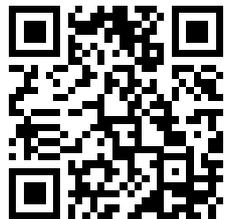

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THE
H O L Y B I B L E,
CONTAINING THE
OLD AND NEW TESTAMENTS.

(ACCORDING TO THE PRESENT AUTHORIZED VERSION.)

WITH
CRITICAL, EXPLANATORY, AND PRACTICAL
NOTES:

THE MARGINAL READINGS OF THE MOST APPROVED PRINTED COPIES OF THE SCRIPTURES

WITH SUCH OTHERS AS APPEAR TO BE COUNTENANCED BY THE

HEBREW AND GREEK ORIGINALS:

A COPIOUS COLLECTION OF PARALLEL TEXTS;

SUMMARIES OF EACH BOOK AND CHAPTER;

AND THE DATE OF EVERY TRANSACTION AND EVENT RECORDED IN THE SACRED
ORACLES, AGREEABLY TO THE CALCULATIONS OF THE
MOST CORRECT CHRONOLOGERS.

BY REV. JOSEPH BENSON.

VOLUME II.—THE FIRST BOOK OF KINGS TO PROVERBS.

New-York:

PUBLISHED BY G. LANE & C. B. TIPPETT,
FOR THE METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH: 200 MULBERRY-STREET.

JAMES COLLORD, PRINTER.

1846.

THE
FIRST BOOK OF THE KINGS,

COMMONLY CALLED THE

THIRD BOOK OF THE KINGS.

ARGUMENT.

THE two books of Samuel, as they relate the original of the royal government in Saul, and of the royal family in David, are an introduction to the two books of Kings. These two books give us an account of David's successor, Solomon; of the division of his kingdom, and of the several kings of Israel and Judah, down to the captivity, including the space of 417 years. It cannot certainly be determined who it was that collected the history of these two books, as they are now come to our hands. The opinion of those learned men who ascribe this work to Ezra, as it is, indeed, without any absolute objection against it, so has it not any clear demonstration to raise it above a probable conjecture. But however that be, what is sufficient for us, these books plainly appear to have been collected out of the ancient and undoubted records of the two kingdoms of Israel and Judah. That such records, or annals, were really written in every king's reign, is not only highly credible, as it was agreeable to the general usage of the eastern monarchies, but is very evident also, from innumerable passages in these books themselves, compared with those of the Chronicles, and other parts of Scripture; wherein (besides what might be written by historians or record-keepers appointed by the several kings themselves) we find the chief transactions of many particular reigns drawn up by such prophets as lived in, and were witnesses of them. Thus, the acts of David were written by Samuel, Nathan, and Gad, 1 Chron. xxix. 29; the life of Solomon by Nathan, Ahijah, and Iddo, 2 Chron. ix. 29; that of Rehoboam by Shemaiah and Iddo; that of Uzziah, and a great part, if not the whole of Hezekiah's, by Isaiah. And, to name no more, the principal matters relating to Jehoiakin and Zedekiah stand incorporated in the prophecy of Jeremiah.

These several larger memoirs are what go under the name of *The Books of the Chronicles of the Kings of Israel or Judah*, so often mentioned and referred to in these writings of the kings. For that those chronicles are not intended of the two books of Chronicles which we now have, is most clear even from this alone, that many transactions referred to in the books of the Kings, are so far from being found more fully related in our Chronicles, that most of them are more short than those in the Kings, and some of them not found there at all. But the books of both Kings and Chronicles do refer us, for several larger accounts, to these writings of the seers or prophets; which were the original large Chronicles, whereof these which we now have are but abbreviations. It is sufficient, therefore, to establish the authority and just esteem of these books, that by all circumstances compared together, we find them to have been collected by persons of unsuspected ability, care, and honesty, and handed down to us with as much purity and uncorruptedness in the copies, as the nature of such things could possibly bear. And, undoubtedly, we owe the banding of them down to us in this uncorrupted manner to the especial providence of God, as being intended for our instruction.

A special regard is had in these books to the house of David, from which Christ came. Some of his sons trod in his steps, and their reigns were usually long; whereas those of the wicked kings were usually short: so that the state of Judah (in Israel all the kings were wicked) was not so bad as it would otherwise have been.

In this first book we have, The death of David, chap. 1, 2. The glorious reign of Solomon, chap. 3-10. His defection, chap. 11. The division of the kingdom between Rehoboam and Jeroboam, chap. 12-14. The reigns of Abijah and Asa over Judah, of Basha and Omri over Israel, chap. 15, 16. The history of Elijah, chap. 17-19. Ahab's success, wickedness, and death, chap. 20-22.

CHAPTER I.

David declines in health, 1-4. Adonijah aspires to the kingdom, 5-10. Nathan and Bathsheba procure an order from David for the succession of Solomon, 11-31. The anointing of Solomon, and the people's joy, 32-40. The dispersion of Adonijah's party, 41-49. Solomon dismisses Adonijah, 50-53.

A. M. 2989. B. C. 1015. **N**OW King David was old and ¹stricken in years; and they covered him with clothes, but he gat no heat.

2 Wherefore his servant said unto him, ²Let there be sought for my lord the king ³a young virgin: and let her stand before the king, and let her ⁴cherish him, and let her lie in thy bosom, that my lord the king may get heat.

3 So they sought for a fair damsel throughout all the coasts of Israel, and found Abishag a ⁵Shunammite, and brought her to the king.

4 And the damsel *was* very fair, and cherished the king, and ministered to him: but the king knew her not.

¹ Heb. entered into days.—² Heb. Let them seek.—³ Heb. a damsel, or virgin.—⁴ Heb. be a cherisher unto him.—⁵ Josh. xix. 18.—⁶ 2 Sam. iii. 4.—⁷ Heb. reign.—⁸ 2 Sam. xv. 1.

NOTES ON CHAPTER I.

Verse 1. *Now King David was old*—Being in the end of his seventieth year. *They covered him with clothes, but he gat no heat*—Which is not strange, considering he was a person who had been exercised with so many hardships in war, and with such tormenting cares, and fears, and sorrows for his own sins, (as divers of his psalms witness,) and for the sins and miseries of his children and people. Besides, this might be from the nature of his bodily distemper, which Dr. Lightfoot thinks was a dead palsy. [David now began to feel the effects of old age, and probably remembered with lively interest the words of his faithful friend Barzillai, spoken some time before: "Can I discern between good and evil? can thy servant taste what I eat or what I drink?"]

Verse 2. *Wherefore his servants*—His physicians; *said, Let there be sought for the king a young virgin*—Whose natural heat is fresh and wholesome, and not impaired with bearing or breeding children. The same counsel is given by Galen for the cure of some cold and dry distempers. *Let her stand before the king*—That is, minister unto him, or wait upon him in his sickness, as occasion requires. *And let her lie in his bosom*—As his wife; for that she was so, may appear by divers arguments. 1st, Otherwise this had been a wicked course; which, therefore, neither his servants would have dared to prescribe, nor would David have used, especially being now in a dying condition. 2d, It appears from this phrase of *lying in his bosom*, which is everywhere in Scripture mentioned as the privilege of a wife. 3d, This made Adonijah's crime, in desiring her to wife, so heinous in Solomon's account, because he saw, that by marrying the king's wife, he designed to revive his pretence to the kingdom.

Verse 4. *The king knew her not*—Did not enjoy

5 ¶ Then ⁶Adonijah the son of ⁷Haggith exalted himself, saying, I ⁸will ⁹be king: and ¹⁰he prepared him chariots and horsemen, and fifty men to run before him.

6 And his father had not displeased him ¹¹at any time in saying, Why hast thou done so? and he also *was* a very goodly man; ¹²and *his mother* bare him after Absalom.

7 And ¹³he conferred with Joab the son of Zeruiah, and with ¹⁴Abiathar the priest: and ¹⁵they, ¹⁶following Adonijah, helped *him*.

8 But Zadok the priest, and Benaiah the son of Jehoiada, and Nathan the prophet, and ¹⁷Shi-

¹ Heb. from his days.—² 2 Sam. iii. 3; 1 Chr. iii. 2.—³ Heb. his words were with Joab.—⁴ 2 Sam. xx. 25.—⁵ Ch. ii. 22, 28.—⁶ Heb. helped after Adonijah.—⁷ Chap. iv. 18.

her as his wife, but she remained still a virgin: which is mentioned to signify the continuance and progress of the king's malady.

Verse 5. *Then*—Upon notice of the desperation of the king's disease, and the approach of his death; *Adonijah exalted himself*—Entertained high thoughts and designs; *saying, I will be king*—As the right of the kingdom is mine, (verse 6,) so I will now take possession of it. *And he prepared him chariots, &c.*—As Absalom had done upon the like occasion, 1 Sam. xv. 1.

Verses 6, 7. *His father had not displeased him at any time*—This is mentioned as David's great error, and the occasion of Adonijah's presumption. *In saying, Why hast thou done so?*—He had neither restrained him from, nor reproved him for his miscarriages, which David knew was a great sin. *He also was a very goodly man*—This was a second ground of his confidence, because his great comeliness made him amiable in the people's eyes. *His mother bare him after Absalom*—This is mentioned as a third reason why he expected the crown. Absalom being dead, he was next to him in order of birth. See 2 Sam. iii. 3, 4. *He conferred with Joab and with Abiathar*—Whom it is likely he knew to be two discontented persons; the former on account of David's putting Amasa in his place, and the other because he saw Zadok in greater favour than himself. *They helped him*—Probably, not so much because they thought the right of the crown was his, as with a view to oppose Solomon, and to secure and advance their own interest. It seems that God left them to themselves, to correct them for former miscarriages, with a rod of their own making.

Verses 8-10. *The mighty men were not with Adonijah*—That is, those named 2 Sam. xxiii., and the guards, who had served under David so long, and

A. M. 2989. B. C. 1015. mei, and Rei, and ^h the mighty men which *belonged* to David, were not with Adonijah.

9 And Adonijah slew sheep, and oxen, and fat cattle, by the stone of Zohemoth, which *is* by ^g En-rogel, and called all his brethren the king's sons, and all the men of Judah the king's servants :

10 But Nathan the prophet, and Benaiah, and the mighty men, and Solomon his brother, he called not.

11 ¶ Wherefore Nathan spake unto Bathsheba the mother of Solomon, saying, Hast thou not heard that Adonijah the son of ^h Hagith doth reign, and David our lord knoweth it not ?

12 Now therefore come, let me, I pray thee, give thee counsel, that thou mayest save thine own life, and the life of thy son Solomon.

13 Go, and get thee in unto King David, and say unto him, Didst not thou, my lord, O king, swear unto thy handmaid, saying, ^k Assuredly Solomon thy son shall reign after me, and he shall sit upon my throne ? why then doth Adonijah reign ?

14 Behold, while thou yet talkest there with the king, I also will come in after thee, and ^l confirm thy words.

15 ¶ And Bathsheba went in unto the king into the chamber : and the king was very old ;

^h 2 Sam. xxiii. 8.—^g Or, *the well Rogel*, 2 Sam. xvii. 17.
ⁱ 2 Sam. iii. 4.—^k 1 Chron. xxii. 9.—^l Heb. *fill up*.

had done such mighty acts in his reign and under his conduct. Adonijah had no hope of drawing them to his party, and therefore did not confer with them as he did with Joab and Abiathar. *And called all his brethren and all the men of Judah*—Except those mentioned verse 8, and again excepted, verse 10. But all the rest of the family of David, and the principal persons of the tribe of Judah, with the high-priest and captain of the host, being present, there seemed to be nothing wanting to the making of him king, but only his anointing. For this appears to have been a federal feast, in which they swore allegiance to Adonijah. *But Nathan the prophet, and Benaiah, &c., he called not*—Because he knew they favoured Solomon.

Verse 11. *Nathan spake unto Bathsheba*—Who, being private and retired in her apartment, was ignorant of what was done abroad ; and who was likely to be most zealous in the cause, and most prevalent with David. To her Nathan was induced to speak, both by his piety, that he might fulfil the will of God declared to him concerning Solomon's succession, 2 Sam. vii. 13 ; and by his prudence, know-

ing that Adonijah hated him for being the principal instrument of Solomon's advancement. *That Adonijah doth reign*—It seems they were so bold as to proclaim him king.

16 And Bathsheba bowed, and did obeisance unto the king. And the king said, ^m What wouldest thou ?

17 And she said unto him, My lord, ⁿ thou swarest by the Lord thy God unto thy handmaid, *saying*, Assuredly Solomon thy son shall reign after me, and he shall sit upon my throne.

18 And now, behold, Adonijah reigneth ; and now, my lord the king, thou knowest it not :

19 ^o And he hath slain oxen, and fat cattle, and sheep in abundance, and hath called all the sons of the king, and Abiathar the priest, and Joab the captain of the host ; but Solomon thy servant hath he not called.

20 And thou, my lord, O king, the eyes of all Israel *are* upon thee, that thou shouldest tell them who shall sit on the throne of my lord the king after him.

21 Otherwise it shall come to pass, when my lord the king shall ^p sleep with his fathers, that I and my son Solomon shall be counted ^q offenders.

22 ¶ And lo, while she yet talked with the king, Nathan the prophet also came in.

23 And they told the king, saying, Behold Nathan the prophet. And when he was come in before the king, he bowed himself before

^m Heb. *What to thee?*—ⁿ Verses 13, 30.—^o Verses 7-9, 25.
^p Deut. xxxi. 16 ; Chap. ii. 10.—^q Heb. *sinner*.

ing that Adonijah hated him for being the principal instrument of Solomon's advancement. *That Adonijah doth reign*—It seems they were so bold as to proclaim him king.

Verses 13-15. *Didst thou not, O king, swear unto thy handmaid?*—We do not read anywhere else of this oath : but, no doubt, David had solemnly sworn to her that he would make her son his successor, knowing that God himself had designed him to that honour. And it is probable that Adonijah was not an entire stranger to what God had declared to Nathan and David on this subject : and if so, his crime was the greater in setting himself to oppose the decree of heaven. Indeed he acknowledges as much, chap. ii. 15. *The king was very old*—And therefore, probably, could not see so as to discern who had entered the chamber till Abishag, who ministered unto him, informed him.

Verses 19, 20. *Solomon thy servant*—She speaks very submissively, and calls herself his handmaid, and her son his servant. *The eyes of all Israel are upon thee*—This she said that she might free him from all fear of such a rebellion as Absalom

A. M. 2989. the king with his face to the
B. C. 1015. ground.

24 And Nathan said, My lord, O king, hast thou said, Adonijah shall reign after me, and he shall sit upon my throne ?

25 ° For he is gone down this day, and hath slain oxen, and fat cattle, and sheep in abundance, and hath called all the king's sons, and the captains of the host, and Abiathar the priest ; and behold, they eat and drink before him, and say, ° God ¹³ save King Adonijah.

26 But me, *even* me thy servant, and Zadok the priest, and Benaiah the son of Jehoiada, and thy servant Solomon, hath he not called.

27 Is this thing done by my lord the king, and thou hast not showed *it* unto thy servant, who should sit on the throne of my lord the king after him ?

28 ¶ Then King David answered and said, Call me Bath-sheba. And she came ¹⁴ into

° Verse 19.—¶ 1 Sam. x. 24.—¹³ Heb. *let King Adonijah live.*
¹⁴ Heb. *before the king.*—¶ 2 Sam. iv. 9.—¶ Verse 17.

raised ; the people not being yet joined to Adonijah, but continuing in suspense till the king had declared his mind about his successor.

Verses 26, 27. *But me hath he not called*—Whom he knew to be acquainted with thy mind, and with the mind of God in this matter ; and therefore his neglect of me herein gives me cause to suspect that this is done without thy knowledge. *Thou hast not showed it to thy servant*—Who, having been an instrument in delivering God's message to thee concerning thy successor, might reasonably expect that if thou hadst changed thy mind, thou wouldest have acquainted me with it, as being both a prophet of the Lord, and one whom thou hast found faithful to thee. He insinuates that, in a matter of such importance, he could not believe the king would act without his advice, whom he was wont to consult on other occasions, and who had acquainted him with the mind of God concerning Solomon. Nathan knew that David had given no orders about this thing, but thought it prudent to introduce in this manner a relation of what Adonijah had done.

Verses 28, 29. *King David said, Call Bath-sheba*—Who, upon Nathan's approach to the king, had modestly withdrawn. *That hath redeemed my soul out of all distress*—The words contain a grateful acknowledgment of the goodness of God to him, in bringing him safe through the many difficulties that had lain in his way, and which he now mentions to the glory of God, (as Jacob when he lay a dying,) thus setting to his seal, from his own experience, that *the Lord redeemeth the souls of his servants.*

Verse 31. *Let my lord King David live for ever*—Though I desire thy oath may be kept, and the right of succession confirmed to my son, yet I am

the king's presence, and stood before A. M. 2989.
the king. B. C. 1015.

29 And the king sware, and said, ° *As the Lord liveth, that hath redeemed my soul out of all distress.*

30 ° Even as I sware unto thee by the Lord God of Israel, saying, Assuredly Solomon thy son shall reign after me, and he shall sit upon my throne in my stead ; even so will I certainly do this day.

31 Then Bath-sheba bowed with *her* face to the earth, and did reverence to the king, and said, ° *Let my lord King David live for ever.*

32 ¶ And King David said, Call me Zadok the priest, and Nathan the prophet, and Benaiah the son of Jehoiada. And they came before the king.

33 The king also said unto them, ° *Take with you the servants of your lord, and cause Solomon my son to ride upon ¹⁵ mine own*

° Neh. ii. 3 ; Dan. ii. 4.—¹ 2 Sam. xx. 6.—¹⁵ Heb. *which be-
longeth to me,* Esth. vi. 8.

far from thirsting after thy death, and should rather rejoice, if it were possible, for thee to live and enjoy thy crown for ever. There could be no higher expression of love and thankfulness, than to desire never to see Solomon on the throne, if it were possible for David always to enjoy it.

Verse 33. *Take with you the servants of your lord*—His constant guards, the Cherethites and Pelethites, verse 38. *Cause Solomon to ride upon mine own mule*—As a token that the royal dignity is transferred upon him, and that by my consent. The rest of David's sons were wont to ride upon mules when they went abroad, 2 Sam. xiii. 29. And Absalom rode on a mule when he was hanged in the oak. But David had a mule peculiarly reserved for himself alone ; on which Solomon's being set, was considered as the beginning of his kingly power, no private person whatsoever being permitted to ride upon the king's mule. "It was capital," says Maimonides, "to ride on the king's ass or mule, to sit upon his throne, or to handle his sceptre without his order." On the contrary, it appears from the story of Mordecai, (Esther vi.,) that to have the honour to ride on the king's beast by his appointment, was accounted the highest dignity among the Persians. *Bring him down to Gihon*—A little river or brook near Jerusalem, on the west side, which discharged itself into the brook Kidron, and in the Chaldee is called by its modern name, *Siloa*. If we may credit Maimonides, and other rabbis, the kings of the house of David were all obliged to be anointed by the side of a fountain or river ; which, they say, was the reason why David commanded his servants to bring his son down to Gihon, and anoint him there. Such a situation for anointing their kings, the Jews say, was

A. M. 2989. mule, and bring him down to "Gihon :
B. C. 1015.

34 And let Zadok the priest and Nathan the prophet anoint him there king over Israel: and blow ye with the trumpet, and say, God save King Solomon.

35 Then ye shall come up after him, that he may come and sit upon my throne; for he shall be king in my stead: and I have appointed him to be ruler over Israel and over Judah.

36 And Benaiah the son of Jehoiada answered the king, and said, Amen: the LORD God of my lord the king say so too.

37 As the LORD hath been with my lord the king, even so be he with Solomon, and make his throne greater than the throne of my lord King David.

38 ¶ So Zadok the priest, and Nathan the prophet, and Benaiah the son of Jehoiada, and the Cherethites, and the Pelethites, went down, and caused Solomon to ride upon King David's mule, and brought him to Gihon.

39 And Zadok the priest took a horn of oil out of the tabernacle, and anointed Solomon.

* 2 Chron. xxxii. 30.—† 1 Sam. x. 1; xvi. 3, 12; 2 Sam. ii. 4; v. 3; Chap. xix. 16; 2 Kings ix. 3; xi. 12.—‡ 2 Sam. xv. 10; 2 Kings ix. 13; xi. 14.—§ Josh. i. 5, 17; 1 Sam. xx. 13.

chosen to show the perpetuity of their kingdom, because rivers run always, though the cities which they wash are continually decaying, and liable to destruction. But it is much more probable that this place was fixed on, because it was near Jerusalem, and a place of great resort, and capable of containing and displaying that numerous company, which David knew would follow Solomon thither. And being on the west side of the city, it was remote from Adonijah, who was inaugurated on the east side, and from his company, and therefore the people could assemble here without fear of tumults or bloodshed.

Verse 34. *Let Zadok the priest and Nathan the prophet anoint him*—That is, say the Jews, one of them poured out the oil, and the other anointed his head, drawing a circle round about it with oil, according to their maxim that their kings were anointed in the form of a crown, to denote their delegation to the royal dignity. It is of more importance to observe, that this unction signified not only the designation of the person anointed to his office, but the gifts and graces which were necessary to qualify him for it, and which, seeking them sincerely of God, he might expect to receive. "We do not find," says Henry, "that Abiathar pretended to anoint Adonijah: he was made king by a feast, not by unction. Whom God calls, he will qualify, which was signified by the anointing: usurpers had it not.

And they blew the trumpet; and all the people said, God save King Solomon.

40 And all the people came up after him, and the people piped with pipes, and rejoiced with great joy, so that the earth rent with the sound of them.

41 ¶ And Adonijah and all the guests that were with him heard it as they had made an end of eating. And when Joab heard the sound of the trumpet, he said, Wherefore is this noise of the city being in an uproar?

42 And while he yet spake, behold, Jonathan the son of Abiathar the priest came: and Adonijah said unto him, Come in; for thou art a valiant man, and bringest good tidings.

43 And Jonathan answered and said to Adonijah, Verily our lord King David hath made Solomon king.

44 And the king hath sent with him Zadok the priest, and Nathan the prophet, and Benaiah the son of Jehoiada, and the Cherethites, and the Pelethites, and they have caused him to ride upon the king's mule:

45 And Zadok the priest and Nathan the

* Verse 47.—† 2 Sam. viii. 18; xxiii. 20-23.—‡ Exod. xxx. 23, 25, 32; Psalm lxxxix. 20.—§ 1 Chronicles xxix. 22. ¶ 1 Sam. x.—|| Or, *flutes*.—¶ 2 Sam. xviii. 27.

Christ signifies anointed, and he is the king whom God hath set upon his holy hill of Zion, according to the decree, Psa. ii. 6, 7. Christians, also, are made to our God, and by him, kings, and they have an unction from the Holy One, 1 John ii. 20."

Verses 35, 36. *Then ye shall come up after him, that he may sit on my throne*—Ye shall attend upon him to Jerusalem, and give him actual possession of the throne. *For he shall be king in my stead*—My deputy and vice-king while I live, and absolutely king when I die. *Over Israel and over Judah*—The latter clause is added, lest the men of Judah, who were in a special manner invited by Adonijah, (verse 9,) should think themselves exempted from his jurisdiction. *And Benaiah said, Amen*—They all said the same, (verse 47,) not doubting but God would establish his authority.

Verses 39, 40. *Zadok took a horn of oil*—A vessel of oil, as the Arabic translates it; which vessel was made of an ox's horn, as Bochart observes; *out of the tabernacle, and anointed Solomon*—It rendered his unction more solemn, and his person more sacred, that he was anointed with holy oil taken out of the tabernacle: though the Jews are generally of opinion, that it was not necessary to anoint their kings with this holy oil made by Moses. *So that the earth rent*—An hyperbolical expression, to signify the very loud noise which the people made with their shouts and their pipes.

A. M. 2989. prophet have anointed him king
B. C. 1015. in Gihon: and they are come up
from thence rejoicing, so that the city rang
again. This is the noise that ye have
heard.

46 And also Solomon ^s sitteth on the throne
of the kingdom.

47 And moreover the king's servants came
to bless our lord King David, saying, ^h God
make the name of Solomon better than thy
name, and make his throne greater than thy
throne. ⁱ And the king bowed himself upon
the bed.

48 And also thus said the king, Blessed be
the LORD God of Israel, which hath ^k given
one to sit on my throne this day, mine eyes
even seeing *it*.

49 And all the guests that *were* with Adoni-

A. M. 2989. jah were afraid, and rose up, and
B. C. 1015. went every man his way.

50 ¶ And Adonijah feared because of Solo-
mon, and arose, and went, and ^l caught hold
on the horns of the altar.

51 And it was told Solomon, saying, Behold,
Adonijah feareth King Solomon: for lo he hath
caught hold on the horns of the altar, saying,
Let King Solomon swear unto me to-day that
he will not slay his servant with the sword.

52 And Solomon said, If he will show him-
self a worthy man, ^m there shall not a hair of
him fall to the earth: but if wickedness shall
be found in him, he shall die.

53 So King Solomon sent, and they brought
him down from the altar. And he came and
bowed himself to King Solomon: and Solomon
said unto him, Go to thy house.

¶ 1 Chron. xxix. 23.—^h Verse 37.—ⁱ Gen. xvii. 31.—^k Ch.
iii. 6; Psa. cxxxii. 11.

^l Chap. ii. 28.—^m 1 Samuel xiv. 45; 2 Samuel xiv. 11; Acts
xxvii. 34.

Verses 46-48. *Also Solomon sitteth on the throne*—Being in actual possession of the kingdom, though his father be alive. For to sit upon the throne was proper to the king; and none else, on pain of death, might be placed there. *The king bowed himself upon the bed*—Adoring God for this great mercy, and thereby declaring his hearty consent to this action. *And also thus said the king, Blessed be the Lord, &c.*—He gave his solemn thanks to God for the happiness of seeing Solomon begin his reign, with such affection of his people as they expressed by their joy at his inauguration. It is a great satisfaction to good men, when they are going out of the world, to see their children rising up in their stead, to serve God in their generation: and especially to see *peace upon Israel*, and the establishment of it.

Verses 50, 51. *Adonijah feared, &c.*—He fled to the altar for protection and safety, it being a privileged place; not, indeed, by the appointment of the law, but by the custom of all nations. *And caught hold on the horns of the altar*—With a resolution, it seems, of not stirring therefrom till Solomon had given his oath, or solemn word, not to take away his life. And by thus doing Adonijah appears to have

hindered the offering of sacrifices on the altar till such time as Solomon granted his pardon. *Let King Solomon swear that he will not slay his servant*—He owns Solomon as his king, and himself as his servant and subject; and being sensible of his guilt, and of the jealousy which kings have of their competitors, could not be satisfied without Solomon's oath.

Verses 52, 53. *And Solomon said, &c.*—Solomon did not swear unto him, as he desired, but only declared that he gave him a full pardon for what was past, on condition that he behaved himself as became a good subject for the time to come. *But if wickedness be found in him, he shall die*—That is, if he did any thing in future which manifested that he had still a rebellious mind, the pardon, now granted, should signify nothing, because he had broken the condition of it. *He came and bowed himself to King Solomon*—Thereby owning him for his sovereign, such respect not being otherwise due from one brother to another. *And Solomon said unto him, Go to thy house*—There to lead a private life, without noise, equipage, or numerous attendants, and not meddling with the affairs of the kingdom.

CHAPTER II.

David's charge to Solomon, 1-9. His death and burial, with the beginning of Solomon's reign, 10-12. He puts Adonijah to death, 13-25. Deposits Abiathar from the high-priesthood, 26, 27. Puts Joab to death, 28-35. Confines Shimei to Jerusalem, 36-38. Puts him to death, 39-46.

A. M. 2989. B. C. 1015. **N**OW ^athe days of David drew nigh that he should die; and he charged Solomon his son, saying,

2 ^bI go the way of all the earth: ^cbe thou strong therefore, and show thyself a man;

3 And keep the charge of the LORD thy God, to walk in his ways, to keep his statutes, and his commandments, and his judgments, and his testimonies, as it is written in the law of Moses, that thou mayest ^dprosper¹ in all that thou doest, and whithersoever thou turnest thyself.

4 That the LORD may ^econtinue his word which he spake concerning me, saying, ^fIf

^a Gen. xvii. 29; Deut. xxxi. 14.—^b Josh. xxiii. 14.—^c Deut. xvii. 19.—^d Deut. xxxix. 9; Josh. i. 7; 1 Chron. xxii. 12.—^e Or, do wisely, 1 Sam. xviii. 5, 14, 40.—^f 2 Sam. vii. 25.—¹ Psa. xxxiii. 12.—² Kings xx. 3.

NOTES ON CHAPTER II.

Verses 1, 2. *The days of David drew nigh, that he must die*—As he himself was sensible. *And he charged Solomon his son*—After the example of Abraham, the father of the faithful, Gen. xviii. 19. *I go the way of all the earth*—Even the sons and heirs of heaven must go the way of all the earth, of all who dwell thereon. But they walk with pleasure in this way, *through the valley of the shadow of death*. Prophets, yea, kings, must go this way to brighter light and honour than prophecy or sovereignty. *Be thou strong*—For, to govern his people according to the law of God, required great fortitude or strength of mind. *And show thyself a man*—In manly wisdom, and courage, and constancy, though thou art but young in years.

Verses 3, 4. *And keep the charge of the Lord thy God*—Here we find David inculcating, in his last moments, the great ruling principle, the foundation-stone of the Hebrew state, and which in some measure distinguishes it from all other governments that have ever subsisted. For the whole strength and stability of that state was built, not upon the *riches* or *forces* of the kingdom, but upon a strict observance of the statutes and commandments of the Lord. *As it is written in the law of Moses*—Which the prince was enjoined to transcribe and read, (Deut. xvii. 11,) that he might govern his own and his people's actions by it. *That thou mayest prosper*—Or, *behave thyself prudently*. Hereby he intimates that religion is the truest reason of state, and that all true wisdom and good success depend upon piety. *That the Lord may confirm his word*—Fulfil his promise, the condition upon which it was suspended being performed. Thus, to engage him to keep the charge of the Lord, he represents unto him the gracious promise which God had made him, to perpetuate the kingdom in his family without interruption, provided his children sincerely and heartily cleaved to God in faithful and conscientious obedience to his commandments.

thy children take heed to their way, A. M. 2989. B. C. 1015. to ^awalk before me in truth, with all their heart, and with all their soul, ^bthere shall not ^cfail thee (said he) a man on the throne of Israel.

5 Moreover, thou knowest also what Joab the son of Zeruiah ^ddid to me, and what he did to the two captains of the hosts of Israel, unto ^eAbner the son of Ner, and unto ^fAmasa the son of Jether, whom he slew, and ^gshed the blood of war in peace, and put the blood of war upon his girdle that *was* about his loins, and in his shoes that *were* on his feet.

6 Do therefore ^haccording to thy wisdom,

^a 2 Sam. vii. 12; Chap. viii. 25.—^b Heb. *be cut off from thee from the throne*.—^c 2 Sam. iii. 39; xviii. 5, 12, 14; xix. 5, 7. ^d 2 Sam. iii. 27.—^e 2 Sam. xx. 10.—^f Heb. *put*.—^g Verse 9; Prov. xx. 26.

Verse 5. *Moreover, thou knowest, &c.*—After David had given Solomon this general charge, he proceeded to direct him to do some particular acts of justice and kindness, and first of all bids him remember how Joab had acted. We must not look upon this admonition of David, on his death-bed, as proceeding from a spirit of *private revenge*, but as advising the execution of a public piece of justice, which the circumstances of things would not permit him to inflict before. Certainly the punishment of Joab was owing both to God and man, for his treacherous and cruel murder of Abner and Amasa; and, therefore, David here, in justice to his people, and the *divine laws*, ordered his son and successor to do that, when his throne was fully established, which he could not execute himself for want of sufficient power, Joab's interest being then so great, that it might have thrown the state into a fresh civil war, had any steps been taken to inflict punishment upon him. *What Joab the son of Zeruiah did to me*—That is, *against me*. For Joab's murder of Abner and Amasa was a great injury to David, as it was a breach of his laws and peace, a contempt of his person and government, a pernicious example to his subjects, and a great scandal to him, giving people reason to suspect that Joab had been only David's instrument, to effect what he secretly designed. *And shed the blood of war in peace*—He slew them as if they had been in the state of war, when there was not only a cessation of arms, but also a treaty of peace. *And put the blood of war upon his girdle*—This is added to denote his impenitence, that although by his perfidious manner of killing them, when he pretended to embrace them, he stained his own garments with their blood, yet he was not ashamed of it, but gloried in it, and marched boldly along with the army, with the same girdle and shoes which were sprinkled with their blood.

Verse 6. *Do therefore according to thy wisdom*—What in reason and justice thou seest to be fit. For though I was forced to forbear him, I never forgave

A. M. 2989. and let not his hoar head go down to
B. C. 1015. the grave in peace.

7 But show kindness unto the sons of ^a Barzillai the Gileadite, and let them be of those that ^oeat at thy table: for so ^pthey came to me when I fled because of Absalom thy brother.

8 And behold, *thou hast* with thee ^qShimei the son of Gera, a Benjamite of Bahurim,

^a 2 Sam. xii. 31, 38.—^o 2 Sam. ix. 7, 10; xix. 28.—^p 2 Sam. xvii. 27.—^q 2 Sam. xvi. 5.

him. *Let not his hoar head go down to the grave in peace*—Punish him according to his demerits. "This dying order of David," says Dr. Dodd, referring to Dr. Chandler, "was an order worthy of a good king, and fit to be given in the last moments of his life. The crimes which drew down this punishment upon Joab, have already been expiated upon. Many reasons concurred to prevent David's calling him to an account; but it is plain he never forgot nor forgave his crime: nay, he could not, consistently with the law, have forgiven him if he had been inclined to it. His deferring his punishment so long, was no reason why he should always do it. Reasons of state prevented its being inflicted before, and reasons of state required its being put in execution at this juncture. In time of war it was dangerous to attempt it, on account of the power, influence, and military skill of Joab; in time of peace it was safe, because Joab's power was then upon the decline, and his services were unnecessary. Joab was ambitious, enterprising, and restless, and having not proved very loyal to the father, might have practised the same perfidy against the son; who being young, and scarcely settled in his throne, might have suffered from his treachery, his want of fidelity, and his ambitious views, which were insatiable."

Verse 7. *Show kindness to the sons of Barzillai*—David's gratitude here expressed is remarkable. Barzillai only desired him to show kindness to Chimham, 2 Sam. xix. 37; but he extends it to all his sons. *Let them be of those that eat at thy table*—As Mephibosheth had done at David's table. It is probable Mephibosheth was now dead, for otherwise David would not have forgotten him. *For so they came to me*—Such kindness they showed me; inviting him to Barzillai's house, who sustained him in his great distress, 2 Sam. xix. 32.

Verse 8. *Behold thou hast with thee Shimei, &c., which cursed me with a grievous curse*—"David," says Delaney, "when he was importuned to punish Shimei, (2 Sam. xvi. 9, and xix. 21,) imitated the mercy of God, who *waits that he may be gracious*. Had he copied after any lower pattern, he had not spared *Shimei*, in the very instant of passion and provocation; nor would he afterward have forgiven him, in the fulness of prosperity and power. He very well knew how much the remission of personal injuries became the kingly character, and, therefore, he gave Shimei his life, and confirm-

which cursed me with a ⁴grievous A. M. 2989.
B. C. 1015. curse in the day when I went to Mahanaim: but ^rhe came down to meet me at Jordan, and ^sI sware to him by the Lord, saying, I will not put thee to death with the sword.

9 Now therefore ^thold him not guiltless: for thou *art* a wise man, and knowest what thou oughtest to do unto him; but his hoar head

⁴ Heb. *strong*.—^r 2 Samuel xix. 18.—^s 2 Samuel xix. 23.
^t Exod. xx. 7; Job ix. 28.

ed the grant by an oath. But then it must be remembered, that the obligation of the oath was purely personal; for so he himself explains it, saying, *I sware unto him by the Lord, I will not put thee to death by the sword*. And, therefore, though David was bound, Solomon was at full liberty to vindicate the majesty of kings, in chastising this high insult upon his father in such a manner as he thought fit: nor was there any danger of doing this to excess, when the chastisement was deferred to the calm and cool season of dispassionate justice; when neither passion nor personal resentment could inflame the vengeance. David well knew how much it became the piety of his character to submit himself and his concerns to the divine disposal, throughout the whole course of his life; but could he, for this reason, wholly renounce the interest of justice? Or, if he could, he very well knew how dangerous an example it might be to his successors, to suffer such injuries and insults upon majesty to pass unpunished: and, therefore, when he had acted up to the *piety* and *dignity* of his own character, he very wisely admonished his son to act up to the *wisdom* of his."

Verse 9. *Now therefore hold him not guiltless*—Though I spared his life, do not treat him as an innocent person, nor consider him as one reconciled to my family, and to thy succession to the throne. He is Shimei still, and wants nothing but a fair opportunity to declare it. Clear him not, therefore, as I did, if thou findest him guilty of any mal-practices; *but his hoar head bring down, &c.*—Cut him off as an old offender and dangerous enemy, to secure thy own peace, and the safety of thy government. In this sense Josephus understands the words. But, certainly, David's telling Solomon, that he *swore to Shimei he would not put him to death for his outrage and treason*, is a demonstrative proof that he did not advise Solomon to put him to death for the crime that he himself had solemnly forgiven; for can any one imagine David would tell Solomon that he had sworn not to put Shimei to death, and in the same breath order him, in defiance of his oath, to be put to death? If he had intended that Solomon should immediately put him to death, there would have been neither reason nor sense in the words, *Thou art a wise man, and knowest what thou oughtest to do unto him*. For to what purpose was it to tell Solomon that he knew

A. M. 2990. ^abring thou down to the grave with
B. C. 1014. blood.

10 ¶ So ^aDavid slept with his fathers, and was buried in ^bthe city of David.

11 And the days that David ^areigned over Israel were forty years: seven years reigned he in Hebron, and thirty and three years reigned he in Jerusalem.

12 ¶ ^aThen sat Solomon upon the throne of David his father; and his kingdom was established greatly.

^aGen. xlii. 38; xlii. 31.—^bCh. i. 21; Acts ii. 29; xiii. 36. ^c2 Sam. v. 7.—^d2 Sam. v. 4; 1 Chron. xxix. 26.—^e1 Chron.

how to behave to Shimei, if David's command was immediately to cut him off, and Solomon understood him in that sense? But it is certain Solomon did not understand his father in that sense, by his ordering him to build a house for himself in Jerusalem, (verse 36.) as well as from the different manner in which he treated Shimei and Joab. The fact is, David advised his son to keep a strict watch over Shimei, and to put him to death only, if, on any new offence, he should again forfeit his life; and this, it is hoped, has been made appear to be the truth of the case. Now, how is this inconsistent with piety, or the advice of a prince on his death-bed? It is true, forgiveness of enemies is a duty, provided they cease to become our enemies; but no man is obliged, by any law, so to forgive an enemy, continuing such as not to take the proper methods to guard against the effects of his enmity, and bring him to justice, if no other method will prove effectual. Much less is a prince obliged so to forgive an implacable enemy to his crown and government, and one who is likely to disturb the settlement of the crown in his successor, as not to order the successor to be upon his guard against him, and punish him when guilty, according to his demerits. Such a caution and order is what he owes to his people; he may die as a private person, in charity with all mankind, and forgive every private injury against himself; and yet, as a prince, advise what is necessary for the public good after his decease, and even the execution of particular persons, if, by abusing the lenity and respite they once received, they should be guilty of new and capital offences.—Chandler. Doctor Waterland, Le Clerc, and Calmet, give the same interpretation with Doctor Chandler. The reader will probably think that the above reasoning sufficiently justifies David in this particular, even on supposition that the text is rightly translated, which, however, Dr. Delaney is of opinion it is not. The Hebrew particle, *vau*, he thinks, ought to have been rendered here, as in all similar cases, not connectively, but disjunctively, as it is Prov. xxx. 8, and in many other places. "Agur," says he, "beseeches God to keep him from the extremes of poverty and wealth. If the particle *vau* were to be interpreted here connectively, the

13 ¶ And Adonijah the son of Haggith came to Bath-sheba the mother of Solomon. And she said, ^bComest thou peaceably? And he said, Peaceably.

14 He said moreover, I have somewhat to say unto thee. And she said, Say on.

15 And he said, Thou knowest that the kingdom was ^cmine, and that all Israel set their faces on me that I should reign: howbeit the kingdom is turned about, and is become my brother's: for ^dit was his from the LORD.

xxix. 23; 2 Chron. i. 1.—^b1 Samuel xvi. 4.—^cChap. i. 5. ^d1 Chron. xxii. 9; xxviii. 5, 7; Prov. xxi. 30; Dan. ii. 21.

petition would run thus: *Give me not poverty and riches.* Every one sees the absurdity of this petition; and therefore the translators rightly rendered it, *Give me neither poverty nor riches.* In the same analogy, the passage in question, rightly translated, will stand thus: *Now, therefore, neither hold him guiltless, (for thou art a wise man, and knowest what thou oughtest to do unto him,) nor his head bring thou down to the grave with blood.* This advice, in this sense, is full of humanity, as well as wisdom, and Solomon (we see) understood and observed it in this sense, and in no other."

Verses 10, 11. *So David slept with his fathers*—He died with the satisfaction of seeing his own son his successor, the wisest and the hopefulest prince of the whole earth, and with the assurance of God's peculiar favour to his posterity, from whence he had already, in the clearest light of prophetic vision, seen the Messiah, the Lord of life, to arise; of whose dominion, and the increase of his government and glory, he well knew, by the Spirit of God upon him, there would be no end. *And was buried in the city of David*—In that part of Jerusalem which was called by his name, because he took it from the Jebusites. *Seven years reigned he in Hebron*—More precisely, seven years and six months; (2 Sam. v. 5;) but smaller numbers are often omitted in Scripture computations, and only the larger noticed.

Verse 12. *Then sat Solomon upon the throne, &c.*—The kingdom was settled upon him with universal consent and approbation. *His kingdom was established*—He had the hearty affections of his people, which all men know to be a prince's best and surest establishment.

Verses 13–15. *She said, Comest thou peaceably?*—Or with some evil design against me or my son? which she might well suspect, knowing his ambition and envy at Solomon, and his hatred against her, as the chief cause of his being cast down from his aspiring views and high hopes. *He said, Thou knowest that the kingdom is mine*—Both by right of primogeniture and actual inauguration. *And all Israel set their faces on me*—They looked on me as their king and my father's successor, and expected that he would confirm my election. He pretends that the generality of the people favoured his views,

A. M. 2990. 16 And now I ask one petition of
B. C. 1014. thee, ^e deny me not. And she said
unto him, Say on.

17 And he said, Speak, I pray thee, unto Solomon the king, (for he will not say thee nay,) that he give me ^e Abishag the Shunammite to wife.

18 And Bath-sheba said, Well; I will speak for thee unto the king.

19 Bath-sheba therefore went unto King Solomon, to speak unto him for Adonijah. And the king rose up to meet her, and ^f bowed himself unto her, and sat down on his throne, and caused a seat to be set for the king's mother; ^g and she sat on his right hand.

20 Then she said, I desire one small petition of thee; *I pray thee*, say me not nay. And the king said unto her, Ask on, my mother: for I will not say thee nay.

^g Heb. *turn not away my face*, Psa. cxxiii. 10.—^e Chap. i. 3, 4.
^f Exod. xx. 12.

and wished him to be king. *Howbeit the kingdom is turned about, and is become my brother's*—Is translated from me to him by the vicissitude of human affairs, and the changeable humour of the people. *For it was his from the Lord*—Either, 1st, By God's providence so disposing David's mind, and the people's hearts: or rather, 2d, By God's appointment, and particular designation: wherein he seems to acquiesce, affectionately terming Solomon his brother, that he might deceive both her and him into a belief that he was far from any design of usurping the government.

Verse 17. *That he give me Abishag to wife*—It is not likely that either Adonijah or Bath-sheba was ignorant that it was unlawful for any man to marry his father's wife: but they perhaps thought that as David *knew her not*, the marriage had not been completed.

Verse 19. *The king rose up to meet her, and bowed himself*—For the high dignity to which he was advanced, did not make him forget the honour due to a parent: an amiable example this, to teach all children to continue to show respect to their parents, how much soever they may be advanced above them in wealth, dignity, or honour. *She sat on his right hand*—The most honourable place, next to the king.

Verses 20, 21. *I desire one small petition of thee*—So she esteemed it, because she did not perceive Adonijah's design in it, nor the circumstances connected with it. *I will not say thee nay*—Supposing thy request can be lawful and safely granted, and will be productive of no injury to myself or others. *Let Abishag be given to Adonijah thy brother*—That is, thy brother by the father's side, and whom brotherly affection and relation oblige thee to gratify; at least, in small things.

Verse 22. *Ask for him the kingdom also*—His

21 And she said, Let Abishag the Shunammite be given to Adonijah thy brother to wife. A. M. 2990. B. C. 1014.

22 And King Solomon answered and said unto his mother, And why dost thou ask Abishag the Shunammite for Adonijah? ask for him the kingdom also; for he is mine elder brother; even for him, and for ^h Abiathar the priest, and for Joab the son of Zeruiah.

23 Then King Solomon sware by the LORD, saying, ⁱ God do so to me, and more also, if Adonijah have not spoken this word against his own life.

24 Now therefore, *as the LORD liveth* which hath established me, and set me on the throne of David my father, and who hath made me a house, as he ^k promised, Adonijah shall be put to death this day.

^h Psa. xlv. 9.—ⁱ Chap. i. 7.—^j Ruth i. 17.—^k 2 Sam. vii. 11, 13; 1 Chron. xxiii. 10.

design is not upon Abishag, but upon the kingdom; which by this means he hopes to recover. "That Adonijah had such a design is very probable," says Poole, "both from his temper, for he was an aspiring and designing man, highly discontented with Solomon's government, and desirous of a change; and from the nature of the thing, because he would not have made so daring and presumptuous a request, if he had not had some great design in it." *For he is my elder brother*—And therefore looks on the kingdom as his by birth-right, and the law of nations, and thinks he may lawfully endeavour to recover his own, and cast me out as a usurper; to accomplish which the seeking Abishag to wife is the first step. *Even for him, and for Abiathar and Joab*—"It is very likely," says the author last quoted, "though not expressed, that he, and Joab, and Abiathar, were engaged in some design against Solomon, and that Solomon had obtained information of it; and therefore he did, and reasonably might, take this attempt of Adonijah to obtain Abishag, for an indication, and the first overt act of his treason."

Verse 23. *Then King Solomon sware by the LORD*—Once here, and again verse 24, which he did to oblige himself irrevocably to perform his resolution, and to prevent all intercession for Adonijah's life, the matter being, he believed, of the greatest importance to him.

Verse 24. *And set me on the throne of David*—For, though Adonijah be my elder brother, yet I have an undoubted right and title to the crown, from the promise and appointment of that God who disposes of all kingdoms, and especially this of Israel, to whom he pleaseth; and therefore Adonijah in this and his former attempt is guilty of treason against me, and of rebellion against God. *And who hath made me a house*—Who hath given me pos-

A. M. 2990. 25 And King Solomon sent by the
B. C. 1014. hand of Benaiah the son of Jehoiada ; and he fell upon him that he died.

B. C. 1014. 26 ¶ And unto Abiathar the priest said the king, Get thee to ¹Anathoth, unto thine own fields ; for thou art ⁶worthy of death : but I will not at this time put thee to death, ^mbecause thou barest the ark of the Lord GOD before David my father, and because ⁿthou hast been afflicted in all wherein my father was afflicted.

27 So Solomon thrust out Abiathar from being priest unto the LORD ; that he might ^ofulfil

the word of the LORD ; which he ^{A. M. 2990.}
spake concerning the house of Eli in ^{B. C. 1014.}
Shiloh.

28 ¶ Then tidings came to Joab ; (for Joab ^phad turned after Adonijah, though he turned not after Absalom ;) and Joab fled unto the tabernacle of the LORD, and ^qcaught hold on the horns of the altar.

29 And it was told King Solomon that Joab was fled unto the tabernacle of the LORD ; and behold, *he is* by the altar. Then Solomon sent Benaiah the son of Jehoiada, saying, Go, fall upon him.

¹ Josh. xxi. 18.—⁶ Heb. *a man of death*.—^m 1 Sam. xxiii. 6 ;
2 Sam. xv. 24, 29.

^a 1 Samuel xxii. 20, 23 ; 2 Samuel xv. 24.—^o 1 Sam. ii. 31—35.
^p Chap. i. 7.—^q Chap. i. 50.

terity, as this phrase often means ; see Exod. i. 21 ; for Rehoboam was probably born before this time : or rather, who hath established me in the house and throne of David, and so hath fulfilled in and to me the promise made to him respecting his house, (2 Sam. vii. 11,) and the settlement of the crown in him and his seed. *Adonijah shall be put to death this day*—“Had Adonijah lived under our constitution, he would have had a fair hearing before conviction. But we should remember that in the kingdoms of the East the government was absolute, and the power of life or death entirely in the prince ; so that Solomon, without the formality of any process, could pronounce his brother dead ; and because he conceived that in cases of this nature delays were dangerous, might send immediately and have him despatched ; though we cannot but say that it would have been more to his commendation, had he showed more clemency and spared his life.”—Dodd.

Verse 25. *Solomon sent by the hand of Benaiah, &c.*—For the execution of justice was not then committed to obscure persons, as it is now, but to persons of great honour and authority. Notwithstanding what has been observed in the two or three preceding notes, probably the reader will be inclined to think, as certainly many are, that it is far from being clear Solomon acted right in putting Adonijah to death, or that the latter had any ill design in asking Abishag. And yet, what certainly is of great weight, we nowhere find Solomon censured in the Scriptures for this action.

Verses 26, 27. *Unto Abiathar—said the king, Get thee to Anathoth*—This was a city of the priests, (Josh. xxi. 28,) where he commanded him to lead a private life ; either in that part of the suburbs which fell to his share, or in some land which he had purchased. *I will not, at this time, put thee to death*—He does not fully pardon him, but reserves to himself a liberty of punishing him afterward if he should see occasion. This he does to keep him in awe, that he might not dare to raise or foment discontents or tumults among the people, which otherwise he might have been inclined to do. *Because thou didst bear the ark of the Lord before my fa-*

ther—When he thought fit to carry it out with him ; and when thou, as high-priest, wast called to attend upon it. Thus Solomon shows his respect to the sacred office. *Because thou hast been afflicted, &c.*—Exposed to all the hardships David endured all the time of his exile under Saul, 1 Sam. xxii. 20, &c. Here Solomon mixes mercy with justice, and requites Abiathar's former kindness to David ; hereby teaching princes, that they should not write injuries in marble, and benefits in sand and water, as they have been too often observed to do. *So Solomon thrust out Abiathar*—Either from his office, or at least from the execution of it. *That he might fulfil the word of the Lord*—Solomon did not do this that he might fulfil the word of the Lord, but because Abiathar had taken the part of Adonijah. But by Solomon's being moved to do this on account of Abiathar's rebellion, the word of the Lord was fulfilled, which he had spoken concerning the house of Eli in Shiloh. And in this sense we are to take the same kind of expressions in the New Testament, where things are frequently said to be done to *fulfil certain prophecies*.

Verse 28. *Then tidings came to Joab*—Concerning Adonijah's death, and Abiathar's deposition. *And Joab fled unto the tabernacle of the Lord*—This makes it appear that Joab had had a hand in the counsel mentioned verse 22, as Solomon suspected. *And caught hold on the horns of the altar*—It appears from this and some other instances, that it was now become a custom among the Israelites, though by no divine law, to flee to the altar of the Lord, as to an asylum ; however, by Solomon's treatment of Joab on this occasion, it appears, that this privilege was only allowed for some misdemeanours, and not for capital offences, especially murder. And Solomon (verse 31) showed that the altar had better be stained with the blood of a murderer, than be polluted with his touch, in seeking an asylum from it, and thereby escaping the punishment which the divine laws required to be inflicted on him.

Verses 29, 30. *Go, fall upon him*—Namely, if he will not come out from thence, as I foresee he will

A. M. 2990. 30 And Benaiah came to the tabernacle of the LORD, and said unto him, Thus saith the king, Come forth. And he said, Nay; but I will die here. And Benaiah brought the king word again, saying, Thus said Joab, and thus he answered me.

31 And the king said unto him, Do as he hath said, and fall upon him, and bury him; that thou mayest take away the innocent blood which Joab shed from me, and from the house of my father.

32 And the LORD shall return his blood upon his own head, who fell upon two men more righteous and better than he, and slew them with the sword, my father David not knowing thereof, to wit, Abner the son of Ner, captain of the host of Israel, and Amasa

the son of Jether, captain of the host of Judah. A. M. 2990. B. C. 1014.

33 Their blood shall therefore return upon the head of Joab, and upon the head of his seed for ever: but upon David, and upon his seed, and upon his house, and upon his throne, shall there be peace for ever from the LORD.

34 So Benaiah the son of Jehoiada went up, and fell upon him, and slew him: and he was buried in his own house in the wilderness.

35 ¶ And the king put Benaiah the son of Jehoiada in his room over the host: and Zadok the priest did the king put in the room of Abiathar.

36 ¶ And the king sent and called for Shimei, and said unto him, Build thee a house in Jerusalem, and dwell there, and go not forth thence any whither.

* Exod. xxi. 14.—* Num. xxxv. 33; Deut. xix. 13; xxi. 8, 9. † Judg. ix. 24, 57; Psa. vii. 16.—† 2 Chron. xxi. 13.—† 2 Sam. iii. 27.—† 2 Sam. xx. 10.

* 2 Sam. iii. 29.—* Prov. xxv. 5.—* Num. xxv. 11–13; 1 Samuel ii. 35; 1 Chronicles vi. 53; xxiv. 3.—* Verse 27. † 2 Samuel xvi. 5; Verse 8.

not. *Thus saith the king, Come forth*—That the king gave this command, though it be not mentioned before, is evident, both from the nature of the thing, for Solomon would not pollute the altar without necessity, and from Benaiah's affirmation of it; for why should he tell a lie without a cause? It appears, also, from his returning to the king for new orders, upon Joab's resolution not to come out thence. *He said, Nay, but I will die here*—For he supposed, either that Solomon would not defile that place with his blood, but would spare him for his respect to it, as he had done Adonijah; or, he had a superstitious conceit, that his dying there might give his guilty and miserable soul some advantage.

Verse 31. *Do as he hath said*—Kill him, though he be there; take him from that place, and then kill him: for Exod. xxi. 14, doth not command the ruler to kill the murderer there, but to remove him thence; *to take him from the altar, that he may die. That thou mayest take away the innocent blood from me*—Kings or judges owe that justice to God, whose vicegerents they are, as to inflict those punishments on offenders which the divine laws require them to inflict: or otherwise, the punishment due to the offenders may with justice fall upon their own heads, as, by not executing the punishment, they, in some measure, give their approbation to the crime.

Verses 32–34. *The Lord shall return his blood—The guilt of the blood which he hath shed. Upon his own head*—Shall make him alone bear the punishment of his iniquity. *Who fell upon two men more righteous than he*—Of more ingenuous and generous tempers, abhorring such treacherous practices; and both of them devoted to, and employed in my father's service. Prejudice, however, and anger seem here too much to have dictated Solomon's expressions; for, it is certain, Joab had always been a firm friend to David, and had done

him considerable service at a time when both Abner and Amasa had acted against him. *Upon the head of his seed for ever*—Either as long as he shall have a posterity, or for a long time, as that phrase is frequently used. So that Solomon here pronounces that Joab's own death should not expiate his guilt; but that his posterity should suffer for it in future generations, according to what David had said, 2 Sam. iii. 28, 29. If Solomon spoke by inspiration of God when he uttered these words, no doubt the prediction was fulfilled, and God visited the sins of the father upon the children, as he often does, when the children tread in their progenitors' sinful steps. But whether, or how far, this was the case, the Scriptures give us no information. *But upon David and upon his seed—shall there be peace*—In and by this execution of justice upon Joab and such malefactors, my throne shall be established, and God will bless me and mine with peace and prosperity. *He was buried in his own house*—That is, in some ground belonging and adjoining to his house, and accounted a part of the mansion. *In the wilderness*—So they called those parts of the country which were but thinly inhabited.

Verse 36. *Go not forth thence any whither*—Solomon, it is likely, suspected Shimei's loyalty and fidelity, and therefore ordered this, 1st, for his own security. For by confining him to the royal city, he would have him always under his eye, and in a place where, as in a public theatre, all his words and actions would be narrowly observed. And by removing him from that part of the country where his kindred, and estates, and interest lay, to a place where he was almost a stranger, and yet sufficiently odious for his former and never to be forgotten insolence toward his lord and king, he would be rendered utterly incapable of raising any tumults or seditions. Solomon enjoined this, 2d, as a kind of

A. M. 2990. B. C. 1014. 37 For it shall be, *that* on the day thou goest out, and passest over * the brook Kidron, thou shalt know for certain that thou shalt surely die: † thy blood shall be upon thine own head.

38 And Shimei said unto the king, The saying is good: as my lord the king hath said, so will thy servant do. And Shimei dwelt in Jerusalem many days.

B. C. 1011. 39 And it came to pass at the end of three years, that two of the servants of Shimei ran away unto † Achish son of Maacah king of Gath: and they told Shimei, saying, Behold, thy servants be in Gath.

40 And Shimei arose and saddled his ass, and went to Gath to Achish to seek his servants: and Shimei went and brought his servants from Gath.

41 And it was told Solomon that Shimei had gone from Jerusalem to Gath, and was come again.

42 And the king sent and called for Shimei,

* 2 Sam. xv. 23.—† Lev. xx. 9; Josh. ii. 29; 2 Sam. i. 16. ‡ 1 Sam. xxvii. 2.

penalty for his former wickedness, wherein yet there was more mercy than justice, and from which David had not promised him any security, but had only given him his life for the present, or during his own life and reign.

Verse 37. *In the day thou passest over the brook Kidron, &c.*—Which Solomon mentions, because it was in the way to Bahurim, where Shimei's former and settled habitation was, as appears by comparing 2 Sam. xv. 23, with xvi. 5. But Solomon's meaning was, and so, no doubt, was understood by Shimei, that if he went out of Jerusalem any way, to a greater distance than Kidron was from thence, he should die for it; for when he went to Gath, after his servants, he went not over Kidron, but the direct contrary way, that city lying westward of Jerusalem, as Kidron did eastward. *Thy blood shall be upon thine own head*—The blame and guilt of thy blood shall lie upon thyself only. In other words, his death should be owing to himself only, as the condition of his holding his life was known to him and accepted by him, as appears from the next verse.

Verse 38. *The saying is good*—Thy sentence is much more merciful than I expected or deserve. *As my lord hath said, so will thy servant do*—And it appears from verses 42, 43, that he not only promised this, but confirmed his promise by an oath, being required by Solomon so to do.

Verses 39, 40. *Achish king of Gath*—A king, but subject and tributary, first to David, and then to Solomon: permitted to enjoy the title and honour of a king, but not the full power: whence it was, that Achish could not keep these servants, though

and said unto him, Did I not make thee to swear by the LORD, and pro-
A. M. 2993. B. C. 1011. tested unto thee, saying, Know for a certain, on the day thou goest out, and walkest abroad any whither, that thou shalt surely die? and thou saidst unto me, The word *that* I have heard is good.

43 Why then hast thou not kept the oath of the LORD, and the commandment that I have charged thee with?

44 The king said moreover to Shimei, Thou knowest † all the wickedness which thy heart is privy to, that thou didst to David my father: therefore the LORD shall † return thy wickedness upon thine own head;

45 And King Solomon *shall be* blessed, and † the throne of David shall be established before the LORD for ever.

46 So the king commanded Benaiah the son of Jehoiada; which went out, and fell upon him, that he died. And the † kingdom was established in the hand of Solomon.

† 2 Sam. xvi. 5.—‡ Psa. vii. 16; Ezek. xvii. 19.—§ Proverbs xxv. 5.—|| Verse 12; 2 Chron. i. 1.

they had fled to him for protection; but suffered Shimei to take them away from his royal city. *Shimei arose and went to Gath to seek his servants*—In three years' time he thought Solomon might have forgotten his injunction, or he presumed he would not hold him strictly to it, especially since he did not go from Jerusalem for his pleasure, but to recover what he had lost, which he thought was pardonable, these servants being probably worth a great deal of money. "By seeking his servants," says Bishop Hall, "he lost himself. These earthly things either are, or should be, our servants. How commonly do we see men run out of the bounds set by God's laws, to hunt after them, till their souls incur a fearful judgment!"

Verses 43, 44. *Why hast thou not kept the oath of the Lord?*—He lay under the guilt of two crimes: of disobeying the king's express command, and violating his oath to God, which latter Solomon terms *the oath of the Lord*, because it was taken in the Lord's presence, and the Lord was called upon as a witness of it, and as the avenger of all such violations, and because the law of the Lord obliged him to the performance of it. *The wickedness which thy heart is privy to*—For which thine own conscience accuseth thee, and there is no need of other witnesses. *The Lord shall return*—God hath punished thee for thy former wickedness, by suffering thee to expose thyself to thy deserved death.

Verses 45, 46. *The throne of David*—To which Shimei had wished confusion; the royal power and dignity conferred upon him and his heirs. *Shall be established*—By the execution of such righteous

judgments as this. *Before the Lord for ever*—In the presence of that God who is both an observer and rewarder of all such righteous actions; or under his inspection, and by his blessing. *Which went out*—

Carrying Shimei along with him to the place of execution, which was to be in the king's presence. *The kingdom was established in the hand of Solomon*—His secret and worst enemies being taken out of the way.

CHAPTER III.

Solomon marries Pharaoh's daughter, 1. His religion, 2—4. His prayer for wisdom, and the answer, 5–15. He decides the dispute between the two harlots, 16–28.

A. M. 2990. B. C. 1014. **AND** ^a Solomon made affinity with Pharaoh king of Egypt, and took Pharaoh's daughter, and brought her into the ^b city of David, until he had made an end of building his ^c own house, and ^d the house of

the LORD, and ^e the wall of Jerusalem round about. A. M. 2990. B. C. 1014.

2 ¶ ^f Only the people sacrificed in high places, because there was no house built unto the name of the LORD, until those days.

^a Chap. vii. 8; ix. 24.—^b 2 Sam. v. 7.—^c Chap. vii. 1. ^d Chap. vi.

^e Chapter ix. 15, 19.—^f Lev. xvii. 3, 5; Deut. xii. 2, 4; Chap. xxii. 43.

NOTES ON CHAPTER III.

Verse 1. *Solomon made affinity with Pharaoh*—As being a powerful neighbour. *And took Pharaoh's daughter*—To wife, which was not unlawful, if she was first instructed in, and made a proselyte to, the Jewish religion, as, in all probability, she was. For Solomon was not yet fallen from God, but *loved the Lord, and walked in the statutes of David*, (verse 3,) and therefore would not have married a gross idolater, which would have been directly contrary to God's law, and most pernicious in its consequences. It is true he afterward *loved many strange women*, and the wives he married alienated his heart from Jehovah, and drew him in to worship strange gods: but the gods of the Egyptians are not reckoned among them, nor does it appear that Pharaoh's daughter was one of the wives whose example or conversation had such a pernicious influence. On the contrary, it is likely she was a worshipper of the true God, and that Solomon's taking her to wife was designed by God to be a type of Christ calling his church to himself and to the true religion, not only from among the Jews, but even out of the Gentile world. This, it is thought, plainly appears from the forty-fifth Psalm, and the book of Canticles. *And brought her into the city of David*—Into David's palace there. *Until he had made an end of building the house of the Lord*—The temple designed for the worship and honour of God. *And the wall of Jerusalem round about*—Which, though in some sort built by David, yet Solomon is here said to build, either because he made it higher and stronger, in which sense Nebuchadnezzar is said to have built Babylon, (Dan. iv. 30,) or because he built another wall besides the former, for after this time Jerusalem was encompassed with more walls than one.

Verse 2. *Only the people sacrificed in high places*—Which were groves, or other convenient places upon hills. In such places the patriarchs had been

went to offer up their worship, and sacrifices to God; and from them this custom was derived both to the Gentiles and the Jews; and in them the Gentiles sacrificed to idols, and the Hebrews to the true God. But this custom was expressly forbidden by God to his people, except in some extraordinary cases, and they were commanded to offer their sacrifices and other oblations only in the place which the Lord should choose, and where his tabernacle, altar, and ark should be, Lev. xvii. 3–5; Deut. xii. 10–14. It is, therefore, here mentioned as an exception to Solomon's integrity and glory, and the happiness of his reign, and as a blemish to his government, that he permitted and practised what was thus so expressly forbidden. Possibly he permitted it because he thought it better to allow of an error in a circumstance, than occasion a neglect of God's worship altogether, which he apprehended would follow upon a severe prohibition of that practice. For the people's hearts were generally and constantly set upon these high places, as appears from the following history; and they were not willing to submit to the trouble and charge which the bringing their sacrifices to one place would cause, nor, indeed, would they yield to it until the temple was built: and, as that was speedily to be done, Solomon seems to have thought it more advisable to delay enforcing obedience to God's law in this point for the present, than by force to drive them to it. These, however, and all other prudential considerations, ought to have given place to the will and wisdom of God. *Because there was no house built to the name of the Lord*—For his service, and to the honour, and praise, and glory of his name; that is, of his majesty, and all his perfections, which were to be adored and manifested there. But this reason for their sacrificing in high places was not sufficient; because there was a tabernacle, to which they were as much confined as they were afterward to the temple.

A. M. 2990. 3 And Solomon ^a loved the LORD,
B. C. 1014. ^b walking in the statutes of David his
father: only he sacrificed and burnt incense in
high places.

4 And ^c the king went to Gibeon to sacrifice
there; ^d for that was the great high place: a
thousand burnt-offerings did Solomon offer upon
that altar.

5 ¶ ^e In Gibeon the LORD appeared to Solo-
mon ^f in a dream by night: and God said,
Ask what I shall give thee.

6 ^g And Solomon said, Thou hast showed
unto thy servant David my father great ^h mer-
cy, according as he ⁱ walked before thee in
truth, and in righteousness, and in uprightness
of heart with thee; and thou hast kept for him

this great kindness, that thou ^j hast
given him a son to sit on his throne,
as it is this day.

7 And now, O LORD my God, thou hast made
thy servant king instead of David my father:
^k and I am but a little child: I know not how
^l to go out or come in.

8 And thy servant is in the midst of thy peo-
ple which thou ^m hast chosen, a great people,
ⁿ that cannot be numbered nor counted for mul-
titude.

9 ^o Give therefore thy servant an ^p un-
derstanding heart ^q to judge thy people, that
I may ^r discern between good and bad:
for who is able to judge this thy so great
a people?

^a Deut. vi. 5; xxx. 16, 20; Psa. xxxi. 23; Rom. viii. 28; 1 Cor. viii. 3.—^b Verses 6, 14.—^c 2 Chron. i. 3.—^d 1 Chron. xvi. 39; 2 Chron. i. 3.—^e Ch. ix. 2; 2 Chron. i. 7.—^f Num. xii. 6; Matt. i. 20; ii. 13, 19.—^g 2 Chr. i. 8, &c.—^h Or, bounty.

^o Chap. ii. 4; ix. 4; 2 Kings xx. 3; Psa. xv. 2.—^p Chap. i. 48. ^q 1 Chron. xxix. 1.—^r Num. xxvii. 17.—^s Deut. vii. 6. ^t Gen. xiii. 16; xv. 5.—^u 2 Chron. i. 10; Prov. ii. 3-9; James i. 5.—^v Heb. hearing.—^w Psa. xxvii. 1.—^x Heb. v. 14.

Verse 3. *And Solomon loved*—Or, *Yet he loved, the Lord*—Although he miscarried in the matter of high places, yet, in the general, his heart was right with God. *Walking in the statutes*—According to the statutes or commands of God, which are here called *the statutes of David*; not only because they were diligently practised by David, but also because the observation of them was so earnestly pressed upon Solomon, and fortified with David's authority and command.

Verse 4. *The king went to Gibeon*—Because the tabernacle was there, and the great brazen altar which Moses made. For after Shiloh was destroyed, they were carried to Nob; and the priests being there slain by Saul, they were removed to Gibeon, 2 Chron. i. 3-6. *That was the great high place*—The most eminent and frequented; and, possibly, was a high and raised ground. *A thousand burnt-offerings did Solomon offer*—This undoubtedly includes the peace-offerings which were killed and dressed for the entertainment of the guests who were invited to the sacrifices; for it can hardly be supposed that so many were wholly consumed on the altar at one time of sacrificing.

Verse 5. *The Lord appeared to Solomon in a dream*—As he had done to Jacob at Bethel, Gen. xxviii. 13; and to others on different occasions, Gen. xx. 3, and xxvi. 24. Sleep is like a state of death to the soul; wherein the senses are locked up, and the understanding and will deprived of the free exercise of their functions. And yet this is no impediment to God in communicating his will to mankind; for no doubt he has power, not only to awaken our intellectual faculties, but to advance them above their ordinary measure of perception, even while the body is asleep. Solomon had prayed the day before with great fervency, and desired of God the gift of wisdom: see Wisd. vii. 7. In the night-time God appeared unto him in a dream, and bade him ask

whatever he would. Solomon, having his mind still full of the desire of wisdom, asked and obtained it: so that the prayer or desire he uttered in his dream was but the consequence of the option he had made the day before, when he was awake. In a word, though we should allow that the soul of man, when the body is asleep, is in a state of rest and inactivity; yet we cannot but think that God can approach it many different ways; can move and actuate it just as he pleases; and, when he is inclined to make a discovery of any thing, can set such a lively representation of it before the understanding, as shall make a man not doubt of the reality of the vision. See Calmet and Dodd.

Verses 6-8. *According as he walked before thee in truth*—In the true worship of God, in the profession, belief, practice, and defence of the true religion. So *truth* here contains all duties to God, as *righteousness* doth his duties to men, and *uprightness* the right manner of performing both sorts of duties. *In uprightness of heart with thee*—That is, in thy judgment, to whom he appealed as the witness of his integrity. *I am but a child*—So he was in years: not above twenty years old, and withal (which he principally intends) he was raw and inexperienced as a child in state affairs. *How to go out, &c.*—To govern my people, and manage affairs. *Thy servant is in the midst of thy people*—Is set over them to rule and guide them. A metaphor from the overseer of divers workmen, who usually is in the midst of them, that he may the better observe how each of them discharges his office. *Which thou hast chosen*—Thy peculiar people, whom thou takest special care of, and therefore wilt expect a more punctual account of my government of them.

Verse 9. *Give to thy servant an understanding heart*—Whereby I may both clearly discern, and faithfully perform all the parts of my duty: for

A. M. 2970. **10** And the speech pleased the
B. C. 1014. **LORD**, that Solomon had asked this
thing.

11 And God said unto him, Because thou hast asked this thing, and hast ² not asked for thyself ³ long life ; neither hast asked riches for thyself, nor hast asked the life of thine enemies : but hast asked for thyself understanding ⁴ to discern judgment ;

12 ^a Behold, I have done according to thy word : ^b lo, I have given thee a wise and an understanding heart ; so that there was none like thee before thee, neither after thee shall any arise like unto thee.

^a James iv. 3.—^b Hebrew, many days.—^c Hebrew, to hear.
^a 1 John v. 14, 15.—^b Ch. iv. 29, 30, 31 ; v. 12 ; x. 24 ; Eccles. i. 16.—^c Matt. vi. 33 ; Eph. iii. 20.—^d Chap. iv. 21, 24 ;

both these are spoken of in Scripture as the effects of a good understanding ; and he that lives in the neglect of his duties, or the practice of wickedness, is called a *fool*, and one *void of understanding*. *To judge thy people*—Or govern, as that word is often used. *That I may discern between good and bad*—Namely, in causes and controversies among thy people ; that I may not, through mistake, or prejudice, or passion, give wrong sentences, and call *evil good*, or *good evil*. Absalom, that was a fool, wished himself a judge : Solomon, that was a wise man, trembles at the undertaking. The more knowing and considerate men are, the more jealous they are of themselves.

Verse 10. *The speech pleased the Lord*—For it manifested a disinterested mind and a public spirit, that desired, above all things, the honour of God and the good of his people, and to direct his conduct aright and to do justice.

Verses 11, 12. *Nor hast asked the life of thine enemies*—That God would take away their lives, or put it into his power to destroy them. *Behold I have done according to thy word*—I have granted, and do at this present grant thy desire. And accordingly at this time God did infuse into him a far higher degree of wisdom than he had before possessed ; and that not only to govern his people, and to know and do the several duties which he owed to God and them, but also the knowledge of divers arts and sciences, and of things human and divine, as appears from chap. iv. 29–34 ; and that in a far greater measure and proportion, than with the best natural understanding he could have attained by the most diligent study, if he had been employed therein from a child. *So that there was none like thee before thee*—Either no king, or rather no man. For in these respects he is preferred, (chap. iv. 31,) not only before all kings, but before all men. No mere man, it appears, since the fall of Adam, ever equalled him in universal knowledge, especially in the art of well governing his people. But, it may be asked, did not the apostles excel him ? Not in natural

13 And I have also ^c given thee that ^d rich-
A. M. 2990. which thou hast not asked, both ^d rich-
B. C. 1014. es and honour : so that there ^e shall not be any among the kings like unto thee all thy days.

14 And if thou wilt walk in my ways, to keep my statutes and my commandments, ^e as thy father David did walk, then I will ^f lengthen thy days.

15 And Solomon ^g awoke ; and behold, *it was a dream*. And he came to Jerusalem, and stood before the ark of the covenant of the **LORD**, and offered up burnt-offerings, and offered peace-offerings, and ^h made a feast to all his servants.

x. 23, 25, &c. ; Prov. iii. 16.—^a Or, hath not been.—^b Chap. xv. 5.—^c Psa. xci. 16 ; Prov. iii. 2.—^d Gen. xli. 7.—^e Gen. xl. 20 ; Chap. viii. 65 ; Esth. i. 3 ; Dan. v. 1 ; Mark. vi. 21.

and political knowledge, but only in the knowledge of the mysteries of faith, which were more freely and more fully imparted in these latter times ; the ignorance whereof was no disparagement to Solomon's wisdom, because they were not discoverable by any creature without that divine revelation which God saw fit not to afford in Solomon's time.

Verses 13, 14. *I have given thee that which thou hast not asked*—Or rather, *I will give thee*, as it is expressed in the parallel place, 2 Chron. i. 12 ; I will as certainly give them as if I had already actually done it. For future things, which God is engaged to bring to pass, or foresees will take place, are often expressed in Scripture in the past time. *So that there shall not be any among the kings*—The succeeding kings of Israel, of whom he speaks. *Or, hath not been*, as it is in the Hebrew : and so it may be true of all the kings that then were or had been in the world, whereof none were like him in the things here mentioned, namely, riches and honour, or renown, as well as wisdom. *All thy days*—Whereby he signifies that these gifts of God were not transient, as they were in Saul, but such as should abide with him while he lived. *And if thou wilt walk in my ways*—This caution God gives him lest his great wisdom should make him proud, or careless, or presumptuous, as if he were out of all danger ; and to oblige him to more care and circumspection, to avoid the snares and mischiefs to which so much prosperity and glory would probably expose him ; and withal to justify himself, in case he should afterward alter the course of his providence toward Solomon.

Verse 15. *Behold, it was a dream*—He perceived that it was a dream ; not a vain dream, such as those wherewith men are commonly deluded, but a divine dream, assuring him of the things promised, which he knew, by a divine impression, after he was awaked, and by the vast alteration which he presently found within himself in point of wisdom and knowledge. *And stood before the ark*—Which was there in the city of David, (2 Sam. vi. 17,) before

A. M. 2990.
B. C. 1014.

16 ¶ Then came there two women, *that were* harlots, unto the king, and ⁱ stood before him.

17 And the one woman said, O my lord, I and this woman dwell in one house; and I was delivered of a child with her in the house.

18 And it came to pass the third day after that I was delivered, that this woman was delivered also: and we *were* together; *there was* no stranger with us in the house, save we two in the house.

19 And this woman's child died in the night; because she overlaid it.

20 And she arose at midnight, and took my son from beside me, while thy handmaid slept, and laid it in her bosom, and laid her dead child in my bosom.

21 And when I arose in the morning to give my child suck, behold, it was dead: but when I had considered it in the morning, behold,

ⁱ Num. xxvii. 2.—¹ Gen. xliii. 30; Isa. xlix. 15;

which he presented himself in a way of holy adoration. *And offered up burnt-offerings*—Chiefly for the expiation of his and his people's sin, through the blood of Christ, manifestly signified in these sacrifices. *And peace-offerings*—Solemnly to praise God for all his mercies, and especially for giving him quiet possession of the kingdom, and for his glorious appearance to him in the dream, and for the promise therein made to him, and the actual accomplishment of it.

Verse 16. *Two women that were harlots*—Or, *rictuallers*; for the Hebrew word signifies both. Yet that they were unmarried persons seems probable, both because there is no mention of any husbands, whose office it was, if there were any such, to contest for their wives; and because they lived a solitary life in one house. *Unto the king*—Probably they had presented their cause to the inferior courts, and as they could not determine it, they now bring it to the king as the supreme magistrate, and famous for wisdom. *And stood there before him*—Desiring and expecting his sentence in the case.

Verses 18–22. *On the third day—this woman was delivered also*—So that the children could not be distinguished by their age. *No stranger was with us in the house*—Therefore there was no witness on either side; and although there might be some difference distinguishable by an exact observer between the features of the two children, yet it is not probable that was much attended to by the neighbours who might be present to assist either or both of them in their labour; as they were persons, it seems, of suspected fame. And the testimonies of the women were of equal credit, that is, of no credit at all. *Because she overlaid it*—And so anothered it: which she justly conjectures, be-

it was not my son which I did ^{A. M. 2990} bear. ^{B. C. 1014}

22 And the other woman said, Nay; but the living *is* my son, and the dead *is* thy son. And this said, No; but the dead *is* thy son, and the living *is* my son. Thus they spake before the king.

23 Then said the king, The one saith, This *is* my son that liveth, and thy son *is* the dead; and the other saith, Nay; but thy son *is* the dead, and my son *is* the living.

24 And the king said, Bring me a sword. And they brought a sword before the king.

25 And the king said, Divide the living child in two, and give half to the one, and half to the other.

26 Then spake the woman whose the living child *was* unto the king, for ^kher bowels ⁶yearned upon her son, and she said, O my lord, give her the living child, and in no wise

Jer. xxxi. 20; Hos. xi. 8.—⁶ Heb. *were hot*.

cause there were evidences of that kind of death, but no appearance of any other cause thereof. *Thus they spake before the king*—Both peremptorily and vehemently affirmed the same thing; oft repeating the same words.

Verse 25. *The king said*—With seeming sincerity, though with a design far above the reach of the two women, or of the people present, who probably with horror expected the execution of his sentence. "Solomon knew at once that the only sign whereby to discover the true mother, would be her affection, and compassionate tenderness for her child; and therefore, in order to distinguish between the two, his business was to make trial of this. And if we suppose that, when he commanded the child to be divided, he spake with a sedate countenance and seeming earnestness, as the true mother's petition to the king makes it apparent that he did; then we may suppose further, not only the two women, but all the people present, with dread and admiration expecting the execution of the thing; which when it ended in so just a decision, quite contrary to what they looked for, raised joy in every breast, and gave a more advantageous commendation to the judge. And yet Abarbanel, the Jewish commentator, thinks that all this was no great proof of Solomon's extraordinary wisdom, nor could it beget that fear or reverence which the text (says verse 28) it procured to his person. His opinion, therefore, is, that Solomon made a discovery of the truth antecedent to this experiment: that by observing the countenance, the manner of speech, and all the motions of the women, he discerned the secret of their hearts, and penetrated to the bottom of the business; and that his commanding the child to be divided afterward was only to

A. M. 2990. B. C. 1014. lay it. But the other said, Let it be neither mine nor thine, *but* divide it.

27 Then the king answered and said, Give her the living child, and in no wise slay it: she is the mother thereof.

¹ Verses 9, 11.

notify to the company what he before had discovered." See Patrick and Calmet.

Verses 27, 28. *She is the mother*—As is evident from her natural affection to the child, which she

28 And all Israel heard of the judgment which the king had judged; and they feared the king: for they saw that the ¹ wisdom of God *was* ² in him, to do judgment.

² Heb. in the midst of him.

had rather have given away from her than destroyed. *Wisdom of God*—Divine wisdom, with which God had inspired him for the government of his people.

CHAPTER IV.

Solomon's ministers of state, 1-6. The purveyors of his household, 7-19. The number of his subjects, and extent of his kingdom, 20, 21. The provision for his table, 22, 23. The peace of his subjects, 24, 25. His stables, 26-28. His wisdom, 29-34.

A. M. 2990. B. C. 1014. **SO** King Solomon was king over all Israel.

2 And these *were* the princes which he had: Azariah the son of Zadok the ¹ priest;

3 Elihoreph and Ahiah, the sons of Shisha, ² scribes; ³ Jehoshaphat the son of Ahilud, the ³ recorder.

4 And ^b Benaiah the son of Jehoiada *was*

¹ Or, the chief officer.—² Or, secretaries.—³ 2 Sam. viii. 16; xx. 24.—³ Or, remembrancer.—^b Chap. ii. 35.—^c Ch. ii. 27.

NOTES ON CHAPTER IV.

Verse 1. *Over all Israel*—Reigned over all the tribes, and with the full consent of them all. This is spoken with respect to his successors, who were kings only over a part, and that the smallest part of Israel. Or in reference to the times of division and rebellion under David, when part only went after David, and part after Ish-bosheth, Absalom, Sheba, or Adonijah.

Verse 2. *These were the princes which he had*—The principal officers employed under him. *Azariah the son*—Or the grandson; of *Zadok*—1 Chron. vi. 8, 9. *The priest*—The second priest, or the priest that attended upon Solomon's person in holy offices and administrations. Or, as the Hebrew word here rendered *priest* may be, and is often, translated *prince*, in Scripture, this Azariah might be the highest officer of the state, next to the king; or the chief minister of state, by whom the great affairs of the kingdom were managed and prepared for the king's consideration.

Verses 3, 4. *Scribes*—That is, secretaries of state. He chose two, whereas David had but one, either because he observed some inconveniences in trusting all the important matters of his government in one hand; or because he had now more employment than David had, this being a time of great peace

over the host: and Zadok and ^o Abiathar *were* the priests: A. M. 2990. B. C. 1014.

5 And Azariah the son of Nathan *was* over ^d the officers: and Zabud the son of Nathan *was* ^e principal officer, and ^f the king's friend:

6 And Ahishar *was* over the household: and ^g Adoniram the son of Abda *was* over the ⁴ tribute.

^d Ver. 7.—^e 2 Sam. viii. 18; xx. 26.—^f 2 Sam. xv. 37; xvi. 16; 1 Chron. xxvii. 33.—^g Chap. v. 14.—⁴ Or, levy.

and prosperity, and his empire being enlarged, and his correspondences with foreign princes more frequent. *Zadok and Abiathar were the priests*—That is, the *high-priests*, namely, successively, first Abiathar, and then Zadok.

Verses 5, 6. *The son of Nathan was over the officers*—Over those twelve officers named verse 7, &c., who were all to give up their accounts to him. The Hebrew word, נִסְבִּים *nitsabim*, here, and verse 7, rendered officers, signifies any governors, or commanders of the higher sort. See 2 Chron. viii. 10. *Zabud the son of Nathan*—The prophet, who had been so highly instrumental in establishing Solomon on the throne; *was principal officer*—Possibly president of the king's council. The Hebrew word is כֹּהֵן, *cohen*, which, verse 2, and generally, is rendered *priest*, although, as we have observed there, it may also be translated *prince*. *And the king's friend*—His confidant, with whom he used to communicate his most secret counsels. *Ahishar was over the household*—Steward of the king's house. *Over the tribute*—The personal tribute, or levy of men, as appears by comparing this with chap. v. 13, 14; it being very fit that there should be some one person to whom the chief conduct or inspection of that great business should be committed.

A. M. 2990. 7 ¶ And Solomon had twelve officers over all Israel, which provided victuals for the king and his household: each man his month in a year made provision.

8 And these are their names: ⁵The son of Hur, in mount Ephraim:

9 ⁶The son of Dekar, in Makaz, and in Shaalvim, and Beth-shemesh, and Elonbeth-hanan:

10 ⁷The son of Hessed, in Aruboth; to him pertained Sochoh, and all the land of Hopher:

11 ⁸The son of Abinadab, in all the region of Dor; which had Taphath the daughter of Solomon to wife:

12 Baanah the son of Abilud; to him pertained Taanach and Megiddo, and all Beth-shean, which is by Zartanah beneath Jezreel, from Beth-shean to Abel-meholah, even unto the place that is beyond Jokneam:

13 ⁹The son of Geber, in Ramoth-gilead; to him pertained ^b the towns of Jair the son of Manasseh, which are in Gilead; to him also pertained ⁱ the region of Argob, which is in

⁵ Or, *Benhur*.—⁶ Or, *Bendekar*.—⁷ Or, *Benhessed*.—⁸ Or, *Benbinadab*.—⁹ Or, *Bengeber*.—^b Num. xxxii. 41.—ⁱ Deut. xi. 4.—¹⁰ Or, to *Mahanaim*.

Verses 8-10. *The son of Hur*—This person and others of them are denominated from their fathers, because they were known and famous in their generation. *In mount Ephraim*—And the territory belonging to it, which must be understood also of the rest of the places mentioned in the following verses. *Elonbeth-hanan*—Or, *Elon, the house, or dwelling-place of Hanan*. For Hanan may be a man's name, and this place may be thus distinguished from other *Elons*. Or, as the word *Elon* signifies a plain, the meaning may be, *the plain of Beth-hanan*. *Sochoh*—There were two places of this name, but near each other, Josh. xv. 35-38. *Hopher*—In Judah, 1 Chron. iv. 6.

Verses 11-13. *The region of Dor*—In Manasseh, where also were Taanach, Megiddo, and Beth-shean. *Who had the daughter of Solomon to wife*—Solomon had no daughters marriageable when these officers were appointed; but in process of time, this man and Ahimaaz, mentioned verse 15, had behaved themselves so well in their offices, that Solomon did them the honour to give them two of his daughters to wife. *In Ramoth-gilead*—That is, Ramoth in the land of Gilead, Deut. iv. 43; so called, to distinguish it from Ramoth in Issachar, 1 Chron. vi. 73. *The towns of Jair*—In Manasseh beyond Jordan, Num. xxxii. 41. *With walls and brazen bars*—This is added by way of distinction from those towns of Jair mentioned before. For, being beyond Jordan, they were liable to the attempts of their enemies.

Bashan, threescore great cities with walls and brazen bars: A. M. 2990. B. C. 1014.

14 Ahinadab the son of Iddo had ¹⁰ Mahanaim:

15 Ahimaaz was in Naphtali; he also took Basmath the daughter of Solomon to wife:

16 Baanah the son of Hushai was in Asher and in Aloth:

17 Jehoshaphat the son of Paruah, in Issachar:

18 Shimei the son of Elah, in Benjamin.

19 Geber the son of Uri was in the country of Gilead, in ^k the country of Sihon king of the Amorites, and of Og king of Bashan; and he was the only officer which was in the land.

20 ¶ Judah and Israel were many, ^l as the sand which is by the sea in multitude, ^m eating and drinking, and making merry.

21 And ⁿ Solomon reigned over all kingdoms from ^o the river unto the land of the Philistines, and unto the border of Egypt: ^p they brought presents, and served Solomon all the days of his life.

^k Deut. iii. 8.—^l Gen. xxii. 17; Chap. iii. 8; Prov. xiv. 28. ^m Psa. lxxii. 3, 7; Mic. iv. 4.—ⁿ 2 Chron. ix. 26; Psa. lxxii. 8. ^o Gen. xv. 18; Josh. i. 4.—^p Psa. lxxiii. 29; lxxii. 10.

Verses 14-18. *The son of Iddo had Mahanaim*—The city and territory of Mahanaim, Gen. xxxii. 2; Josh. xiii. 26. If this district seem of less extent than the rest, it must be observed, these portions were distributed into larger or lesser parts, according to their barrenness or fertility; and this seems to have been a very fruitful place, 2 Sam. xvii. 27. *Shimei, the son of Elah*—This is added to distinguish him from the Shimei who cursed and insulted David.

Verse 19. *In the country of Gilead*—That is, in the remaining part of that land of Gilead which was mentioned above. *The only officer in the land*—Or rather, *in that land*; namely, in all Gilead, excepting the parcels mentioned before, the only one in all the territories of Sihon and Og. These were of large extent, and yet all committed to this one man, which is here noticed as a peculiar privilege which he had above the other officers, whose jurisdictions were of narrower extent.

Verse 20. *As the sand which is on the sea-shore*—An hyperbolical expression to signify a vast number. *Eating and drinking, &c.*—In perfect security, and highly satisfied. *Jeshurun now began to wax fat*, as Moses foresaw would be the case, and soon kicked; soon forsook God who made him, and lightly esteemed the rock of his salvation, Deut. xxxii. 15. This even Solomon himself did. What individual, or what nation, can bear continual prosperity and plenty?

Verse 21. *From the river*—Euphrates; for so far David, having conquered the Syrians, extended his

A. M. 2990. 22 ¶ And Solomon's ¹¹ provision
B. C. 1014. for one day was thirty ¹² measures of
fine flour, and threescore measures of meal,

23 Ten fat oxen, and twenty oxen out of the
pastures, and a hundred sheep, besides harts,
and roe-bucks, and fallow-deer, and fatted fowl.

24 For he had dominion over all *the region*
on this side the river, from Tiphseh even to
Azzah, over ⁹ all the kings on this side the
river: and ^r he had peace on all sides round
about him.

25 And Judah and Israel ⁸ dwelt ¹³ safely,
⁷ every man under his vine and under his fig-

¹¹ Heb. *bread*.—¹² Heb. *cors*.—⁹ Psa. lxxii. 11.—^r 1 Chr. xxii. 9.—Jer. xxiii. 6.—¹³ Heb. *confidently*.—⁷ Mic. iv. 4; Zech. iii. 10.

empire, which Solomon also maintained in that extent. And so God's promise concerning the giving the whole land, as far as Euphrates, to the Israelites, was fulfilled. And if the Israelites had multiplied so much that the land of Canaan would not have sufficed them, having God's grant of all the land as far as Euphrates, they might have seized upon it whensoever occasion required. *The land of the Philistines*—Which is to be understood inclusively; for the Philistines were within Solomon's dominion. *The border of Egypt*—Unto the river Sihor, which was the border between Egypt and Canaan. *And served*—By tribute, or other ways, as he needed and required.

Verses 22, 23. *Thirty measures of fine flour*—Hebrew, *cors*; each of which contained ten ephahs. So this provision was sufficient for near three thousand persons. *Meal*—Of a coarser sort for common use. *Ten fat oxen*—Fatted in stalls. *Out of pastures*—Well fleshed, tender, and good, though not so fat as the former.

Verse 24. *From Tiphseh even to Azzah*—Either that Tiphseh (2 Kings xv. 16) which was in the kingdom of Israel within Jordan; or, rather, another place of that name upon the Euphrates, even that eminent city which is mentioned by Ptolemy, and Strabo, and Pliny, called Thapsarum. And this best agrees with the following Azzah, which was the border of Canaan in the south and west, as Tiphseh was in the north and east. And so his dominion is described by both its borders. *Over all kings*—Who owned subjection, and payed tribute to him.

Verse 25. *Under his vine*—Enjoying the fruit of his own labour with safety and comfort. Under these two trees, which were most used and cultivated by the Israelites, he understands all other fruit-bearing trees, and all other comforts. And they are brought in as sitting or *dwelling under* these trees, partly for recreation or delight in the shade, and partly for the comfort or advantage of the fruit; and withal, to signify their great security, not only in their strong cities, but even in the country, where the vines and fig-trees

tree, ⁸ from Dan even to Beer-sheba, A. M. 2990.
all the days of Solomon. B. C. 1014.

26 ¶ And ² Solomon had forty thousand stalls
of ⁷ horses for his chariots, and twelve thousand
horsemen.

27 And ² those officers provided victual for
King Solomon, and for all that came unto King
Solomon's table, every man in his month: they
lacked nothing.

28 Barley also and straw for the horses and
¹⁴ dromedaries brought they unto the place
where *the officers* were, every man according
to his charge.

² Judg. xx. 1.—² Chap. x. 26; 2 Chron. i. 14; ix. 25.
⁷ Deut. xvii. 16.—² Verse 7.—¹⁴ Or, *mules, or, swift beasts*
Esth. viii. 14; Mic. i. 13.

grew, which was most open to the incursions of
their enemies.

Verse 26. *Solomon had forty thousand stalls of horses for chariots*—In 2 Chron. ix. 25, it is said, he had but *four thousand*. And Bochart thinks that the Hebrew word here used should be rendered *four*, not *forty*, or that some error has crept into the text in regard to the number here mentioned. It is justly observed, however, by Poole, that the Hebrew word translated *stalls* here, is not exactly the same word which is used, and so translated, in Chronicles; and that, therefore, there may well be allowed some difference in the signification; the one signifying, properly, *stables*; of such there were four thousand; the other *stalls*, or *partitions* for each horse, which were forty thousand. *For his chariots*—Both for his military chariots, which seem to be those fourteen hundred, chap. x. 26, and for divers other uses, as respecting his great and various buildings, and merchandises, and other occasions, which might require some thousands of other chariots. *And twelve thousand horsemen*—Appointed partly for the defence of his people in peace, and partly for attendance upon his person, and for the splendour of his government.

Verses 27, 28. *Those officers*—Named above, verse 7. *They lacked nothing*—Or, rather, *they suffered nothing to be lacking* to any man that came to Solomon's table, but plentifully provided all things necessary. This is repeated to show their diligence, exactness, and care, which was remarkable; especially since they took care of his stables as well as of his house, as it follows in the next verse. *Barley also and straw*—Barley was anciently horse-corn, as appears by many places in Homer. *For the horses and dromedaries*—The Hebrew word, *rechesh*, signifies swift horses, as Abarbanel thinks; see Esther viii. 14; but others take them for mules. *Where the officers were*—Or, rather, *Where the beasts were*; for there is no word for officers in the Hebrew. *Every man according to his charge*—Which lasted for a month every year.

A. M. 2900. B. C. 1014. 29 ¶ And ^a God gave Solomon wisdom and understanding exceeding much, and largeness of heart, even as the sand that is on the sea-shore.

30 And Solomon's wisdom excelled the wisdom of all the children ^b of the east country, and all ^c the wisdom of Egypt.

31 For he was ^d wiser than all men; ^e than Ethan the Ezrahite, ^f and Heman, and Chalcol, and Darda, the sons of Mahol: and his fame was in all nations round about.

^a Chap. iii. 12.—^b Gen. xxv. 6.—^c Acts vii. 22.—^d Chap. iii. 12.—^e 1 Chron. xv. 19; Psa. lxxxix., title.—^f 1 Chron. ii.

Verses 29, 30. *God gave Solomon wisdom and understanding exceeding much*—Knowledge of a great variety of things, and prudence in the administration of the government. *And largeness of heart*—Vastness of understanding, or a very comprehensive mind, capable of receiving the knowledge of all things, both divine and human. *As the sand that is on the sea-shore*—As the sand there encloses a vast body of waters, so his mind contained an ocean of knowledge, as the Lord Bacon somewhere speaks. *The wisdom of all the children of the east country*—The Chaldeans, Persians, and Arabians, who all lay eastward from Canaan, and were famous in ancient times for their wisdom and learning, the Arabians especially, as appears from the book of Job. And, in after ages, Porphyry reports that Pythagoras travelled into this country to improve himself in learning. *And all the wisdom of Egypt*—Which country was celebrated for wisdom in Moses's time, as appears from Acts vii. 22; and, in after times, Macrobius calls Egypt the mother of arts. Indeed, such was their skill in arts and sciences, that they despised the Greeks as children in knowledge.

Verse 31. *He was wiser than all men*—Either of his nation, or of his time: or, of all times and nations, whether of the East, or any other country, excepting only the first and second Adam. *Ethan, &c.*—Israelites of eminent wisdom, probably the same mentioned 1 Chron. ii. 6; xv. 19; xxv. 4; Psalm lxxxviii., title, and lxxxix., title. *Chalcol, &c.*—Of whom see 1 Chron. ii. 6.

Verses 32, 33. *He spake three thousand proverbs*

A. M. 2900. B. C. 1014. 32 And ^a he spake three thousand proverbs: and his ^b songs were a thousand and five.

33 And he spake of trees, from the cedar-tree that is in Lebanon, even unto the hyssop that springeth out of the wall: he spake also of beasts, and of fowl, and of creeping things, and of fishes.

34 And ^c there came of all people to hear the wisdom of Solomon, from all kings of the earth, which had heard of his wisdom.

6; vi. 33; xv. 19; Psa. lxxxviii., title.—^a Prov. i. 1; Eccles. xii. 9.—^b Cant. i. 1.—^c Chap. x. 1; 2 Chron. ix. 1, 23.

—That is, short, deep, and useful sentences, whereof a great part are contained in the books of Proverbs and Ecclesiastes. *Songs*—Whereof the most divine and chief are in the Canticles. *And he spake of trees*—That is, of all plants, of their nature and qualities. *From the cedar-tree unto the hyssop*—From the greatest to the least. *That springeth out of the wall*—Dr. Waterland renders the original here, *Hyssop that runneth out to the wall*: the wall of Jerusalem may be meant, which was encompassed with mountains that produced abundance of hyssop. *He spake also of beasts and of fowl, &c.*—This shows the vastness of his knowledge, which comprehended the history of animals as well as of plants, whose nature and qualities he also understood. All these discourses of Solomon are lost, without any impeachment of the perfection of the Holy Scriptures; which were not written to teach men philosophy or physic, but only to make them wise unto salvation.

Verse 34. *From all kings of the earth*—All the neighbouring kings; a restriction grounded upon the following words, where this is limited to such as heard of Solomon's wisdom. Let those who magnify the modern learning above that of the ancients, produce such a treasury of learning, anywhere in these later ages, as that was which Solomon was master of. Yet this puts an honour upon human learning, that Solomon is praised for it, and recommends it to the great ones of the earth, as well worthy their diligent search. In all this Solomon was a type of Christ, in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.

CHAPTER V.

Hiram congratulates Solomon on his accession, and agrees to furnish him with workmen and timber for the temple, 1-9. The work is well done, and the workmen paid, 10-18.

A. M. 2990. B. C. 1014. **AND** ^aHiram king of Tyre sent his servants unto Solomon; for he had heard that they had anointed him king in the room of his father: ^bfor Hiram was ever a lover of David.

2 And ^cSolomon sent to Hiram, saying,

3 Thou knowest how that David my father could not build a house unto the name of the LORD his God, ^dfor the wars which were about him on every side, until the LORD put them under the soles of his feet.

4 But now the LORD my God hath given me ^erest on every side, so that there is neither adversary nor evil occurrent.

5 ^fAnd behold, I ^gpurpose to build a house unto the name of the LORD my God, ^has the LORD spake unto David my father, saying, Thy son whom I will set upon thy throne in thy room, he shall build a house unto my name.

6 Now therefore command thou, that they hew me ⁱcedar-trees out of Lebanon; and my

^a Verses 10, 18; 2 Chron. ii. 3, *Hiram*.—^b 2 Sam. v. 11; 1 Chron. xiv. 1; Amos i. 9.—^c 2 Chron. ii. 3.—^d 1 Chron. xxiii. 8; xxviii. 3.—^e Chap. iv. 24; 2 Chron. xxii. 9.—^f 2 Chron. ii. 4.

NOTES ON CHAPTER V.

Verse 1. *Hiram sent his servants unto Solomon*—Namely, as soon as he heard of his succession in the throne, as the following words show, he sent to congratulate him, as the manner of princes is. *For Hiram was ever a lover of David*—And therefore was desirous to continue in friendship with his son. This Hiram was probably the son of him who sent David timber and artificers to build his palace. Josephus assures us, that in his time, the letters which passed between him and Solomon were preserved in the archives of Tyre.

Verses 3-5. *A house unto the name of the Lord*—For his worship and service. *For the wars which were about him on every side*—Which diverted his cares and thoughts to other things, and occasioned God's denying him the honour of that work. *Until the Lord put them under the soles of his feet*—That is, made them subject to him, that he could trample upon them at his pleasure. Compare Psa. viii. 6; 1 Cor. xv. 27. *I purpose to build a house unto the name of the Lord*—That shall be called by his name, namely, the house of Jehovah; and be appropriated to his honour and glory.

Verse 6. *Now therefore command thou, that they*—That is, thy servants, who are skilful in such work; *hew me cedar-trees*—Which, for their soundness, and strength, and fragrancy, and durability, were most proper for his design. Of these David had procured some, but not a sufficient number. *Out of Lebanon*—Which was in Solomon's

servants shall be with thy servants: A. M. 2990. B. C. 1014. and unto thee will I give hire for thy

servants according to all that thou shalt ²appoint: for thou knowest that *there is* not among us any that can skill to hew timber like unto the Sidonians.

7 ¶ And it came to pass, when Hiram heard the words of Solomon, that he rejoiced greatly, and said, Blessed *be* the LORD this day, which hath given unto David a wise son over this great people.

8 And Hiram sent to Solomon, saying, I have ³considered the things which thou sentest to me for: *and* I will do all thy desire concerning timber of cedar, and concerning timber of fir.

9 My servants shall bring *them* down from Lebanon unto the sea: ⁴and I will convey them by sea in floats unto the place that thou shalt ⁵appoint me, and will cause them to be discharged there, and thou shalt receive *them*: and thou shalt accomplish my desire, ⁶in giving food for my household.

¹ Heb. *say*.—² 2 Sam. vii. 13; 1 Chron. xvii. 12; xxii. 10. ³ 2 Chron. ii. 8, 10.—⁴ Hebrew, *say*.—⁵ Hebrew, *heard*. ⁶ 2 Chron. ii. 16.—⁷ Heb. *send*.—⁸ Ezra iii. 7; Ezek. xxvii. 17; Acts xii. 20.

jurisdiction; and therefore he doth not desire that Hiram would *give* him the cedars, because they were his own already, but only that his servants might hew them for him, which the ingenious Tyrians well understood. *My servants shall be with thy servants*—Either to be employed as they shall direct, or to receive the cedars from their hands, and transmit them to me. *And unto thee will I give hire for thy servants*—Pay them for their labour and art. *Sidonians*—Or Tyrians; for these places and people, being near each other, are promiscuously used one for another. This assistance, which these Gentiles gave to the building of Solomon's temple, was a type of the calling of the Gentiles, and that they should be instrumental in building and constituting Christ's spiritual temple.

Verses 7, 8. *He rejoiced greatly*—Being a faithful friend to David and his house; and though it is not probable he was a sincere proselyte, yet he had received much information concerning the nature and excellence of the God of Israel, and had honourable thoughts of him. *And Hiram sent to Solomon*—A letter, 2 Chron. ii. 11. *Timber of fir*—The word which we translate *fir*, others think signifies *pine*, or *cypress*; but their conjecture is the most reasonable, who think it was a kind of cedar, and therefore comprehended under that name, verse 6, where Solomon desires of him only that his servants might hew him cedar-trees.

Verse 9. *From Lebanon unto the sea*—The Mediterranean sea, on which his city stood. *I will con-*

A. M. 2990. 10 ¶ So Hiram gave Solomon cedar-
B. C. 1014. trees and fir-trees according to all his
desire.

11 ¹ And Solomon gave Hiram twenty thousand ² measures of wheat for food to his household, and twenty measures of pure oil: thus gave Solomon to Hiram year by year.

12 And the LORD gave Solomon wisdom, ³ as he promised him: and there was peace between Hiram and Solomon; and they two made a league together.

13 ¶ And King Solomon raised a ⁴ levy out of

¹ 2 Chron. ii. 10. — ² Heb. *cors*. — ³ Chap. iii. 12. — ⁴ Heb.

vey them—in floats—Or rafts. It is thought the pieces of timber were tied together in the water, as now is usual, and so, by the help of boats or ships, conveyed to the appointed place, which was at no great distance. *Unto the place thou shalt appoint me—*Which was Joppa, a famous seaport in the country of Israel, 2 Chron. ii. 16. *Will cause them to be discharged there—*Hebrew, *dispersed*, or *dissolved*; which implies that they were tied together. *In giving food for my household—*My family and court; which, most properly, is called his household. Though they had plenty of money, being great merchants, yet they wanted corn and other provisions: and in after times, it appears, they were supported by provisions from Judea, Acts xii. 20.

Verses 10, 11. *So Hiram gave Solomon cedar-trees—*That is, he agreed to give him all that he desired; but the trees were not yet cut down and prepared. *Twenty thousand measures of wheat—*Each measure spoken of here is supposed to contain six hundred and forty-eight pounds weight, so that the weight of the wheat yearly given to Hiram was two millions one hundred and sixty thousand pounds. *Twenty measures of pure oil—*In the parallel place, 2 Chron. ii. 10, it is twenty thousand baths of oil, which has the sanction of many of the versions, and seems the most probable reading in this place; and so in verse 16, instead of *three hundred*, it is *six hundred* in the Chronicles; a variation which it is not easy to reconcile without supposing an error, most probably in this place, as the *Septuagint* give their authority to the reading in the Chronicles. But it is thought by some that the place in Chronicles speaks of what was given to the workmen, who had other things, there mentioned, besides, to support them in their labour; but that this place speaks of what was given for the use of Hiram's family. *Thus gave Solomon to Hiram year by year—*Either for sustenance to the workmen during the years wherein they were employed in cutting down or hewing of timber, or for the yearly support of the king's house during the said time. Thus, by the wise disposal of Providence, one country has need of another, and is benefited by an-

all Israel; and the levy was thirty thousand men. A. M. 2990. B. C. 1014.

14 And he sent them to Lebanon ten thousand a month by courses; a month they were in Lebanon, and two months at home. And ⁵ Adoniram was over the levy.

15 ⁶ And Solomon had threescore and ten thousand that bare burdens, and fourscore thousand hewers in the mountains;

16 Besides the chief of Solomon's officers which were over the work, three thousand and three hundred, which ruled over the people that wrought in the work.

tribute of men. — ⁵ Chap. iv. 6. — ⁶ Chap. ix. 21; 2 Chr. ii. 17.

other, that there may be a mutual correspondence and dependance, to the glory of God our common parent.

Verse 13. *Solomon raised a levy—*Which were to be employed in the most honourable and easy parts of the work relating to the temple, in the manner expressed verse 14; and these were Israelites; but those one hundred and fifty thousand mentioned verse 15 were strangers. If it seem strange that so many thousands should be employed about so small a building as the temple was, it must be considered, 1st, That the temple, all its parts being considered, was far larger than men imagine: 2d, That it is probable they were employed by turns, as the thirty thousand were, (verse 13,) else they had been oppressed with hard and uninterrupted labours: 3d, That the timber and stone hewed and carried by them were designed, not only for the temple, but also for Solomon's own houses and buildings; because we read of no other levy of men, nor of any care and pains taken, after the building of the temple, for the procurement or preparation of materials for his own houses, or his other buildings; nay, that this very levy of men was made and employed for the building of the Lord's house, and Solomon's house, and Millo, and the wall of Jerusalem, and Hazor, and Megiddo, and Gezer, is expressed chap. ix. 15.

Verses 15, 16. *That bare burdens—*Namely, porters, carters, seamen, and such like. *Fourscore thousand hewers in the mountains—*That is, hewers of stone, for timber was hewed by Hiram's servants in Lebanon. *Officers over the work three thousand three hundred—*Whereof three thousand were set over the one hundred and fifty thousand mentioned verse 15, each of these over fifty of them, and the odd three hundred were set over these three thousand; each of them to have the oversight of ten, to take an account of the work from them. But in 2 Chron. ii. 18, these overseers are said to be three thousand six hundred. The three hundred added in 2 Chron. ii. might be a reserve to supply the places of the other three thousand; yea, or of the three thousand six hundred, as any of them should be taken off from the work by death, or sickness, or weakness, or any necessary occasion; which was a

A. M. 2990. 17 And the king commanded, and
B. C. 1014. they brought great stones, costly
stones, and ^p hewed stones, to lay the founda-
tion of the house.

^p 1 Chron. xxii. 2.

prudent provision, and not unusual in like cases. And so there were three thousand six hundred commissioned for the work, but only three thousand three hundred employed at one time; and therefore both computations fairly stand together.

Verse 17. *Costly stones*—Marble and porphyry, or other stones of great size and value. *To lay the foundation of the house*—Where they could not afterward be seen; and therefore that this was done, is mentioned only as a point of magnificence, except it was intended for a type or mystical signification of the preciousness of Christ, who is the foundation of the true temple, and the church of God. "It should seem," says Henry, "that Solomon was himself present at the founding of the temple, and that the first stone, as has been usual in famous buildings, was laid with great solemnity. *Solomon commanded, and they brought costly stones*—For a foundation; though, being out of sight, worse might

18 And Solomon's builders and Hi- A. M. 2990
ram's builders did hew *them*, and the B. C. 1014.
^r stone-squarers: so they prepared timber and
stones to build the house.

^r Or, *Giblites*, as Ezra xxvii. 9.

have served. Christ, who is laid for a foundation, is an elect and precious stone, (Isaiah xxviii.,) and the foundations of the church are said to be laid with *sapphires*, Isa. liv. 11. and Rev. xxi. 19. Sincerity obligeth us to lay our foundation firm, and to bestow most pains on that part of our religion which lies out of the sight of men."

Verse 18. *Solomon's builders and Hiram's did hew them*—It seemed Solomon's servants learned of Hiram's, or, at least, were directed by them to assist in the work. *And the stone-squarers*—Hebrew, *the Giblites*, the inhabitants of Gebal, a place near Zidon, mentioned Psal. lxxxiii. 7; Ezek. xxvii. 9, famous for artificers and architects, Josh. xiii. 5. These are here distinguished from the rest of Hiram's builders, as the most eminent of them. *So they prepared timber and stones to build the house*—Made all ready, not only to lay the foundation, but to raise the superstructure.

CHAPTER VI.

The time when the temple was built, 1. The dimensions of it, 2, 3. The windows, chambers, materials, doors, 4-10. God's message to Solomon, 11-13. The walls and flooring, 14-18. The oracle and cherubim, 19-30. The doors and inner court, 31-36. How long it was building, 37, 38.

A. M. 2992. AND ^a it came to pass in the
B. C. 1012. four hundred and eightieth year
after the children of Israel were come out
of the land of Egypt, in the fourth year
of Solomon's reign over Israel, in the month
Zif, which *is* the second month, that ^b he

^a 2 Chron. iii. 1, 2.—^b Acts vii. 47.

NOTES ON CHAPTER VI.

Verse 1. *In the four hundred and eightieth year*—Allowing forty years to Moses, seventeen to Joshua, two hundred and ninety-nine to the Judges, forty to Eli, forty to Samuel and Saul, forty to David, and four to Solomon before he began the work, we have just the sum of four hundred and eighty. So long it was before that holy house was built, which in less than four hundred and thirty years was burned by Nebuchadnezzar. It was thus deferred, because Israel had, by their sins, made themselves unworthy of this honour: and because God would show how little he values external pomp and splendour in his service. And God ordered it now, chiefly to be a *shadow of good things to come*. *In the fourth year of Solomon's reign*—Solomon was occupied more than three years in making the necessary preparations; for although, his father had amassed

¹ began to build the house of the A. M. 2992.
LORD. B. C. 1012.

2 And ^o the house which King Solomon built for the LORD, the length thereof *was* threescore cubits, and the breadth thereof twenty cubits, and the height thereof thirty cubits.

¹ Heb. *built*.—^c Ezek. xli. 1, &c.

much treasure, had left him a plan, and provided many things necessary for the undertaking, yet as these materials, it appears, lay at a considerable distance, and were left rude and unfashioned, it could not cost less time to form them into the exact symmetry in which the Scripture represents them to have been before they were used, and to bring them together to Jerusalem. *In the month Zif*—The second of the ecclesiastical year. The word signifying *splendour, beauty, comeliness*, it was a very proper name for that month when the trees and the whole vegetable creation first break forth, and the beauty of the spring begins to appear. *He began to build the house of the Lord*—Either to lay the foundation of it, or to build on the foundation before mentioned.

Verse 2. *The house*—Properly so called, as distinct from all the walls and buildings adjoining to

A. M. 2992. B. C. 1012. 3 And the porch before the temple of the house, twenty cubits *was* the length thereof, according to the breadth of the house; and ten cubits *was* the breadth thereof, before the house.

4 ¶ And for the house he made ^d windows ² of narrow lights.

5 ¶ And ³ against the wall of the house he built ^e chambers ⁴ round about, *against* the

^a Ezek. xl. 16; xli. 16.—² Or, windows broad within, and narrow without; or, skewed and closed.—³ Or, upon, or, joining to.

walls of the house round about, *both* A. M. 2992 of the temple ^f and of the oracle: and B. C. 1012 he made ⁵ chambers round about.

6 The nethermost chamber *was* five cubits broad, and the middle *was* six cubits broad, and the third *was* seven cubits broad: for without *in the wall* of the house he made ⁶ narrowed rests round about, that *the beams* should not be fastened in the walls of the house.

^a Ezek. xli. 6.—⁴ Heb. floors.—^f Verses 16, 19, 20, 21, 31. ^b Heb. ribs.—⁶ Heb. narrowings, or, rebatements.

it: namely, the holy and most holy place. *Which King Solomon built for the Lord*—For his worship and service; and wherein his divine presence might, as it were, dwell among them by a visible appearance. *The length thereof was threescore cubits*—From east to west; forty of which belonged to the holy place, and twenty to the most holy. And this and the other measures seem to belong to the inside from wall to wall. The cubit was that of the sanctuary, about a foot and a half. *And the breadth thereof twenty cubits*—The length and breadth of it were twice as much as those of the tabernacle, which in length was but thirty cubits, and in breadth but ten. *And the height thereof thirty cubits*—Just half of the length of the whole house. But this is to be understood of the holy place, for the holy of holies was only twenty cubits high, (verse 20,) and the porch was one hundred and twenty, 2 Chron. iii. 4. The height of the holy place, therefore, was three times the height of that part of the tabernacle. For this temple was to resemble a high tower having chambers in three stories, one above another. “All the measures,” says Poole, “compared each with other, were harmonious. For sixty to twenty (the length to the breadth) is triple; or as three to one: and sixty to thirty (the length to the height) is double; or as two to one: and thirty to twenty (the height to the breadth) is one and a half, or as three to two. Which are the proportions answering to the three great concords in music, commonly called a twelfth, an eighth, and a fifth. Which therefore must needs be a graceful proportion to the eye, as that in music is graceful to the ear.”

Verse 3. *The porch before the temple*—That is, in the front of, or entrance into the house, (2 Chron. iii. 4.) being a portico, a walk, or gallery, at the east end of the building, (from side to side.) And the measures of this were harmonious also. For twenty to ten (the length of the portico to the breadth of it) is double, or as two to one. And if the height within were the same with that of the house, that is, thirty, it was to the length of it, as three to two; and to its breadth, as three to one. Or, if we take in the whole height, mentioned 2 Chron. iii. 4, which is one hundred and twenty, there is in this no disproportion; (being to its length as six to one, and to its breadth as twelve to one;) especially as this height

was conveniently divided into several galleries, one over another, all of which had their due proportions.

Verse 4. *Windows of narrow lights*—Narrow without, to prevent the inconveniences of the weather, and widening by degrees inwardly, that the house might better receive, and more disperse, the light. The tabernacle had no light from without, and it appears by this the temple had not much.

Verse 5. *Against the wall of the house he built chambers*—For the accommodation of the priests, when they were upon duty at the temple. Here they kept their clothes, the sacred vessels not in immediate use, and the treasures belonging to the temple. These chambers are said to have been built *against* or *adjoining* to the wall; for their beams were not fastened into the wall, but leaned upon the buttresses of the wall. *Round about*—On all the sides except the east, where the porch was, and except some very small passages for the light. And yet the lights might be in the five uppermost cubits of the wall, which were above all these chambers, for these were only fifteen cubits high, and the wall was twenty cubits high. *And he made chambers round about*—In the Hebrew, *He made ribs*; by which some understand *galleries*, which encompassed all the forenamed chambers, and were necessary for passages to them.

Verse 6. *The nethermost chamber was five cubits broad*—In the inside, and besides the galleries mentioned above. It appears, by verse 10, that they were but five cubits high, and built over one another in three stories; increasing in breadth every story one cubit, by the contrivance which follows. *For without in the wall he made narrowed rests*—Or *narrowings*, or *rebatements*. That is, the wall, to which the chambers were joined, was, as walls generally are in our buildings, thicker or broader below, and narrower above. Only these narrowings were in the outside of the wall, which, at each of the three stories, was a cubit narrower than the part beneath it; so that there was more space for the breadth of the upper chambers, than of those beneath them. *That the beams should not be fastened in the walls*—That there might be no holes made in the wall for fastening them; and that the chambers might be removed, if occasion were, without any injury or inconvenience to the house.

A. M. 2999. B. C. 1005. 7 And ⁶ the house, when it was in building, was built of stone made ready before it was brought thither: so that there was neither hammer nor axe, nor any tool of iron heard in the house, while it was in building.

8 The door for the middle chamber was in the right ⁷ side of the house: and they went up with winding stairs into the middle chamber, and out of the middle into the third.

9 ^h So he built the house, and finished it; and covered the house ⁸ with beams and boards of cedar.

10 And then he built chambers against all the house, five cubits high: and they rested on the house with timber of cedar.

11 ¶ And the word of the LORD came to Solomon, saying,

¹ Deut. xxvii. 5; Chap. v. 18.—² Heb. shoulder.—³ Verses 14, 38.—⁴ Or, the vault-beams and the ceilings with cedar. ¹ Chap. ii. 4; ix. 4.—² 2 Sam. vii. 13; 1 Chron. xxii. 10.

Verse 7. *The house—was built of stone made ready*—Hewed and squared, and so fitted for their several uses and places, according to the direction of the architect, that they might be joined together without any other labour than the putting them one by or upon another. *So that there was neither hammer nor axe, &c.*—The stones were laid without any noise, there being nothing to be done but to join them together. Thus it was ordered, partly for the ease and convenience of carriage; partly for the magnificence of the work, and commendation of the workmen's skill and diligence; and partly for mystical signification. And as this temple was a manifest type, both of Christ's church upon earth, and of the heavenly Jerusalem; so this circumstance signified, as to the former, that it is the duty of the builders and members of the church, as far as in them lies, to take care that all things be transacted there with perfect peace and quietness; and that no noise of contention, or division, or violence, be heard in that sacred building; and for the latter, that no spiritual stone, no person, shall bear a part in that heavenly temple, unless he be first hewed, and squared, and made meet for it in this life.

Verse 8. *The door for the middle chamber*—That is, by which they entered to go up into the middle row of chambers; *was in the right side*—That is, in the south side, called the right side, because, when a man looks toward the east, the south is on his right hand. There was another door on the left, or the north side, leading to the chambers on that side. *They went up with winding stairs*—Without the wall, leading up to the gallery, out of which they went into the several chambers. *Into the middle chamber*—Or, rather, into the middle story, or row of chambers; and so in the following

12 *Concerning* this house which thou art in building, ¹ if thou wilt walk in my statutes, and execute my judgments, and keep all my commandments to walk in them; then will I perform my word with thee, ^h which I spake unto David thy father:

13 And ¹ I will dwell among the children of Israel, and will not ² forsake my people Israel.

14 ¶ ³ So Solomon built the house, and finished it.

15 And he built the walls of the house within with boards of cedar, ⁹ both the floor of the house, and the walls of the ceiling: and he covered them on the inside with wood, and covered the floor of the house with planks of fir.

¹ Exod. xxv. 8; Lev. xxvi. 11; 2 Cor. vi. 16; Rev. xxi. 3. ² Deut. xxxi. 6.—³ Verse 38.—⁴ Or, from the floor of the house unto the walls, &c., and so verse 16.

words, out of the middle story: for these stairs could not lead up into each of the chambers, nor was it needful, but only into the story, which was sufficient for the use of all the chambers.

Verses 9, 10. *So he built the house, and finished it*—That is, the walls of the house. *And then he built chambers*—There is nothing in the Hebrew for the word then, which being omitted, the sense is, that he here gives an account of the height of these chambers, as, verse 6, he did of the breadth. But it is very briefly; and we are to understand that those below, and those in the middle, and those above, were all of an equal height, namely, five cubits. So they were fifteen cubits in all, which was five less than the height of the house, for that was twenty cubits; otherwise there would have been no room for the windows, which, it is probable, were above all these chambers, in the top of the house.

Verses 11–13. *The word of the Lord came to Solomon*—By the prophet. *If thou wilt walk in my statutes, &c.*—Here God expresses the condition upon which his promise and favour is suspended; and, by assuring him thereof in case of obedience, he plainly intimates the contrary upon his disobedience. Thus he was taught, that all the charge he and the people were at, in erecting this temple, would neither excuse them from obedience to the law of God, nor shelter them from his judgments in case of disobedience. *And I will dwell among the children of Israel*—As I have done in the tabernacle. *And will not forsake my people*—But protect them in the good land I have given them.

Verse 15. *He built the walls within with boards of cedar*—He wainscoted the house, as we now speak, with cedar. *Both the floor of the house and*

A. M. 2909. 16 And he built twenty cubits on
B. C. 1005. the sides of the house, both the floor
and the walls with boards of cedar: he even
built *them* for it within, *even* for the oracle,
even for the ° most holy place.

17 And the house, that *is*, the temple before
it, was forty cubits long.

18 And the cedar of the house within *was*
carved with ¹⁰ knops and ¹¹ open flowers: all
was cedar; there was no stone seen.

19 ¶ And the oracle he prepared in the house
within, to set there the ark of the covenant of
the LORD.

20 And the oracle in the forepart *was* twenty

¹ Exod. xxvi. 33; Lev. xvi. 2; Chap. viii. 6; 2 Chron. iii. 8;
Ezek. xlv. 3; Heb. ix. 3.—¹⁰ Or, gourds.—¹¹ Or, openings of

the walls of the ceiling—Or, from the floor unto
the ceiling; that is, from the bottom to the top.
And he covered the floor with planks of fir—Or,
with another sort of cedar, which was a great deal
firmer and more lasting than fir. See chap. v. 8.

Verse 16. *He built twenty cubits on the sides of
the house*—He speaks here of the *most holy place*,
which contained in length *twenty cubits*, and might
be said to be on the *sides of the house*, because it
took off twenty cubits in length from each side of
the house, and was also twenty cubits from side to
side, so it was twenty cubits every way. *He built
them for it within, even for the oracle, the most
holy place*—The last words are added to explain
what he means by the word *oracle*, which he had
not used before: this was the most important of all
the parts of the house, because here the divine
glory was present, and from hence God gave an-
swers when he was consulted, on which account it is
termed the oracle.

Verses 17, 18. *The temple before it*—The part of
the house which was before the most holy place. In
the Hebrew the words are, *before my face*, that is,
before the place where the divine glory appeared.
Was forty cubits long—Twice as long as the most
holy place. *The cedar of the house was carved*—
Cedar is here named, not to exclude all other wood,
but stone only, as the following words show. *Carved
with knops*—Or *gourds*, as it is 2 Kings iv. 39,
where the like word is translated *gourds*. *And open
flowers*—Imitations of the flowers of the gourd,
spread and full blown. *All was cedar, there was
no stone seen*—That is, either all the house was
covered with cedar, or all the carved work was of
cedar.

Verses 19, 20. *And the oracle*—Or, rather, the most
holy place. *He prepared*—That is, he adorned
and fitted it for the reception of the ark. Solomon
made every thing new but the ark: that, with its
mercy-seat, was still the same that Moses made.
This was the token of God's presence, which is
with his people, whether they meet in tent or tem-
ple, and changes not with their condition. *And the*

cubits in length, and twenty cubits in A. M. 2999.
breadth, and twenty cubits in the B. C. 1005.
height thereof: and he overlaid it with ¹² pure
gold; and *so* covered the altar *which was* of cedar.

21 So Solomon overlaid the house within with
pure gold: and he made a partition by the chains
of gold before the oracle; and he overlaid it
with gold.

22 And the whole house he overlaid with
gold, until he had finished all the house: also
¹³ the whole altar that *was* by the oracle he
overlaid with gold.

23 ¶ And within the oracle ¹⁴ he made two
cherubims of ¹³ olive-tree, ¹⁴ each ten cubits high.

flowers.—¹² Or, shut up.—¹³ Ex. xxx. 1, 3, 6.—¹⁴ Ex. xxxvii.
7, 9; 2 Chron. iii. 10, 12.—¹³ Or, oily.—¹⁴ Heb. trees of oil.

oracle in the forepart—That is, in the innermost
part, before mentioned, which is called the *fore-
part*, because it was before him that entered into
the house. *And he overlaid it with pure gold*—
Not merely gilded it, but covered it with plates of
gold. For the gold amounted to six hundred talents,
as is said 2 Chron. iii. 8. *And so covered the altar*
—That is, the altar of incense, *with gold*, chap. vii.
48; 1 Chron. xxviii. 18.

Verse 21. *So Solomon overlaid the house within
with pure gold*—Or, *that house*, the oracle, or the
most holy place; which he made as sumptuous as
he could. *And he made a partition by the chains
of gold*—The most holy place was separated from
the sanctuary by a partition, before which there
was a veil also, which hung upon golden chains.
Thus, it seems, this passage is to be understood; for
the partition itself did not depend upon chains. Or
perhaps these golden chains hung down from the
wall only for ornament. *Before the oracle*—In the
outward part of the wall or partition which was
erected between the oracle and the holy place;
which is properly said to be before the oracle, for
there the veil was hung, and there the bars, or what-
soever it was which fastened the doors of the oracle,
were placed. *He overlaid it with gold*—Namely,
the partition; which he here distinguisheth from
the house, or the main walls of the house, which
he had in the former part of this verse told us were
overlaid with gold; and now he affirms as much of
the partition.

Verse 22. *And the whole house he overlaid with
gold*—Not only the oracle, but all the holy place;
and, as some think, even the chambers belonging to
it. *Also the whole altar that was by the oracle he
overlaid with gold*—That is, the altar of incense;
thence called the *golden altar*; which was in the
upper end of the sanctuary, near the entrance of
the oracle. This he covered with cedar, (verse 20,) and
now overlaid with gold.

Verse 23. *Within the oracle he made two cheru-
bims*—These were different from, and much larger
than those made by Moses, which were of solid

A. M. 2999. B. C. 1005. 24 And five cubits *was* the one wing of the cherub, and five cubits the other wing of the cherub: from the uttermost part of the one wing unto the uttermost part of the other *were* ten cubits.

25 And the other cherub *was* ten cubits: both the cherubims *were* of one measure and one size.

26 The height of the one cherub *was* ten cubits, and so *was it* of the other cherub.

27 And he set the cherubims within the inner house: and ^rthey ¹⁵ stretched forth the wings of the cherubims, so that the wing of the one touched the *one* wall, and the wing of the

other cherub touched the other wall; and their wings touched one another in the midst of the house. A. M. 2999. B. C. 1005.

28 And he overlaid the cherubims with gold.

29 And he carved all the walls of the house round about with carved figures of cherubims, and palm-trees, and ¹⁶open flowers, within and without.

30 And the floor of the house he overlaid with gold, within and without.

31 ¶ And for the entering of the oracle he made doors of olive-tree: the lintel and side posts *were* ¹⁷a fifth part of the wall.

^r Exod. xxv. 20; xxxvii. 9; 2 Chron. v. 8.—¹⁵ Or, *the cherubims stretched forth their wings.*

¹⁶ Heb. *opening of flowers.*—¹⁷ Or, *five square.*

gold, and arose out of each end of the mercy-seat, being of one piece with it, and looking one upon the other, Exod. xxv. 18, 19. But these made by Solomon were of olive-wood, or, as it is in the Hebrew, of *tree of oil*; many sorts of which wood there were besides olive; as *pine, cedar, &c.* The heathen set up images of their gods, and worshipped them. These cherubim were designed to represent the servants and attendants of the God of Israel, the holy angels; not to be worshipped themselves, but to show how great he is whom we worship.

Here it may be proper to note, that the word דביר, *debir*, (which our translation constantly renders oracle,) comes from דבר, *dabar*, which signifies to speak; because God, who dwelt between the cherubim of the ark in the Mosaic tabernacle, declared his mind from thence, when he was consulted by the high-priest with Urim and Thummim. And it still retained this name, though we never read of any answer by Urim and Thummim in this temple. It is highly probable that, upon their rejecting the government of God, and turning the theocracy into a human government by kings, God ceased to direct and govern them by that divine oracle. During the reign of David, indeed, there are some footsteps of it, their new government by kings being not well established. So that we may suppose there was a mixture of the theocracy still with it, as may be gathered from 2 Sam. ii. 1, and xxi. 1. But after that there is not the least glimpse of it; but they inquired of God by the prophets, 1 Kings xxii. 3; 2 Kings iii. 11, 20. And, what is very remarkable, in the days of Josiah, when the high-priest was sent by that king to inquire of God, he applied to Huldah the prophetess for that purpose: which is a demonstration that the answer by Urim and Thummim ceased when God's government was cast off by them; to which that oracle properly appertained. And therefore in all these places it would be more properly rendered, the *most holy place*. For though the ark was placed there, no oracles or words of the Lord were given from thence.

Verses 24–26. *Were ten cubits*—Whereas those

of Moses were only so long as to cover the mercy-seat, which was but two cubits and a half in length. *And the other cherub was ten cubits*—So that they filled the whole breadth of the house, which was twenty cubits. *The height—was ten cubits*—That is, half as high as that most holy place, verse 20. For they stood on their feet upon the floor of it.

Verse 27. *He set the cherubims within the inner house*—With their faces toward the sanctuary, so that they looked upon him that entered the oracle. *They stretched forth the wings of the cherubims*—Or, rather, *the cherubims stretched forth their wings*. So that the wing of one touched one wall, &c.—That is, they touched the south and north walls of the house. Whereas the wings of those cherubim that Moses made, stretched themselves from east to west. For they looked one upon the other over the mercy-seat. *Their wings touched one another in the midst of the house*—Where they must needs meet, being five cubits long on each side, and the house twenty cubits wide.

Verses 28, 29. *He overlaid the cherubims with gold*—It must be observed, there were four cherubim in the most holy place of Solomon's temple; two lesser made by Moses of massy gold, and two larger made by Solomon, overlaid with gold. Those made by Moses were part of the mercy-seat, and inseparable from it; these of Solomon seem to have spread their wings over it and them, being added only for the greater ornament of God's house. *He carved all the walls with figures of cherubims*—As signs of the presence and protection of the angels vouchsafed by God to that place. *And palm-trees*—Emblems of that peace and victory over their enemies, which the Israelites duly serving God in that place might expect. *Within and without*—Within the oracle, and without it in the holy place. *The floor of the house he overlaid with gold*—That is, of the whole house, both *within* the oracle and *without* it, both of the most holy, and the holy place; which rendered it wonderfully splendid and magnificent.

Verse 31. *The lintel and side-posts were a fifth part of the wall*—The original text here is very

A. M. 2999. B. C. 1005. 32 The ¹⁸ two doors also were of olive-tree; and he carved upon them carvings of cherubims, and palm-trees, and ¹⁹ open flowers, and overlaid them with gold, and spread gold upon the cherubims, and upon the palm-trees.

33 So also made he for the door of the temple, posts of olive-tree, ²⁰ a fourth part of the wall.

34 And the two doors were of fir-tree: the two leaves of the one door were folding, and the two leaves of the other door were folding.

35 And he carved thereon cherubims, and palm-trees, and open flowers; and covered them

¹⁸ Or, leaves of the doors.—¹⁹ Or, openings of flowers.—²⁰ Or, four square.—Ezek. xli. 23, 25.—¹ Verse 1.

obscure, there being nothing in it for the words, of the wall; but only, *The lintel and side-posts were a fifth*, which may be understood to signify, that they held the proportion of a fifth part of the doors. But some think the meaning is, that this gate was the fifth in number belonging to the house. The first, they say, was that which led into the court of the people; the second, that which led into the court of the priests; the third was the door of the porch; the fourth, that of the holy place; and this fifth, of the oracle, or most holy. And in this way they interpret a similar expression, (verse 33,) which we render a fourth part of the wall, the words, of the wall, being not in the Hebrew, they understand it of the fourth gate; namely, that of the holy place. But the most probable meaning is, as our translators have understood it to be, that the doors, including the lintel and side-posts, here mentioned, as well as the valves, took up a fifth part of the wall or partition, being four cubits in breadth.

Verse 32. *The two doors also were of olive-tree*—Or, *The leaves of the doors*; signifying what sort of doors they were, namely, folding-doors, as is more particularly observed verse 34. *He carved upon them carvings of cherubims, &c., and overlaid them with gold*—When the veil, which covered this whole partition, with the doors of it, was drawn aside to give entrance to the high-priest into the holy of holies on the great day of atonement, then these beautiful doors of olive-tree, thus overlaid with gold, and curiously engraved, were displayed to his view, and the view of such priests as might be in the holy place; but otherwise they were seldom seen, and never but by the priests only.

Verse 36. *The inner court*—That wherein the priests officiated, (2 Chron. iv. 9.) so called because it was next to the temple, which it encompassed. *With three rows of hewed stone, and a row of cedar beams*—It is difficult to ascertain the precise meaning of the sacred historian here. He may be understood as speaking, either, 1st, Of the thickness of the wall, the three rows of stones being one within another, and the cedar innermost, as a lining to the

with gold, fitted upon the carved work. A. M. 2999. B. C. 1005.

36 ¶ And he built the inner court with three rows of hewed stone, and a row of cedar beams.

37 ¶ 'In the fourth year was the foundation of the house of the LORD laid, in the month Zif:

38 And in the eleventh year, in the month Bul (which is the eighth month) was the house finished throughout all the parts thereof, and according to all the fashion of it. So was he seven years in building it. B. C. 1005. ^{992.}

²¹ Or, with all the appurtenances thereof, and with all the ordinances thereof.—² Compare verse 1.

wall. Or, 2d, Of the height of the wall, which was only three cubits high, that the people might see the priests sacrificing upon the altar, which was in their court; each row of stones being about a cubit, and, possibly, of a colour different from the rest, and all covered with cedar. Or, 3d, He is to be understood of so many galleries, one on each side of the temple, whereof the three first were stone, and the fourth of cedar, all supported with rows of pillars, upon which there were many chambers for the uses of the temple, and of the priests.

Verses 37, 38. *In the fourth year, &c.*—This was mentioned verse 1, and is here repeated to subjoin, in the next words, how long the house was in building. *In the eleventh year, in the month Bul*—As the second month was called *Zif*, for the reason before given, so the eighth month was called *Bul*, which signifies to wither, because then the leaves of the trees began to wither and fall off, and the whole vegetable creation to droop and die. *So he was seven years in building*—"That is," says Mr. Locke, "speaking in a round number, for he was seven years and six months; neither is this mode of speaking unusual in Scripture." It is not strange that this work took up so much time; for though the temple, properly so called, was but a small edifice, yet the many courts, offices, chambers, and other buildings about it, above ground and below, made the whole a vast pile; and the exquisiteness of the art, and fewness of the artists that could be employed, made a longer time requisite. Indeed, all things considered, it must be acknowledged Solomon made an extraordinary despatch; for, if the building of Diana's temple at Ephesus employed all Asia for two hundred years; and no fewer than three hundred and sixty thousand men were occupied for twenty years together in erecting one pyramid, as Pliny affirms, lib. 36, chap. 12, no reasonable man can wonder that this temple was seven years and a half in building. See Calmet, and *Univ. Hist.*, vol. iv. octavo. Now let us see what this temple typifies:

1. Christ himself is the true temple. He himself

spoke of the temple of his body : and in him dwell all the fulness of the Godhead. In him all the Israel of God meet, and through him have access with confidence to God.

2. Every believer is a living temple, in whom the Spirit of God dwelleth : we are wonderfully made by the divine providence, but more wonderfully made anew by the divine grace ; and as Solomon's temple was built on a rock, so are we built on Christ.

3. The church is a mystical temple, enriched and beautified, not with gold and precious stones,

but with the gifts and graces of the Spirit. Angels are ministering spirits, attending the church, and all the members of it, on all sides.

4. Heaven is the everlasting temple ; there the church will be fixed, and no longer moveable : the cherubim there always attend upon the throne of glory. In the temple there was no noise of axes or hammers : every thing is quiet and serene in heaven. All that shall be stoned in that building, must here be fitted and made ready for it ; must be hewed and squared by the divine grace, and so made meet for a place in that temple.

CHAPTER VII.

Solomon builds several other houses, 1-12. He furnishes the temple with two pillars, 13-22. With a molten sea, 23-26. With ten bases and ten lavers of brass, 27-39. With all other utensils, and the things David had dedicated, 40-51.

A. M. 2999. **B**UT Solomon was building his own house *thirteen years, and he finished all his house.

2 ¶ He built also the house of the forest of Lebanon ; the length thereof was a hundred cubits, and the breadth thereof fifty cubits, and the height thereof thirty cubits, upon four rows of cedar pillars, with cedar beams upon the pillars.

3 And it was covered with cedar above upon the ¹beams that lay on forty-five pillars, fifteen in a row.

4 And there were windows in three rows, and ²light was against light in three ranks.

5 And all the ³doors and posts were square with the windows : and light was against light in three ranks.

* Chap. ix. 10 ; 2 Chron. viii. 1.—¹ Heb. ribs.—³ Or, sight

against sight.—³ Or, spaces and pillars were square in prospect.

NOTES ON CHAPTER VII.

Verse 1. *Solomon was building his own house*—The royal palace, for himself and for his successors, which he did not begin to build till he had finished the house of God, that nothing might hinder that holy work, chap. ix. 10. *Thirteen years*—Almost double the time to that in which the temple was built ; because, neither were the materials so far provided and prepared for this as they were for the temple, nor did either he or his people use the same diligence in this as in the other work, to which they were quickened by God's express command.

Verse 2. *He built also the house of the forest of Lebanon*—The house mentioned in the foregoing verse was in Jerusalem, and was probably the place of Solomon's residence during the winter. *This* seems to have been built for his summer residence, on some cool, shady mountain near Jerusalem, and to have been called *the house of the forest of Lebanon*, because it was situated in a lofty place, bearing some resemblance to mount Lebanon, and probably was surrounded with many tall cedars, such as grew there. That it was near Jerusalem, and not on mount Lebanon, properly so called, seems evident, because there was *the throne of judgment*, (verse 7,) which it was most proper should be in the place of his constant and usual residence ; and because there was the chief magazine of arms, (Isa. xxii. 8,) and Solomon's golden shields were placed

there, (chap. x. 17, and xiv. 25-28,) which no wise prince would have put in a place at the extremity of his kingdom, and at such a distance from his royal city as mount Lebanon was from Jerusalem. *The length thereof*—Of the principal mansion ; to which, doubtless, other buildings were adjoining. *Was a hundred cubits*—Which was not longer than the house of God, if we take in all the courts belonging thereto. *The height thereof thirty cubits*—The same as the height of the holy place in the temple. *Upon four rows of cedar pillars*—Which supported the building, and between which there were four stately walks. *With cedar beams upon the pillars*—Which were laid for the floor of the second story.

Verses 3-5. *Fifteen in a row*—So in this second story there were only three rows of pillars, which were sufficient for the ornament of the second and for the support of the third story ; and we may conjecture from hence that there were threescore pillars below. *Light was against light*—One directly opposite to another, as is usual in well-contrived buildings. *In three ranks*—One exactly under another in three rows. *All the doors, &c., were square with the windows*—That is, the figures of the doors and windows were one and the same, namely, square. *And light was against light, &c.*—This is meant of the smaller windows or lights which were over the door, and which were also square.

A. M. 2999.
B. C. 1005. 6 ¶ And he made a porch of pillars; the length thereof *was* fifty cubits, and the breadth thereof thirty cubits: and the porch *was* ⁴before them: and the *other* pillars and the thick beam *were* ⁵before them.

7 ¶ Then he made a porch for the throne where he might judge, *even* the porch of judgment: and *it was* covered with cedar ⁶from one side of the floor to the other.

8 ¶ And his house where he dwelt *had* another court within the porch, *which was* of the like work. Solomon made also a house for Pharaoh's daughter, ^bwhom he had taken to *wife*, like unto this porch.

9 ¶ All these *were* of costly stones, according to the measures of hewed stones, sawed with

⁴Or, according to them.—⁵Or, according to them.—⁶Heb. from floor to floor.

Verse 6. *And he made a porch of pillars*—That is, supported by divers pillars: this was for his guard, and for people to walk in who came upon business, as well as for the more magnificent entrance into the house. Upon this also it is probable there were other rooms built as in the house. *The porch was before them*—That is, before the pillars of the great house before spoken of. *And the other pillars, &c.*—Or, *and pillars*, that is, fewer and lesser pillars for the support of the porch. *Were before them*—Or, *according to them*; (see the margin:) that is, they were directly opposite one to another.

Verse 7. *He made a porch for the throne, even the porch of judgment*—So it was called, because here he sat to judge and determine the causes that were brought before him. But some think it unlikely that this porch was adjoining to the house of the forest of Lebanon. They judge it more probable that it was built in some place near the royal palace in Jerusalem, and is here mentioned because the writer was speaking of other porches. *And it was covered, &c., from one side of the floor to the other*—Hebrew, *from floor to floor*; from the lower floor on the ground, to the upper floor which covered it.

Verse 8. *His house where he dwelt had another court within the porch*—That is, between the porch and the house, called therefore the middle court, chap. xx. 4. *Solomon made also a house for Pharaoh's daughter*—Of which, see 2 Chron. ii. 11. *Like unto this porch*—Not for form or size, but for the materials and workmanship, the rooms being covered with cedar and the like ornaments.

Verse 9. *All these were of costly stones*—Namely, the buildings described here, and in the former chapter. *According to the measures of hewed stones*—Either, 1st, Which were hewed in such measure and proportion, as exact workmen use in hewing ordinary stones: or, 2d, As large as hewed stones

saws, within and without, even <sup>A. M. 2999.
B. C. 1005.</sup> from the foundation unto the coping, and so on the outside toward the great court.

10 And the foundation *was* of costly stones, *even* great stones; stones of ten cubits, and stones of eight cubits.

11 And above *were* costly stones, after the measures of hewed stones, and cedars.

12 And the great court round about *was* with three rows of hewed stones, and a row of cedar beams, both for the inner court of the house of the LORD, ^oand for the porch of the house.

13 ¶ And King Solomon sent and fetched ^dHiram out of Tyre.

^b Chap. iii. 1; 2 Chron. viii. 11.—^c John x. 23; Acts iii. .1.
^d 2 Chron. iv. 11, Hiram; Verse 40.

commonly are, which are often very great. *Sawed them with saws, within and without*—Both on the inside of the buildings, which were covered with cedar, and on the outside also. *From the foundation unto the coping*—From the bottom to the top of the building. *So on the outside toward the great court*—Not only on the outside of the front of the house, which, being most visible, men are more careful to adorn, but also of the other side of the house, which looked toward the great court belonging to the king's house.

Verses 10, 11. *The foundation was of costly stones*—By *costly stones*, mentioned here, and in the foregoing and following verses, are not meant *precious stones*, but stones that, being larger, firmer, and better polished than others, were of greater price: probably they were large blocks of marble, squared and polished on all sides. *Stones of ten cubits*—Not ten cubits square, which would have been unnecessary, and would have rendered them unportable and unmanageable, but of such measure as is generally used in measuring stones and timber; and thus also the following *eight cubits* are to be understood. *And above*—That is, in the roof, or upper part; for this is opposed to the foundation. *Were costly stones and cedars*—Intermixed the one with the other. Thus the roof was finished after the same manner with the lower parts.

Verse 12. *And the great court*—Namely, of Solomon's palace, mentioned verse 8. *Was with three rows of hewed stones, &c.*—Just like the inner court of the Lord's house, (chap. vi. 36,) and so the following words are to be understood. *Both for the inner court*—Or, rather, *as* for the inner court, &c.; for so the particle *vau*, sometimes signifies. *And for the porch of the house*—Namely, Solomon's own house.

Verses 13, 14. *Solomon sent and fetched Hiram*—Though he was an Israelite by birth, yet he dwelt at Tyre; and, it is likely, had the privileges of that

A. M. 2999. 14 ° He *was* ⁷ a widow's son of the
B. C. 1005. tribe of Naphtali, and [†] his father *was*
a man of Tyre, a worker in brass; and [‡] he
was filled with wisdom, and understanding,
and cunning to work all works in brass. And
he came to King Solomon, and wrought all his
work.

15 ¶ For he [‡] cast ^h two pillars of brass, of
eighteen cubits high apiece: and a line of
twelve cubits did compass either of them about.

16 And he made two chapters of molten
brass, to set upon the tops of the pillars: the
height of the one chapter *was* five cubits, and
the height of the other chapter *was* five cubits:

17 And nets of checker-work, and wreaths of
chain-work, for the chapters which *were* upon
the top of the pillars; seven for the one chapter,
and seven for the other chapter.

18 And he made the pillars, and two rows

[‡] 2 Chron. ii. 14.—⁷ Hebrew, *the son of a widow woman*.
[†] 2 Chr. iv. 16.—[‡] Exod. xxxi. 3; xxxvi. 1.—^h Heb. *fashioned*.
^h 2 Kings xxv. 17; 2 Chron. iii. 15; iv. 12; Jer. lii. 21.

city, and so was one of King Hiram's subjects. And therefore (2 Chron. ii. 13) that king says he had sent him to Solomon, that is, had granted Solomon's request, who had requested that this man might come and serve him. *His father was a man of Tyre*—Whom his mother, when a widow, had married. *A worker in brass*—And in gold, and stone, and purple, and blue, 2 Chron. ii. 14. But his skill in brass is only mentioned here, because he speaks only of the brazen things which he made. *And he was filled with wisdom, &c.*—He had an excellent genius for and great skill in this work.

Verses 15, 16. *He cast two pillars of brass*—Of which see 2 Kings xxv. 16, 17; Jer. lii. 21. *Of eighteen cubits high apiece*—It is said, 2 Chron. iii. 15, that these pillars were thirty-five cubits high, which relates to the height of both of them together without their pedestals, whereas the height of each is given here with its pedestal. *A line of twelve cubits did compass either of them*—The diameter, therefore, was four cubits, which, considering the chapter of five cubits, added to the height of each pillar, (2 Chron. iii. 15,) was only in due proportion to the height. In 2 Kings xxv. 17, indeed, it is said, that the height of the chapter was only *three cubits*. But it must be observed, that the word chapter may either be taken more largely for the whole, in which case, it was five cubits; or more strictly, either for the *pommels*, as they are called, 2 Chron. iv. 12; or for the cornice or crown, and so it was but three cubits, to which the pomegranates being added, made it four cubits, as it is verse 19, and the other work upon it took up one cubit more, which in all made five cubits.

Verses 17-19. *Nets of checker-work, &c., for the chapters*—Which chapters those nets and wreaths

round about upon the one net-work, A. M. 2999.
to cover the chapters that *were* upon B. C. 1005.
the top, with pomegranates: and so did he for
the other chapter.

19 And the chapters that *were* upon the top
of the pillars *were* of lily-work in the porch, four
cubits.

20 And the chapters upon the two pillars *had*
pomegranates also above, over against the belly
which *was* by the net-work: and the pome-
granates *were* ¹ two hundred in rows round
about upon the other chapter.

21 [‡] And he set up the pillars in ¹ the porch
of the temple: and he set up the right pillar,
and called the name thereof ⁹ Jachin: and he
set up the left pillar, and called the name
thereof ¹⁰ Boaz.

22 And upon the top of the pillars *was* lily-
work: so was the work of the pillars finished.

¹ 2 Chron. iii. 16; iv. 13; Jer. lii. 23.—[‡] 2 Chron. iii. 17.
¹ Chap. vi. 3.—⁹ That is, *He shall establish*.—¹⁰ That is,
In it is strength.

encompassed, either covering, and, as it were, re-
ceiving and holding the pomegranates, or being
mixed with them. *And he made*—Or, *so he made*,
or *framed*, or *perfected*, the pillars, and two
rows round about—Of pomegranates, or some other
curious work, which took up one of the five cubits,
whereof the chapter consisted. *And the chapters,*
&c., were of lily-work—Were made in imitation
of lilies. *In the porch*—Or, *as in the porch*; such
work as there was in the porch of the temple, in
which these pillars were set, (verse 21,) that so the
work of the tops of these pillars might agree with
that in the top of the porch.

Verse 20. *Over against the belly*—So he calls
the middle part of the chapter, which jettied far-
thest out. *The pomegranates were two hundred*
—They are said to be *ninety and six on the side of*
a pillar, in one row, and in all a *hundred*, (Jer. lii.
23,) four pomegranates between the several check-
er-works being added to the first ninety-six. And
it must needs be granted that there were as many
on the other side of the pillar, or in the other row,
which makes them two hundred upon a pillar, as is
here said, and four hundred upon both pillars, as
they are numbered, 2 Chron. iv. 13.

Verse 21. *He set up the pillars in the porch*—
Where they were placed for mere ornament and
magnificence, for they supported nothing. *Called*
the name thereof Jachin—Which signifies, *He*, that
is, God, *shall establish*, his temple, and church, and
people: and Boaz signifies, *in it*, or rather, *in him*
(to answer the *he* in the former name) *is strength*.
So these pillars, being eminently strong and stable,
were types of that strength which was in God, and
would be put forth by God for the defending and
establishing of his temple and people, if they were

A. M. 2999. 23 ¶ And he made ^a a molten sea, B. C. 1005. ten cubits ¹¹ from the one brim to the other: *it was* round all about, and his height *was* five cubits: and a line of thirty cubits did compass it round about.

24 And under the brim of it round about *there were* knops compassing it, ten in a cubit, ^a compassing the sea round about: the knops *were* cast in two rows, when it was cast.

25 It stood upon ^o twelve oxen, three looking toward the north, and three looking toward the west, and three looking toward the south, and three looking toward the east: and the sea *was set* above upon them, and all their hinder parts *were* inward.

26 And *it was* a hand-breadth thick, and the brim thereof was wrought like the brim of a cup, with flowers of lilies: it contained ^p two thousand baths.

27 ¶ And he made ten bases of brass; four cubits *was* the length of one base, and four cu-

^a 2 Kings xxv. 13; 2 Chron. iv. 2; Jer. lii. 17.—¹¹ Heb. from his brim to his brim.

careful to observe the conditions required by him on their parts.

Verse 23. *He made a molten sea*—He melted the brass, and cast it into the form of a great vessel, for its vastness called a sea, which name is given by the Hebrews to all great collections of waters. The use of it was for the priests to wash their hands and feet, or other things, as occasion required, with the water which they drew out of it. *It was round all about*—Of a circular form. *Its height was five cubits*—Besides the height of the oxen whereon it stood. *A line of thirty cubits did compass it*—For the diameter being ten cubits, thirty must be the circumference of it. This sea was filled with water by the Gibeonites, who were afterward called Ne-tinians.

Verse 24. *There were knops compassing it*—Molten figures: for the word כַּפְגִּימ, *pekagnim*, signifies pictures or figures of all sorts, as gourds, flowers, beasts, &c.—*Ten in a cubit*—So there were three hundred of these knops in all, the sea being thirty cubits round. *The knops were cast in two rows when it was cast*—They were not carved afterward, but cast at first when the sea was molten. And, there being two rows of them, Abarbinel thence concludes there were six hundred in all, one under another.

Verses 25, 26. *It stood upon twelve oxen*—Of solid brass, which was necessary to bear so great a weight. Probably the water was drawn by cocks out of the mouths of these oxen. *It contained two thousand baths*—That is, five hundred barrels, the bath being a measure of the same bigness with the ephah, each containing about eight gallons. It appears from

bits the breadth thereof, and three cu- A. M. 2799. bits the height of it. B. C. 1005.

28 And the work of the bases *was* on this *manner*: they had borders, and the borders *were* between the ledges:

29 And on the borders that *were* between the ledges *were* lions, oxen, and cherubims: and upon the ledges *there was* a base above: and beneath the lions and oxen *were* certain additions made of thin work.

30 And every base had four brazen wheels, and plates of brass: and the four corners thereof had undersetters: under the laver *were* undersetters molten, at the side of every addition.

31 And the mouth of it within the chapter and above *was* a cubit: but the mouth thereof *was* round *after* the work of the base, a cubit and a half: and also upon the mouth of it *were* gravings with their borders, four-square, not round.

^a 2 Chronicles iv. 3.—^o 2 Chronicles iv. 4, 5; Jeremiah lii. 20. ^p 2 Chronicles iv. 5.

2 Chron. iv. 5, that if filled up to the brim, it would receive *three thousand* baths. But it is probable they were not wont to put so much in it, lest, with the wind, it should run over; and that two thousand was the quantity usually kept in it.

Verses 27-29. *He made ten bases of brass*—Upon which stood ten lavers mentioned below, (verse 38,) in which they washed the parts of the sacrifices, 2 Chron. iv. 6. *They had borders*—Broad brims, possibly for the more secure holding of the lavers. *Upon the ledges there was a base above*—This is very obscurely expressed; but probably by the *base above* is meant the uppermost part of the base; which, though it was above, yet was a base to the laver, which stood upon it. *Certain additions*—Either as bases for the feet of the said lions and oxen, or only as further ornaments.

Verse 30. *Every base had four brazen wheels*—Whereby the bases and lavers might be removed from place to place, as need required. *Undersetters*—Hebrew, *shoulders*; fitly so called, because they supported the lavers, that they should not fall from their bases, when the bases were removed, together with the lavers.

Verse 31. *The mouth of it*—So he calls that part in the top of the base which was left hollow, that the foot of the laver might be let into it. *Within the chapter*—Within the little base, which he calls *the chapter*, because it rose up from, and stood above the great base. *And above*—Above the chapter; for the mouth went up and grew wider like a funnel. *Was a cubit*—In height, (verse 35.) whereof half a cubit was above the chapter or little base, and the other half below it. *A cubit and half*—

A. M. 2999. 32 And under the borders *were* four
B. C. 1005.

wheels; and the axletrees of the wheels *were* ¹²joined to the base: and the height of a wheel *was* a cubit and half a cubit.

33 And the work of the wheels *was* like the work of a chariot wheel: their axletrees, and their naves, and their felloes, and their spokes, *were* all molten.

34 And *there were* four undersettors to the four corners of one base: *and* the undersettors *were* of the very base itself.

35 And in the top of the base *was there* a round compass of half a cubit high: and on the top of the base the ledges thereof and the borders thereof *were* of the same.

36 For on the plates of the ledges thereof, and on the borders thereof, he graved cherubims, lions, and palm-trees, according to the ¹³proportion of every one, and additions round about.

37 After this *manner* he made the ten bases: all of them had one casting, one measure, *and* one size.

38 ¶ Then ^amade he ten lavers of brass: one laver contained forty baths: *and* every laver was four cubits: *and* upon every one of the ten bases one laver.

39 And he put five bases on the right ¹⁴side

¹² Heb. in the base.—¹³ Heb. nakedness.—¹⁴ 2 Chron. iv. 6.
¹⁵ Heb. shoulder.—¹⁶ Heb. Hiram, Verse 13.—¹⁷ Verses 17, 18.
¹⁸ Heb. upon the face of the pillars.

In compass. *Four-square*—So the innermost part, called the mouth, was round, but the outward part was square, as when a circle is made within a quadrangle.

Verses 33–37. *Were all molten*—Cast together with the bases. *The undersettors were of the very base*—Not only of the same matter, but of the same piece, being cast with it. *According to the proportion of every one*—Hebrew, כמער, chemagnar, according to the nakedness, or, empty space of every one, that is, according to the extent of the spaces left empty for them, namely, that these figures were as large as the void plates would admit. *All of them had one casting, &c.*—They were cast in the same mould, and of the same size.

Verses 38, 39. *He made ten lavers of brass*—Which were to stand upon the bases before mentioned. *One laver contained forty baths*—See verse 26; from whence it will appear, that each of these lavers contained ten barrels of water. *And every laver was four cubits*—Some think they were of this height. But it is more likely that these words relate to the diameter of them, which was four cubits, and then their compass was twelve cubits. *He put five bases on the right side*—That is, on the south side. See chap. vi. 8. *Of the house*—

of the house, and five on the left side of the house: and he set the sea on the right side of the house eastward, over against the south.

40 ¶ And ¹⁵Hiram made the lavers, and the shovels, and the basins. So Hiram made an end of doing all the work that he made King Solomon for the house of the LORD:

41 The two pillars, and the *two* bowls of the chapiters that *were* on the top of the two pillars; and the two ²net-works, to cover the two bowls of the chapiters which *were* upon the top of the pillars;

42 And four hundred pomegranates for the two net-works, *even* two rows of pomegranates for one net-work, to cover the two bowls of the chapiters that *were* ¹⁶upon the pillars;

43 And the ten bases, and ten lavers on the bases;

44 And one sea, and twelve oxen under the sea;

45 ^aAnd the pots, and the shovels, and the basins: and all these vessels which Hiram made to King Solomon for the house of the LORD, *were of* ¹⁷bright brass.

46 ^bIn the plain of Jordan did the king cast them, ¹⁸in the clay-ground between ^aSuccoth and ^cZarthan.

^a Exod. xxvii. 3; 2 Chron. iv. 16.—¹⁷ Heb. made bright, or, scoured.—¹⁸ 2 Chron. iv. 17.—¹⁹ Heb. in the thickness of the ground.—²⁰ Gen. xxxiii. 17.—²¹ Josh. iii. 16.

Of the court where the priests ministered, and where, as occasion required, they washed either their hands or feet, or the parts of the sacrifices. *Five on the left side of the house*—That is, on the north side of that court, which is here opposed to the right or south side. *Over against the south*—That is, in the south-east part, where the offerings were prepared. So that, as soon as the priests entered, which they did at the east gate, they might have water to wash their hands and their feet.

Verse 40. *Hiram made the lavers, &c.*—These seem to have been the last things that he made. For he now finished all his work, most or all the particulars of which are recapitulated, with the addition of some others not mentioned before: *shovels*, for instance, wherewith they cleansed the altar from the ashes, and *basins*, wherein the priests received the blood of the sacrifices that were offered.

Verses 45–47. *And the pots*—Or caldrons rather. These were vessels in which they boiled those sacrifices, or parts of sacrifices, which were divided between the priests and the people that offered them; that is, the *peace-offerings*, that they might eat them before the Lord. *In the clay-ground*—Hebrew, *In the thickness of the ground*. That is, in earth that was stiff and glutinous, and therefore

A. M. 2999. 47 And Solomon left all the vessels
B. C. 1005. *unweighed*,¹⁹ because they were ex-
ceeding many: neither was the weight of the
brass²⁰ found out.

48 ¶ And Solomon made all the vessels that
pertained unto the house of the LORD: † the
altar of gold, and † the table of gold, whereupon
† the show-bread *was*,

49 And the candlesticks of pure gold, five on
the right *side*, and five on the left, before the
oracle, with the flowers, and the lamps, and the
tongs of gold,

¹⁹ Heb. for the exceeding multitude.—²⁰ Heb. searched, 1 Chron.
xiii. 14.—† Exod. xxxvii. 25, &c.—‡ Exod. xxxvii. 10, &c.

more fit for making moulds of all kinds. And in a
plain country such moulds were more easily fixed
than on the sides of hills, or steep places. *Solomon
left all the vessels unweighed*—Because the weigh-
ing of them would have been troublesome, and to
no purpose. *Neither was the weight of the brass
found out*—Hebrew, נִקְרָא, *nechkar*, investigated, or
inquired into. Much less was an exact account
taken of it.

Verse 48. *All the vessels that pertained to the
house of the Lord*—Such as God, by the mouth of
Moses, had commanded to be made for his house
and service, and such as Moses had made for the
tabernacle; only these for the temple were larger,
richer, and more in number; according to the differ-
ence, as to size and splendour, between the temple
and the tabernacle, and between Solomon's vast
riches and the poverty of Moses and the Israelites
in the wilderness. *The altar of gold*—That is,
overlaid with gold. For it was made of cedar, as
that of Moses was of shittim-wood, and it was only
covered with gold, chap. vi. 20. This was the altar
of incense which stood in the holy place, and is
mentioned 1 Chron. xxviii. 18, as one of the holy
things for which David left gold. *And the table of
show-bread*—Under which, by a synecdoche, are
comprehended, both all the utensils belonging to it,
and the other ten tables, which were made at the
same time, 2 Chron. iv. 7, 8.

Verse 49. *And the candlesticks*—Which were ten,
according to the number of the tables, whereas Mo-
ses made but one: whereby might be signified the
progress of the light of sacred truth, which was
now grown clearer than it was in Moses's time,
and should shine brighter and brighter until the per-
fect day of gospel light. *Of pure gold*—Of massy
and fine gold. *Before the oracle*—In the holy place.
Flowers—Wrought upon the candlesticks, as had
formerly been the case. *Tongs of gold*—Where-
with to take coals from the altar of burnt-offering.

Verse 50. *The bowls and the snuffers, &c.*—The
use of the different articles here named is manifest.
The bowls were to contain oil for the lamps, the
snuffers to trim them: the basins, which were a
hundred, as we learn 2 Chron. iv. 8, were to re-

50 And the bowls, and the snuffers, A. M. 2999
and the basins, and the spoons, and B. C. 1005.
the²¹ censers of pure gold; and the hinges of
gold, *both* for the doors of the inner house,
the most holy *place*, and for the doors of the
house, *to wit*, of the temple.

51 So was ended all the work that King
Solomon made for the house of the LORD.
And Solomon brought in the²² things^b which
David his father had dedicated: *even* the
silver, and the gold, and the vessels, did he put
among the treasures of the house of the LORD.

^a Exod. xxv. 30; Lev. xxiv. 5, 8.—²¹ Heb. *ash-pana*.
²² Heb. *holy things of David*.—^b 2 Sam. viii. 11; 2 Chron. v. 1.

ceive the water of sprinkling, and the blood of the
sacrifices, which was sometimes brought into the
most holy place. The spoons served to take up
the oil. The censers were for offering incense. *The
hinges of gold, &c.*—This shows the vast riches of
Solomon, and his great piety, which made him
spare no cost to beautify the house of God, and all
things belonging to it.

Verse 51. *Solomon brought in the things which
David his father had dedicated*—The silver and
gold, and other things which David had provided
for erecting this temple, and which had not been
expended in the house itself, or its furniture, Solo-
mon laid up in the treasury belonging to it, for re-
pairs, exigences, and the constant charge of the
temple-service. Although this splendid edifice had
cost him immense sums, besides what David had
prepared for building it, he would not repay him-
self in any degree by diverting from their intended
purpose, and transferring to his own secular use,
these devoted, or, as they are termed in the margin,
holy things of David. "What parents have dedi-
cated to God," says Henry, here, "the children
ought by no means to alienate or recall; but cheer-
fully confirm what was intended for pious and
charitable uses, that they may with their estates
inherit the blessing." *And the vessels did he put
among the treasures of, &c.*—With those which
David had dedicated, he laid up the altar of Moses,
and some other of the old utensils which belonged
to the tabernacle, as being of no further use, far
better being provided in their room. Indeed, the
tabernacle itself was thus laid up, for which, as
the temple was now built, there was no further occa-
sion; and yet it was proper to preserve the parts
of so sacred a structure, which had been formed, in
all respects, by divine direction, and had long been
holy to the Lord.

So was ended all the work—"Concerning this
temple, we may observe, upon the whole, that the
glory of it did not consist in its bulk or largeness,
(for in itself it was but a small pile of building, no
more than one hundred and fifty feet in length, and
one hundred and five in breadth, taking the whole
together, and is exceeded by many of our parish

churches,) but its chief grandeur and excellence lay in its out-buildings and ornaments, in its workmanship, which was everywhere very curious, and in its overlayers, which were vast and prodigious. The overlaying of the holy of holies only, which was a room but thirty feet square and twenty high, amounted to six hundred talents of gold, which comes to four millions three hundred and twenty thousand pounds of our sterling money. 'The whole frame,' says Josephus, 'was raised upon stones, polished to the highest degree of perfection, and so artificially put together, that there was no joint to be discerned, no sign of any working-tools having been upon them, but the whole looked more like the work of providence and nature, than the product of art and human invention. And as for the inside, what carving, gilding, embroidery, rich silks, and fine linen could do, of these there was the greatest profusion. The very floor of the temple was overlaid with beaten gold; the doors were large, and proportioned to the height of the walls, twenty cubits broad, and still gold upon gold.' *Antiq.*, lib. viii. chap. 2. In a word, it was gold all over, and nothing was wanting, either within or without, that might contribute to the glory and magnificence of the work."—Dr. Dodd. Some have intimated, that one principal reason why Solomon bestowed all this outward splendour and glory on the temple of the one living and true God, probably was that he might keep the people from idolatry, knowing how much they were taken with such things. Certainly none of the idol temples were to be compared to it for riches and magnificence. Indeed, there was nothing like it in the whole world. But if this were any part of his design, the event showed how far it was

from being answered thereby, and how little the expedient availed. Multitudes of the Israelites, and those not only of the more distant tribes, but even of the tribe of Judah itself, in the very midst of whom this most splendid and sumptuous fabric stood, soon relapsed into that most unreasonable and stupid of all sins. Nearly the whole Hebrew nation, even, became idolatrous. Nay, what is more astonishing, Solomon himself, who erected this most costly and superb edifice, was drawn away from the worship of that God to whose honour he had raised it, and was turned in his heart after other gods, chap xi. 4; so true it is, that nothing merely external, whether in the place or ceremonies of God's worship, however sumptuous or dazzling, can engage or secure the attachment of fallen man to him and his service. An acquaintance with his spiritual and holy nature and infinite perfections, and his love shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost given unto us, can only effect this; which blessings if we would receive and retain, we must keep our hearts with all diligence, and not suffer their desires to wander after vain things, which cannot profit. Had Solomon continued to attend to this, his own advice, the glory of his youth would not have suffered so dreadful an eclipse in his declining years; but the bright example of his wisdom and piety would have continued to shine with undiminished, nay, with increasing lustre, to the credit of the true religion, and the edification of millions, while he himself, in soul and body, would have remained a temple of the living God, a habitation of Jehovah through the Spirit, a fabric unspeakably more glorious than that which, with such immense expense of treasure, time, and labour, he had erected in Jerusalem.

CHAPTER VIII.

The chief men of Israel called together, 1, 2. The ark fixed in the most holy place, 3-9. God takes possession of it by a cloud, 10-12. Solomon tells the people the occasion of their meeting, 13-21. The prayer of dedication, 22-53. He dismisses the assembly with a blessing and an exhortation, 54-61. Offers abundance of sacrifices, 62-66.

A. M. 3000. B. C. 1004. **T**HEN ^aSolomon assembled the elders of Israel, and all the heads of the tribes, the ¹chief of the fathers of the children of Israel, unto King Solomon in Jerusalem, ^bthat they might bring up the ark of

the covenant of the LORD ^cout of A. M. 3000. the city of David, which is Zion. B. C. 1004.

2 And all the men of Israel assembled themselves unto King Solomon at the ^dfeast in the month Ethanim, which is the seventh month.

^a 1 Chron. v. 2, &c.—¹ Heb. *princes*.—^b 2 Sam. vi. 17.

^c 2 Sam. v. 7, 9; vi. 12, 16.—^d Lev. xxiii. 24; 2 Chron. vii. 8.

NOTES ON CHAPTER VIII.

Verse 1. *Solomon assembled the elders of Israel*—The senators, and judges, and rulers. *And all the heads of the tribes*—For each tribe had a peculiar head or governor. *The chief of the fathers*—The principal person of every great family in each tribe. *Unto King Solomon, in Jerusalem*—Where the temple was built, and now finished. *That they might bring up the ark*—With solemn pomp to the top of Moriah, (upon which mountain the temple

stood,) in order that by this their attendance they might make a public profession of the respect, obedience, and service which they owed unto that God, who had been graciously and gloriously present with the ark. *Out of the city of David, which is Zion*—That is, called Zion. Thither David had brought the ark from the house of Obed-Edom, and had made a tabernacle for it, (2 Sam. vi. 12, 17,) until a fixed house should be prepared.

Verse 2. *All the men of Israel assembled*—Not

A. M. 3000. **3** And all the elders of Israel came,
B. C. 1004. * and the priests took up the ark.

4 And they brought up the ark of the LORD,
and the tabernacle of the congregation, and
all the holy vessels that were in the taberna-
cle, even those did the priests and the Levites
bring up.

5 And King Solomon, and all the congrega-
tion of Israel, that were assembled unto him,

* Num. iv. 15; Deut. xxxi. 9; Joshua iii. 3, 6; 1 Chron. xv.
14, 15.—† Chap. iii. 4; 2 Chron. i. 3.

only the chief men, who were particularly invited, but a vast number of the common people, as being desirous to see and join in this great and glorious solemnity. *At the feast*—This feast of the dedication to which Solomon had invited them. *In the month Ethanim, which is the seventh month*—This time he chose for the people's greater convenience, because now they had gathered in all their fruits, and were going up to Jerusalem to celebrate the feast of tabernacles. But it may be objected, "According to chap. vi. 38, the temple was not finished till the eighth month, how then could he invite them to the dedication of it in the seventh month?" To this it must be answered, It was the seventh month of the next year. For although the house in all its parts was finished the year before, yet, it seems, the utensils of it were not then fully finished; and many preparations were to be made for this great and extraordinary occasion. Add to this, that Solomon chose to defer this solemnity till the next year, that he might celebrate it with the greater magnificence, that being the year of jubilee, their ninth, according to Archbishop Usher, which opened the fourth millenary of the world; and at the solemnity of the jubilee, there used to be always a vast concourse of people from all parts of the kingdom. "This ceremony" then of the dedication "began on the eighth day of the seventh month of the sacred year, which was the first of the civil year, answering to the latter end of our October, and lasted seven days, at the end of which began the feast of tabernacles."

Verse 3. The priests took up the ark—The ark had been carried by the priests three times before this; when they went over Jordan; when they encompassed the walls of Jericho; and when David sent it back by Zadok and Abiathar, at the time when he fled from Absalom. It was, however, the office of the Levites to carry the ark, which they did, except upon special occasions, of which this was one. The priests were now appointed to carry it for the greater honour of the solemnity; and because the Levites might not enter into the holy place, much less into the holy of holies, where it was to be placed, into which the priests themselves might not have entered, if the high-priest alone could have done this work without them.

Verse 4. And the tabernacle of the congregation—That made by Moses, which doubtless before this

were with him before the ark, * sa- A. M. 3000.
crificing sheep and oxen, that could B. C. 1004.
not be told nor numbered for multitude.

6 And the priests ^h brought in the ark of the covenant of the LORD unto ⁱ his place, into the oracle of the house, to the most holy place, even ^k under the wings of the cherubims.

7 For the cherubims spread forth *their* two wings over the place of the ark, and the cherub-

† 2 Sam. vi. 13.—‡ 2 Sam. vi. 17.—§ Exodus xxvi. 33, 34; Chap. vi. 19.—|| Chap. vi. 27.

time had been removed from Gibeon to Zion. *And all the holy vessels*—Namely, the altar of incense, the table of show-bread, the candlestick, and every thing belonging to them; all these were now carried into the temple, and laid up there, to prevent all idolatrous and superstitious use of them, and to oblige the people to come up to Jerusalem, as the only place where sacrifices were now to be offered, and the various ceremonies of public worship performed.

Verse 5. King Solomon, and all the congregation with him before the ark—This ceremony of removing the ark from the tabernacle which David had erected for it, to the temple, and depositing it in the most holy place, was opened with a pompous procession. The king himself, accompanied by all his chief officers and the elders of Israel, marched before the ark; these were followed by a great number of priests and Levites, who sung some canticles proper to the occasion, and played upon various instruments. Next to the ark followed another number of singers and players, with other priests bearing the tabernacle and the sacred utensils of the sanctuary, which had been brought from Gibeon. While the priests were placing the ark in the most holy place, the air rung with the sound of a hundred and twenty trumpets, and with the voices of the Levites, who sang the praises of God, repeating these words at proper intervals; *Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good; and his mercy endureth for ever.* It was then that God seemed to come down in a visible manner, to take possession, as it were, of his new temple, by filling it with a glorious cloud, as he had formerly done the tabernacle; inasmuch that the priests could not stand to offer up the sacrifices which they had prepared upon that occasion. See Universal Hist. *Sacrificing sheep and oxen that could not be numbered*—When the ark was seated in its place; for although they might in the way offer some sacrifices, as David did, yet that was not a proper season to offer so many sacrifices as could not be numbered. This is more particularly related below, (verses 62-64,) and is here only mentioned by way of anticipation.

Verses 6-8. Under the wings of the cherubim—Which Solomon had made. For the cherubim made by Moses were fixed to the mercy-seat and the ark, and were inseparable from it, and therefore, together with the ark, were placed under the wings

A. M. 3000. imms covered the ark and the staves
B. C. 1004. thereof above.

8 And they ¹drew out the staves, that the ²ends of the staves were seen out in the ³holy place before the oracle, and they were not seen without: and there they are unto this day.

9 ^m There was nothing in the ark ⁿ save the two tables of stone, which Moses ^o put there at Horeb, ⁴ when ^p the LORD made a covenant with the children of Israel, when they came out of the land of Egypt.

10 ¶ And it came to pass, when the priests were come out of the holy place, that the cloud ^q filled the house of the LORD,

11 So that the priests could not stand to minister because of the cloud: for the glory of

¹ Exod. xxv. 14, 15. — ² Heb. heads. — ³ Or, ark, as 2 Chron. v. 9. — ^m Exod. xxv. 21; Deut. x. 2. — ^o Deut. x. 5; Heb. ix. 4. — ^o Exod. xl. 20. — ⁴ Or, where. — ^p Exod. xxxiv. 27, 28; Deut. iv. 13; Verse 21. — ^q Exod. xl. 34, 35; 2 Chron. v. 13, 14; vii. 2.

of these cherubim. *And they drew out the staves*—Not wholly, which was expressly forbidden, (Exod. xxv. 15; Num. iv. 6,) but in part. *That the ends of the staves were seen out in the holy place*—That is, the most holy, often called the holy place by way of eminence. And the next clause *before the oracle*, may be as well rendered, *within the oracle*. These staves were left in this posture, that the high-priest might thereby be certainly guided to that very place where he was, one day in a year, to sprinkle blood, and to offer incense *before the ark*, which otherwise he might have mistaken in that dark place, where the ark was wholly covered with the wings of the great cherubim, which stood between him and the ark when he entered in. *They were not seen without*—In the sanctuary. *There they are unto this day*—In that posture, namely, when this book was written.

Verse 9. *There was nothing in the ark, &c.*—Strictly and properly speaking. But in a looser sense, *the pot of manna*, and *Aaron's rod* were also *in or by it*, (Heb. ix. 4,) being placed by Moses, as God commanded, (Num. xvii. 10,) *before the ark of the testimony*, in the most holy place.

Verses 10, 11. *When the priests were come out of the holy place*—That is, the most holy, where they had set down the ark. *The cloud*—The usual token of God's glorious presence, Exod. xvi. 10, and xxiv. 15, 16; Num. ix. 15; *filled the house of the Lord*—In testimony of his gracious acceptance of this work and their service; and to beget an awe and reverence in them and in all others when they approached to God. *So that the priests could not stand to minister*—By this it appears that the cloud filled the whole house, as well as the most holy place: for it was at the altar of incense in the sanctuary that the priests ministered. And it was either so bright that it dazzled their eyes; or rather, as the next verse seems to imply, so dark that it struck them with horror and amazement. Probably it

the LORD had filled the house of A. M. 3000.
the LORD. B. C. 1004.

12 ¶ Then spake Solomon, The LORD said that he would dwell ^r in the thick darkness.

13 I have surely built thee a house to dwell in, ^s a settled place for thee to abide in for ever.

14 And the king turned his face about, and ^t blessed all the congregation of Israel: and all the congregation of Israel stood;

15 And he said, ^v Blessed be the LORD God of Israel, which ^u spake with his mouth unto David my father, and hath with his hand fulfilled it, saying,

16 ^w Since the day that I brought forth my people Israel out of Egypt, I chose no city out of all the tribes of Israel to build a house, that

^r 2 Chron. vi. 1, &c. — ^s Lev. xvi. 2; Psa. xviii. 11; xcvii. 2. — ^t 2 Samuel vii. 13. — ^u Psalm cxxxii. 14. — ^v 2 Samuel vi. 18. — ^w Luke i. 68. — ^x 2 Samuel vii. 5, 25. — ^y 2 Samuel vii. 6; 2 Chron. vi. 5, &c.

was first excessively dark, and afterward broke out in overpowering light and splendour.

Verse 12. *Then spake Solomon*—Perceiving both priests and people to be struck with consternation and horror at this supernatural and sudden darkness, he uttered the words which follow, to compose their minds and comfort them. *The Lord said he would dwell in the thick darkness*—This dark cloud, therefore, is not a sign of his displeasure, as some may imagine, but rather a token of his special presence with us, and approbation of us, and that he owns this for his house, and will dwell in it, according to his declaration respecting the tabernacle, that he would *appear in a cloud upon the mercy-seat*, Lev. xvi. 2. See also Deut. iv. 11, and v. 22; Psa. xcvi. 2; Exod. xl. 35.

Verse 13. *I have surely built thee a house to dwell in*—He turns his speech from them to God, as entering into the house, and expresses his desire and hope that he would continue to manifest, by such visible tokens, that he was present in it, and would, as it were, make it the place of his special and stated abode. *A settled place for thee*—Not a tabernacle, made to be carried about from place to place, but a durable and perpetual habitation.

Verse 14. *The king turned his face about*—From the court of the priests and the sanctuary, to the body of the congregation who were in the court designed for the people. *And blessed all the congregation*—Probably in that form of words which God himself had prescribed, Num. vi. 23–25. *All the congregation stood*—In token of reverence to God, and respect to the king, and of their readiness to receive his blessing, and the blessing of God through his instrumentality.

Verses 15, 16. *Which spake with his mouth unto David, &c.*—He acknowledges the grace and goodness of God in making the promise, and his truth and faithfulness in fulfilling it. *I chose no city*—

A. M. 3000. ^b my name might be therein ; but I
B. C. 1004. chose ^c David to be over my people
Israel.

17 And ^d it was in the heart of David my
father to build a house for the name of the
LORD God of Israel.

18 ^e And the LORD said unto David my
father, Whereas it was in thy heart to build a
house unto my name, thou didst well that it
was in thy heart.

19 Nevertheless, ^f thou shalt not build the
house ; but thy son that shall come forth out
of thy loins, he shall build the house unto my
name.

20 And the LORD hath performed his word
that he spake, and I am risen up in the room
of David my father, and sit on the throne of
Israel, ^g as the LORD promised, and have built a
house for the name of the LORD God of Israel.

21 And I have set there a place for the ark,
wherein ^h is the covenant of the LORD, which

^b Verse 29 ; Deut. xii. 11.—^c 1 Sam. xvi. 1 ; 2 Sam. vii. 8 ;
1 Chronicles xxviii. 4.—^d 2 Samuel vii. 2 ; 1 Chron. xvii. 1.
^e 2 Chron. vi. 8, 9.—^f 2 Samuel vii. 5, 12, 13 ; Chap. v. 3, 5.
^g 1 Chron. xxviii. 5, 6.—^h Verse 9 ; Deuteronomy xxxi. 26.
ⁱ 2 Chron. vi. 12, &c.

Until David's time ; for then he did choose Jerusa-
lem. *That my name might be therein*—Not only,
which should be called by my name, namely, the
house of Jehovah : but that my presence, and grace,
and worship, and glory, might be there. *But I
chose David*—And in and with him the tribe of
Judah, to which he belonged, and Jerusalem, where
he dwelt.

Verses 17–20. *It was in the heart of David my
father*—In his desire and purpose, as this and the
like phrase is often used. *Thou didst well that it
was in thine heart*—Thy intention and affection
were well pleasing to me, although I did not per-
mit thee, for wise reasons, to put thy pious designs
into execution. *The Lord hath performed his word*
—He concludes, as he began, with a thankful ac-
knowledgment of God's goodness in fulfilling his
promise.

Verse 21. *I have set there a place for the ark*—
The token of God's presence with us ; *wherein is
the covenant of the Lord*—That is, the tables of the
covenant, in which are written the conditions of
God's covenant with our fathers. *When he brought
them out of the land of Egypt*—And declared to
them that by the tenure of this covenant they were
to hold the land of Canaan.

Verse 22. *Solomon stood before the altar of the
Lord*—He had erected a brazen scaffold, of five
cubits long, five cubits broad, and three cubits high,
(2 Chron. vi. 13,) and on this he stood, raised above
the people, who were in the court and in the galle-
ries round about, observing him, and disposed to

he made with our fathers, when he ^{A. M. 3000}
brought them out of the land of ^{B. C. 1004.}
Egypt.

22 ¶ And Solomon stood before ⁱ the altar
of the LORD in the presence of all the congre-
gation of Israel, and ^k spread forth his hands
toward heaven :

23 And he said, LORD God of Israel, ^m *there
is no God like thee, in heaven above, or on
earth beneath, ⁿ who keepest covenant and
mercy with thy servants that ^o walk before
thee with all their heart :*

24 Who hast kept with thy servant David
my father that thou promisedst him : thou
spakest also with thy mouth, and hast fulfilled
it with thy hand, as *it is* this day.

25 Therefore now, LORD God of Israel, keep
with thy servant David my father that thou
promisedst him, saying, ^p *There^q shall not fail
thee a man in my sight to sit on the throne
of Israel ; ^r so that thy children take heed to*

^k Exod. ix. 33 ; Ezra ix. 5 ; Isa. i. 15.—^m Exod. xv. 11 ;
2 Sam. vii. 22.—ⁿ Deut. vii. 9 ; Nehemiah i. 5 ; Dan. ix. 4.
^o Gen. xvii. 1 ; Chap. iii. 6 ; 2 Kings xx. 3.—^p Chap. ii. 4 ;
2 Sam. vii. 12, 16.—^q Or, *There shall not be cut off unto thee a
man from my sight.*—^r Heb. only if.

hearken, with profound attention, to what he should
further say. And, having spoken the foregoing
words with his face toward them, and blessed them,
he now turned about again with his face toward the
altar, that he might address a solemn prayer to God,
and so dedicate the sacred building to his worship
and service. *And spread forth his hands toward
heaven*—A solemn posture in which prayer was
wont to be made, not only among the Jews, but other
nations. It appears from verse 54 of this chapter,
that when he had stood awhile with his face to-
ward the altar, he fell down upon his knees, and
uttered the greatest part of the following prayer in
the posture of kneeling.

Verses 23, 24. *Lord God of Israel, there is none
like thee*—He here acknowledges the transcendent
excellences of Jehovah ; and again particularly ex-
tols his faithfulness to those who serve him sin-
cerely. *Who hast kept with thy servant David
that thou promisedst*—That branch of thy promise
concerning the building of this house by his son.

Verse 25. *Therefore now keep, &c.*—Make good
the other branch of thy promise. He considered
God's fulfilling the foregoing part of his promise,
as an earnest that he would accomplish the other
part also, made at the same time, concerning David's
posterity, 2 Sam. vii. 12, 13. *So that thy children
take heed to their way*—Solomon here acknow-
ledges that the accomplishment of the promise re-
specting the continuance of the kingdom in David's
family, depended on their continuance in the faith
and worship of God : and that, if they became idol-

A. M. 3000. their way, that they walk before me
B. C. 1004. as thou hast walked before me.

26 ^a And now, O God of Israel, let thy word, I pray thee, be verified, which thou spakest unto thy servant David my father.

27 But ^r will God indeed dwell on the earth? behold the heaven and ^a heaven of heavens cannot contain thee; how much less this house that I have builded?

28 Yet have thou respect unto the prayer of thy servant, and to his supplication, O LORD my God, to hearken unto the cry and to the prayer, which thy servant prayeth before thee to-day:

29 That thine eyes may be open toward this

^a 2 Sam. vii. 25.—^r 2 Chron. ii. 6; Isa. lvi. 1; Jer. xxiii. 24; Acts vii. 49; xvii. 24.—² 2 Cor. xii. 2.—⁴ Deut. xii. 11. ⁵ Dan. vi. 10.

aters, they rendered themselves unworthy of this privilege, and forfeited all right to the inheritance of the kingdom, being no longer David's genuine children. And therefore, according to Solomon's own acknowledgment, after he and Rehoboam had departed from the worship of God, and began to follow idols, God might justly have taken away the kingdom from their posterity. And indeed when all Israel forsook the Lord, and worshipped the gods of the nations round about them, he did forsake their land, and would no longer dwell among them.

Verse 27. *But will God indeed dwell on earth?*—Is it possible that the great and high and holy God, the infinite, the eternal, should stoop so low as to take up his dwelling among men? *Behold the heaven, &c.*—All this vast space of the visible heaven; nay, the third and highest, therefore most extensive heaven, called, for its eminence and comprehensiveness, *the heaven of heavens, cannot contain thee*—For thy essence reacheth far beyond them, being omnipresent. *Much less this house*—Which, therefore, was not built as if it were proportionable to thy greatness, or could contain thee, but only that therein we might serve and glorify thee.

Verses 28, 29. *Yet have thou respect, &c.*—Though thou art not comprehended within this place, yet show thyself to be graciously present here, by accepting and granting my present request here offered unto thee. *That thine eyes may be open toward this house*—To behold it with favourable regards, and have a gracious respect unto all that come to present their petitions here. *Thou hast said, My name shall be there*—My presence, glory, and grace. *Hearken to the prayer which thy servant shall make toward this place*—This temple, to which Solomon now looked, and to which he directs the people to look in their prayers. Not as if he thought all the devout prayers, offered up to God by those who had no knowledge of this house, or regard to it, were therefore rejected; but he desired that the sensible tokens of the divine presence, with which

house night and day, *even toward* A. M. 3000.
the place of which thou hast said, B. C. 1004.

⁴ My name shall be there: that thou mayest hearken unto the prayer which thy servant shall make ^a toward ⁷ this place.

30 ^a And hearken thou to the supplication of thy servant, and of thy people Israel, when they shall pray ^a toward this place: and hear thou in heaven thy dwelling-place: and when thou hearest, forgive.

31 ¶ If any man trespass against his neighbour, ^a and ^r an oath be laid upon him to cause him to swear, and the oath come before thine altar in this house:

⁷ Or, in this place.—^a 2 Chron. xx. 9; Neh. i. 6.—⁸ Or, in this place.—⁹ Heb. and he require an oath of him, Lev. v. 1. ⁷ Exod. xxii. 11.

this house was blessed, might always give sensible encouragement and comfort to believing petitioners.

Verse 30. *When they shall pray toward this place*—None but the priests might enter that place, but when the people worshipped in the courts of the temple, it was to be with an eye toward it, not with a superstitious regard or veneration, as though it were holy in itself, or in any respect the ground of their confidence in their worship, which would have been idolatry; but, as an instituted medium of their worship, helping the weakness of their faith, and typifying the mediation of Jesus Christ, who is the true temple, and to whom we must have an eye in all our approaches to, and intercourse with, God. Hence, the pious Jews that were at a distance looked toward Jerusalem for the sake of the temple, even when it lay in ruins, Dan. vi. 10. *Hear thou in heaven*—Which he adds to direct them, in their addresses to God in or looking toward this temple, to lift up their eyes above it, even to heaven, where God's most true and most proper dwelling-place is. *When thou hearest, forgive*—The sins of thy people praying, and even of their prayers; which sins, if not pardoned, will certainly hinder the success of all their prayers, and the course of all thy blessings.

Verse 31. *If any man, &c.*—He now puts divers cases in which he supposed application would be made to God in prayer, in or toward this house of prayer; and first that of God's being appealed to by an oath for the determining of any controverted right between man and man. *If any man trespass against his neighbour*—If a man be accused of a trespass. *And an oath be laid upon him*—Either by the judge, or by the party accusing him, or by the accused person himself, claiming the privilege of perjuring himself by an oath from the trespass laid to his charge, which was usual when there were no witnesses. Solomon seems here to refer chiefly to the case of those who were accused of denying that which was said to be deposited with them by their neighbour. *And the oath come before thine*

A. M. 3000. 32 Then hear thou in heaven, and
B. C. 1004. do, and judge thy servants, * con-
demning the wicked, to bring his way upon
his head; and justifying the righteous, to give
him according to his righteousness.

33 ¶ * When thy people Israel be smitten
down before the enemy, because they have
sinned against thee, and ^b shall turn again to
thee, and confess thy name, and pray, and
make supplication unto thee ¹⁰ in this house :

34 Then hear thou in heaven, and forgive
the sin of thy people Israel, and bring them
again unto the land which thou gavest unto
their fathers.

35 ¶ * When heaven is shut up, and there is
no rain, because they have sinned against thee ;

* Deut. xxv. 1.—^a Lev. xxvi. 17; Deut. xxviii. 25.—^b Lev.
xxvi. 39, 40; Neh. i. 9.—^c Or, toward.—^e Lev. xxvi. 19;
Deut. xxviii. 23.

altar—Where God, who was appealed to as a witness, was supposed to be especially present. Hence the heathen were wont to swear at their altars; calling on their gods to witness to the truth of what they said, and to punish them if they uttered any falsehood therein.

Verse 32. *Then hear thou in heaven, and do, and judge*—Discover the truth, and judge between the contending parties. He prays that in difficult matters his throne of grace might be a throne of judgment, from which God would right the injured that believingly appealed to it; and punish the injurious that presumptuously appealed to it. *To bring his way upon his head*—The just recompense of his wicked action and course. *And justifying the righteous, to give him, &c.*—To vindicate him, and manifest his integrity.

Verses 33, 34. *When thy people be smitten*—This is the second case he puts. If the people of Israel were in general groaning under any national calamity, he desires that the prayers which they should make in or toward that house might be heard and answered. *Shall turn again to thee, and confess thy name*—Not only shall acknowledge thee to be God alone, renouncing all false gods; but shall give glory to thy name by acknowledging their sins and thy justice; by accepting the punishment of their iniquity; and by trusting to thy power and goodness alone for deliverance. *And make supplication to thee in this house*—Trusting in thee, and expecting help from thee alone. *Then hear, and bring them again, &c.*—Deliver them out of the captivity into which their enemies may have carried them, and restore them to their own country.

Verse 35. *When heaven is shut up*—The lower or aerial heaven, in which the clouds are. This is compared to a great storehouse in God's keeping, out of which nothing can be obtained so long as it is close shut up. And as he is said to bring

if they pray toward this place, and A. M. 3000.
confess thy name, and turn from their B. C. 1004.
sin, when thou afflictest them :

36 Then hear thou in heaven, and forgive
the sin of thy servants, and of thy people
Israel, that thou ^d teach them * the good way
wherein they should walk, and give rain upon
thy land, which thou hast given thy people for
an inheritance.

37 ¶ ' If there be in the land famine, if there
be pestilence, blasting, mildew, locust, or if there
be caterpillar; if their enemy besiege them in
the land of their ¹¹ cities, whatsoever plague,
whatsoever sickness *there be* ;

38 What prayer and supplication soever be
made by any man, or by all thy people Israel,

^d Psa. xxv. 4; xxvii. 11; xciv. 12; cxliii. 8.—^e 1 Sam. xii.
23.—^f Lev. xxvi. 16, 25, 26; Deut. xxviii. 21, 22, 27, 38, 42,
52; 2 Chron. xx. 9.—¹¹ Or, jurisdiction.

the wind, (Psalm cxxxv. 7,) so the rain, out of this treasury.

Verse 36. *That thou teach them the good way*—The way of their duty, which is good in itself, and both delightful and profitable to those that walk in it. But this clause is better translated, 2 Chron. vi. 27, (where the Hebrew words are the same with these here,) *When thou hast taught them the good way wherein they should walk*, namely, when their afflictions have had the desired effect to teach them better obedience. *And give rain upon the land*—The order of Solomon's prayer is very observable; first and chiefly, he prays for their repentance and forgiveness, which is the chief blessing, and the only solid foundation of all other mercies; and then he prays for temporal mercies, thereby teaching us what to desire principally in our prayers; which also Christ hath taught us in his perfect prayer, wherein there is but one petition for outward, and all the rest are for spiritual blessings.

Verse 37. *If there be in the land famine*—Which arose sometimes from other causes besides want of rain. *If their enemy besiege them in the land of their cities*—In their gates, whereby they should be so straitened, that none could go in or out. *Whatsoever plague*—The word נֶגַע, *negang*, here rendered *plague*, properly signifies some extraordinary stroke by the hand of God. *Whatsoever sickness there be*—For Solomon believed whatever calamity befel other people, might light on Israel.

Verse 38. *What prayer and supplication soever be made by any man*—Distressed through national calamities, or private and personal troubles. He now comes to speak of the case of individual Israelites. If any man of Israel has an errand to thee, here let him find thee, here let him find favour with thee. He does not instance in particulars; so numerous, so various are the grievances of the children of men. *Which shall know every man the*

A. M. 3000. which shall know every man the
B. C. 1004. plague of his own heart, and spread
forth his hands toward this house :

39 Then hear thou in heaven thy dwelling-
place, and forgive, and do, and give to every
man according to his ways, whose heart thou
knowest ; (for thou, *even* thou only, ^ε knowest
the hearts of all the children of men ;)

40 ^h That they may fear thee all the days that
they live in the land which thou gavest unto
our fathers.

41 ¶ Moreover, concerning a stranger, that is
not of thy people Israel, but cometh out of a far
country for thy name's sake ;

^ε 1 Samuel xvi. 7 ; 1 Chronicles xxviii. 9 ; Psalm xi. 4 ;
Jeremiah xvii. 10 ; Acts i. 24.—^h Psalm cxxx. 4.—ⁱ Deut.
iii. 24.

plague of his own heart—His sinfulness, the corruption of his nature, which may be called the plague of his own heart, in opposition to the other plagues here mentioned : and so the sense is, Who by their afflictions are brought to a true and serious sense of the inward plague of their sins, which are most fitly called *the plague of the heart*, because the heart is both the principal seat of sin, and the fountain from whence all sinful thoughts, words, and actions flow. Now every true Israelite labours to know his heart, and the sinfulness and depravity of it, that he may resist and mortify the lusts, passions, and corrupt inclinations thereof, and may watch against the first risings of evil within him. Of these things he complains: these drive him to his knees and to the sanctuary, and, lamenting and seeking deliverance from these, he spreads forth his hands in prayer, as Hezekiah spread his letter before the Lord. Reader, is this thy practice ?

Verses 39, 40. *Give to every man according to his ways*—According to his repentance or impenitency. As if he had said, I pray with the greater hope and confidence, because I do not desire that thou wouldst deliver such as are insensible of their sins and of thy judgments, but only those that are truly brought to know the plague of their own hearts in the manner before explained. *Whose heart thou knowest*—Thou art acquainted not only with the *plague* of their hearts, their several wants and burdens, (these he knows, but he will know them from us,) but with the desire and intent of the heart, the sincerity or hypocrisy of it ; thou knowest who are truly penitent, and who are not, and therefore the granting my request will be no dishonour to thy government, nor injury to thy holy nature. *That they may fear thee all their days*—That when thou hast first smitten them, and then so eminently delivered them, and that in answer to their prayers, they may hereby be taught to fear thee, to stand in awe of thy justice, and to adore thy goodness.

Verses 41, 42. *Moreover, concerning a stranger*—The case of an alien, who is not an Israelite, is next

42 (For they shall hear of thy great ^{A. M. 3000.}
name, and of thy ^{B. C. 1004.} strong hand, and
of thy stretched-out arm ;) when he shall come
and pray toward this house ;

43 Hear thou in heaven thy dwelling-place,
and do according to all that the stranger calleth
to thee for : ^k that all people of the earth may
know thy name, to ^l fear thee, as *do* thy people
Israel ; and that they may know that ¹² this
house which I have builded is called by thy
name.

44 ¶ If thy people go out to battle against
their enemy, whithersoever thou shalt send
them, and shall pray unto the LORD ¹³ toward

^k 1 Sam. xvii. 46 ; 2 Kings xix. 19 ; Psa. lxxvii. 2.—^l Psalm
cii. 15.—¹² Heb. *thy name is called upon this house.*—¹³ Heb.
the way of the city.

mentioned ; a proselyte that might come to the temple to pray to the God of Israel, being convinced of the folly and wickedness of worshipping the gods of his country. He supposes there would be many such ; that the fame of God's great works which he had wrought for Israel ; by which he had proved himself to be above all gods, nay, to be God alone, would reach distant countries. *They shall hear of thy great name, and of thy strong hand*—And this will bring such as are thinking and considerate among them to pray toward this house, that they may obtain the favour of a God that is able to confer on them real blessings.

Verse 43. *Do according to all that the stranger calleth to thee for*—That is, so far as is agreeable to thy word and will. It is observable, that his prayer for the stranger is more large and comprehensive than for the Israelites ; that thereby he might both show his public spirit, and encourage strangers to the worship of the true God. Thus early were the indications of God's favour toward *the sinners of the Gentiles*. As there was then *one law for the native and for the stranger*, so there was one gospel for both. *That all the people of the earth may know thy name*—Hereby we learn how sincerely and heartily the ancient and godly Jews desired the conversion of the Gentiles ; whereas the latter and degenerate Jews, in the days of Christ and of the apostles, out of pride, envy, and malice, opposed and fretted at it. *That they may know that this house is called by thy name*—Is owned not only by us, but by thyself as thy house ; the only place in the world to which thou wilt vouchsafe thy special presence and protection, and where thou wilt be publicly and solemnly worshipped.

Verses 44, 45. *If thy people go out to battle*—In a just cause, and by thy warrant and commission. This is the next case recommended by Solomon to the divine favour. *Whithersoever thou shalt send them*—In this is implied, that it was unlawful for them to undertake any war merely for their own pleasure or profit, or the gratification of their own

A. M. 3000.
B. C. 1004. the city which thou hast chosen, and
toward the house that I have built
for thy name :

45 Then hear thou in heaven their prayer
and their supplication, and maintain their
¹⁴ cause.

46 If they sin against thee, (^a for *there is* no
man that sinneth not,) and thou be angry with
them, and deliver them to the enemy, so that
they carry them away captives ^b unto the land
of the enemy, far or near ;

47 ^c Yet if they shall ¹⁵ bethink themselves in
the land whither they were carried captives, and
repent, and make supplication unto thee in the
land of them that carried them captives, ^d say-
ing, We have sinned, and have done perversely,
we have committed wickedness ;

48 And so ^e return unto thee with all their

¹⁴ Or, right.—¹⁵ 2 Chron. vi. 36 ; Prov. xx. 9 ; Eccles. vii. 20 ;
Jam. iii. 2 ; 1 John i. 8, 10.—^a Lev. xxvi. 34, 44 ; Deut. xxviii.
36, 64.—^b Levit. xxvi. 40.—^c Heb. bring back to their heart.

worldly or ambitious desires; or to enlarge their
empire beyond its due bounds; and that they could
not, with a good conscience, pray to God for his
blessing on such a war. *And shall pray unto the
Lord*—Whereby he instructs them that they should
not trust either to the strength or justice of their
arms, but only to God's help and blessing, for which
they were to pray. *Toward the city which thou
hast chosen*—For thy dwelling-place, and the seat
of thy temple. *Toward the house which I have
built*—For to it they were to turn their faces in
prayer; to profess themselves worshippers of the
true God, in opposition to idols; and to strengthen
their faith in God's promises and covenant, the tables
whereof were contained in that house. *Soldiers*
in the field must not think it enough that others pray
for them; they must pray for themselves; and they
are here encouraged to expect a gracious answer.
Praying should always go along with fighting.
Maintain their cause—Declare the justice of their
cause by giving them the victory.

Verse 46. *If they sin against thee*—The universal
corruption of man's whole race and nature, makes
me presage that they will fall into sins; and withal
makes me hope that thou wilt not be severe to deal
with them as their sins deserve. *For there is no
man that sinneth not*—That doth not fall short of
his duty in many respects, "that doth not enough,"
says Henry, "to justify God in the severest rebukes
of his providence." And "no man but what is in
danger of falling even into gross sin, and will, if God
leave him to himself." Thus the Hebrew, אֲשֶׁר לֹא
יִשְׁכַּח, *asher lo jecheta, who may not, or will not,
sin*, even openly and wilfully, if divine grace pre-
vent not. This last sense of the clause seems best
to suit the context, as well as to express the meaning

heart, and with all their soul, in the A. M. 3000.
land of their enemies which led them B. C. 1004.

away captive, and ^f pray unto thee toward their
land, which thou gavest unto their fathers, the
city which thou hast chosen, and the house
which I have built for thy name :

49 Then hear thou their prayer and their
supplication in heaven thy dwelling-place, and
maintain their ¹⁶ cause,

50 And forgive thy people that have sinned
against thee, and all their transgressions wherein
they have transgressed against thee, and ^g give
them compassion before them who carried them
captive, that they may have compassion on
them :

51 For ^h they be thy people, and thine inherit-
ance which thou broughtest forth out of Egypt,
ⁱ from the midst of the furnace of iron :

^f Neh. i. 6 ; Psa. cvi. 6 ; Dan. ix. 5.—^g Jer. xxix. 12, 13, 14.
^h Dan. vi. 10.—ⁱ Or, right.—^j Ezra vii. 6 ; Psalm cvi. 46.
^k Deut. ix. 29 ; Neh. i. 10.—^l Deut. iv. 20 ; Jer. xi. 4.

of the original. And, thus understood, the words
do not contradict the declaration of St. John, that
he who is born of God, sinneth not; that is, doth
not commit known and actual sin; but has power
over it, and is careful to shun the appearance of evil.
See notes on 1 John iii. 4–10, and v. 18 ; Rom. vi. 14.
Solomon did not mean that the weakness of human
nature, and its proneness to sin, would excuse known
and wilful offences against God, especially apostacy
from him and his service, which was the cause of all
the calamities of the Israelites.

Verses 47–49. *If they shall bethink themselves*—
Consider their ways, and reflect on their past con-
duct as the cause of their sufferings. Hebrew, *If they
shall bring back their hearts* from their idols and
vanities; from going out after, and trusting in, any
creature. *And repent*—Afflictions are calculated
to bring men, first to serious consideration, and then
to repentance; and when they are truly penitent,
they will confess their sins and humble themselves.
Saying—Sensibly, and with an honest heart; *we
have sinned and done perversely*. *And return unto
thee with all their heart and all their soul*—Sincere-
ly, universally, and steadfastly. *Then hear thou,
and maintain their cause*—Hebrew, *their right*
against their invaders and oppressors; for they had
forfeited all their rights to God only, but not to
their enemies; whom though God used as scourges
to chastise his people's sins, yet they had no pretence
of right to their land.

Verses 50, 51. *That they may have compassion
on them*—Treat them mercifully while they continue
their slaves, and give them liberty to return to their
own land. God has the hearts of all men in his
hands, and can, when he pleaseth, turn the strongest
stream the contrary way, and cause those to pity

A. M. 3000. 52 That thine eyes may be open
B. C. 1004. unto the supplication of thy servant,
and unto the supplication of thy people Israel,
to hearken unto them in all that they call for
unto thee.

53 For thou didst separate them from among
all the people of the earth, to be thine inheri-
tance, ² as thou spakest by the hand of Moses
thy servant, when thou broughtest our fathers
out of Egypt, O Lord God.

54 ¶ And it was so, that when Solomon had
made an end of praying all this prayer and
supplication unto the LORD, he arose from be-
fore the altar of the LORD, from kneeling on his
knees with his hands spread up to heaven.

55 And he stood ⁷ and blessed all the congre-
gation of Israel with a loud voice, saying,

56 Blessed be the LORD, that hath given rest
unto his people Israel, according to all that he

^a Exodus xix. 5; Deut. ix. 26, 29; xiv. 2.—⁷ 2 Sam. vi. 18.
^b Deuteron. xii. 10; Joshua xxi. 45; xxiii. 14.—¹⁷ Heb. fallen.
^c Deuteron. xxxi. 6; Joshua i. 5.

his people, who have been their most cruel persecutors. For they be thy people—How much soever they may sin against thee, or suffer from men, yet still remember they are thy peculiar people, received into covenant with thee, and taken under thy care and protection. And thine inheritance—From whom, more than from any other nation, thy rent and tribute of glory arises. Which thou broughtest from the furnace of iron—From cruel bondage, and painful labours. For he compares Egypt to a furnace in which iron and other metals are melted, or which, being made of iron, is more hot and terrible than one of brick and stone, to signify the misery and torment which the Israelites endured there.

Verse 53. For thou didst separate them to be thine inheritance—Thou hast begun a work of great and glorious mercy to them; do not give occasion to thine enemies to think thou wast unable to finish it; or that thou art inconstant in thy ways and purposes, or unkind to thy own children.

Verses 55, 56. He stood and blessed all the congregation, &c.—He spoke what follows standing, that he might be the better heard, and because he blessed as one having authority. Never were words more pertinently spoken; never was a congregation dismissed with that which was more likely to affect them, and to abide with them. Blessed be the Lord that hath given rest, &c., according to all that he promised—Thus he, as it were, writes a receipt in full on the back of the bonds of the divine promises. There hath not failed one word of all his good promises—This discharge he gives in the name of all Israel, to the everlasting honour of the divine faithfulness, and the everlasting encouragement of all those who build on the divine promises.

promised: ^a there hath not ¹⁷ failed one
word of all his good promise, which
he promised by the hand of Moses his servant.

57 The LORD our God be with us, as he was
with our fathers; ^a let him not leave us, nor
forsake us:

58 That he may ^b incline our hearts unto
him, to walk in all his ways, and to keep his
commandments, and his statutes, and his judg-
ments, which he commanded our fathers.

59 And let these my words wherewith I have
made supplication before the LORD, be nigh
unto the LORD our God day and night, that he
maintain the cause of his servant, and the cause
of his people Israel ¹⁸ at all times, as the matter
shall require:

60 ^c That all the people of the earth may
know that ^d the LORD is God, and that there
is none else.

^b Psalm cxix. 36.—¹⁸ Heb. the thing of a day in his day.
^c Joshua iv. 24; 1 Sam. xvii. 46; 2 Kings xix. 19.—^d Deut.
iv. 35, 39.

Verse 58. That he may incline our hearts unto him—That he may not only bless us with outward prosperity and glory; but especially with spiritual blessings; and that as he has given us his word to teach and direct us; so he would, by his Holy Spirit, effectually incline us to obey it.

Verse 59. Let these my words be nigh unto the Lord our God, day and night—Let a gracious return be made to every prayer that shall be made there, and that will be a constant answer to this prayer. That he maintain the cause of his servant and of his people—Of me their king, and consequently of all my successors, and of the whole kingdom. As the matters shall require—According to mine or their various necessities and exigences. What Solomon asks here, with regard to his prayer, is still granted in the intercession of Christ, of which his supplication was a type; that powerful, prevailing intercession, is before the Lord our God day and night. For our great Advocate attends continually to this very thing, and we may depend on him to maintain our cause, against the adversary that accuseth us day and night, (Rev. xii. 10.) and the common cause of his people Israel at all times, upon all occasions, as the matter shall require, so as to speak for us the word of the day in its day, as the original here reads it, from which we shall receive grace sufficient, suitable and seasonable in every time of need.

Verse 60. That all the people of the earth may know that the Lord (Hebrew, Jehorah) is God—That both by our virtuous and holy lives, to which his grace inclines us; and by the eminent manifestations of his power and goodness in defending and delivering us from the assaults and devices of our

A. M. 3000. 61 Let your ^a heart therefore be
B. C. 1004. perfect with the LORD our God, to
walk in his statutes, and to keep his command-
ments, as at this day.

62 ¶ And ^f the king, and all Israel with him,
offered sacrifice before the LORD.

63 And Solomon offered a sacrifice of peace-
offerings, which he offered unto the LORD, two
and twenty thousand oxen, and a hundred and
twenty thousand sheep. So the king and all
the children of Israel dedicated the house of the
LORD.

64 ¶ The same day did the king hallow the
middle of the court that *was* before the house
of the LORD: for there he offered burnt-offerings,

^a Chap. xi. 4; xv. 3, 14; 2 Kings xx. 3.—^f 2 Chron. vii. 4,
&c.—^g 2 Chron. vii. 7.—^h 2 Chron. iv. 1.—ⁱ Verse 2;
Leviticus xxiii. 34.

enemies, all the nations of the world may be convinced that our God is the living and true God, and he alone, and may thereupon be induced to renounce their idols and to serve him. For Solomon did not desire that Israel should be thus blessed, thus favoured, in order that all people might become tributaries to him and his successors, (his kingdom being already as great as he desired,) but that all people might know and worship Jehovah. Thus Solomon's prayers, like the prayers of his father David, the son of Jesse, are ended, Psa. lxxii. 19, 20, with this petition, *Let the whole earth be filled with his glory.* And "we cannot close our prayers," says Henry, "with a better summary than this, *Father, glorify thy name.*"

Verse 61. *Let your heart therefore be perfect with the Lord your God*—Be sincere and serious in your purposes of new obedience. Let it be universal, without dividing; upright, without dissembling; and constant, without declining. Thus having spoken to God for them, he here speaks from God to them; and those only would be the better for his prayers, that were made better by his preaching.

Verse 63. *And Solomon offered*—By the hands of the priests, *two and twenty thousand oxen, &c.*—Not all in one day, but in seven, or, it may be, in the fourteen days mentioned verse 65. *So the king and all Israel dedicated the house of the Lord*—Began to set it apart for the work and services of God by these sacrifices and holy exercises.

Verse 64. *The same day*—Or rather, at the same time. For it can scarcely be supposed that it could all be done the same day. *Did the king hallow the middle of the court*—Namely, the court of the priests in which the great altar was. This he consecrated as he did the great altar, by sacrifices; but with this difference, that he consecrated that for perpetual use, but this only for the present occasion, being warranted to do so both by the necessity of it for God's service, and for the present solemn work, for which the brazen altar was not sufficient; and by the

and meat-offerings, and the fat of the A. M. 3000.
peace-offerings: because ^h the brazen B. C. 1004.
altar that *was* before the LORD *was* too little
to receive the burnt-offerings, and meat-offer-
ings, and the fat of the peace-offerings.

65 ¶ And at that time Solomon held ⁱ a feast,
and all Israel with him, a great congregation,
from ^k the entering in of Hamath unto ^l the
river of Egypt, before the LORD our God, ^m seven
days and seven days, *even* fourteen days.

66 ⁿ On the eighth day he sent the people
away: and they ^o blessed the king, and went
unto their tents joyful and glad of heart for all
the goodness that the LORD had done for David
his servant, and for Israel his people.

^k Num. xxxiv. 8; Josh. xiii. 5; Judg. iii. 3; 2 Kings xiv. 25.
^l Genesis xv. 18; Numbers xxxiv. 5.—^m 2 Chron. vii. 8.
ⁿ 2 Chron. vii. 9, 10.—^o Or, *thanked.*

direction of God's Spirit, wherewith Solomon was endowed, as being a prophet, as well as a king. Here therefore he suddenly reared up divers altars, which, after this solemnity, were demolished.

Verses 65, 66. *At that time Solomon held a feast*—That is, kept a solemn festival. *And all Israel from Hamath unto the river of Egypt*—The usual and known bounds of the land, in the utmost length of it, Num. xxxiv. 8; Josh. xiii. 5; Jud. iii. 3. *Before the Lord*—Before the temple, as in God's presence. *Seven days and seven days*—Seven for the dedication of the temple, or altar; and the other seven for the feast of tabernacles. And it seems to be expressed in this manner, to intimate, that these fourteen days of rejoicing were not all together, but that there was some interval between them, which indeed was necessary, because the day of atonement was on the tenth day of this month, Lev. xxiii. 27. And because these fourteen days ended on the twenty-second day, (2 Chron. vii. 10.) it may seem most probable, that the feast of the dedication was kept before the tenth day; and the feast of tabernacles some days after it. *On the eighth day he sent the people away*—Having joined with them in the solemn assembly, which was kept on the eighth day; in the close of that day he took his solemn farewell, and dismissed them with his blessing; and the next morning, when the heads and elders, with divers of the people, came to take their leave of the king, he sent them away. *And they blessed the king*—They applauded, admired, and returned him the thanks of the congregation for the great care and pains he had taken in building the temple and setting up God's worship among them. Or, they prayed to God to bless him, according to their duty and custom. *And went to their tents joyful and glad of heart*—Easy in mind and pleased; rejoicing in *all the goodness that the Lord had done for David*—In giving him a sure house, and a wise and religious son, by whom he had now fulfilled the promise made to him about building the temple. *And for Israel his people*—

They rejoiced in God's blessings both on the royal family and on the kingdom. In this spirit should we go home from holy ordinances, and should rejoice for God's goodness to our Lord Jesus, of whom David his servant was a type, in the advancement and establishment of his throne, pursuant to

the covenant of redemption; and to all believers, his spiritual Israel, in their sanctification and consolation, pursuant to the covenant of grace. If we rejoice not herein always, it is our own fault; it is owing to the weakness of our faith and hope, and the coldness of our love.

CHAPTER IX.

God in a vision answers Solomon's prayer, 1-9. The mutual presents of Solomon and Hiram, 10-14. His workmen and buildings, 15-24. His devotion, 25. His navy, 26-28.

A. M. 3012. B. C. 992. **AND** ^a it came to pass, when Solomon had finished the building of the house of the LORD, ^b and the king's house, and ^c all Solomon's desire which he was pleased to do,

2 That the LORD appeared to Solomon the second time, ^d as he had appeared unto him at Gibeon.

3 And the LORD said unto him, ^e I have heard thy prayer and thy supplication that thou hast

^a 2 Chron. vii. 11, &c. — ^b Chap. vii. 1. — ^c 2 Chron. viii. 6. — ^d Chap. iii. 5. — ^e 2 Kings xx. 5; Psa. x. 17.

made before me: I have hallowed ^{A. M. 3012. B. C. 992.} this house, which thou hast built, ^f to put my name there for ever; ^g and mine eyes and my heart shall be there perpetually.

4 And if thou wilt ^h walk before me, ⁱ as David thy father walked, in integrity of heart, and in uprightness, to do according to all that I have commanded thee, *and* wilt keep my statutes and my judgments:

5 Then I will establish the throne of thy

^f Chap. viii. 29. — ^g Deut. xi. 12. — ^h Gen. xvii. 1. — ⁱ Chap. xi. 4, 6, 38; xiv. 8; xv. 5.

NOTES ON CHAPTER IX.

Verses 1, 2. *And it came to pass when Solomon had finished, &c.*—Or rather, according to 2 Chron. vii. 11, *Thus Solomon finished the house of the Lord, &c.*, and concluded all with the foregoing prayer, and the great festival which he kept. *That the Lord appeared to Solomon the second time*—That is, the second time in a dream or vision; the divine message, mentioned chap. vi. 11, having been imparted unto him by some prophet or messenger sent from God on that errand. Accordingly this appearance, like the former at Gibeon, is said (2 Chron. vii. 10) to have been made by night, and in all probability the very night after he had finished the solemnities of his festival, as the other had been. God had given a real answer to Solomon's prayer, and tokens of his acceptance of it, immediately, by the fire from heaven which consumed the sacrifice, (2 Chron. vii. 1,) but here we have a more express and distinct answer to it.

Verse 3. *The Lord said, I have heard thy prayer*—This shows that the first verse is to be understood as we have just stated: for otherwise we must suppose this appearance of God to Solomon to have taken place, and this answer to have been given to his prayer, eleven years after he had finished the house, and addressed that prayer to him at the dedication of it; which is very unlikely. *I have hallowed this house*—By my glorious presence in the cloud, and by my acceptance of thy sacrifices. *I have sanctified it to my proper use and service.* Solomon had dedicated it, but it was God's prerogative

to hallow or consecrate it. Men cannot make a place holy; yet what we in sincerity devote to God, we may hope he will graciously accept as his. *To put my name there for ever*—As long as the Mosaic dispensation lasts: whereas hitherto my worship has been successively in several places. *And mine eyes*—My watchful and gracious providence. *My heart*—My true and tender affection. *Shall be there perpetually*—Shall be toward this place and people, upon condition of your obedience, as it here follows. Apply this to persons, to God's living temples: those whom he hallows or sanctifies; whom he sets apart for himself, in consequence of their repentance and faith in Jesus, have his *eye* upon and his *heart* toward them; they have his love and his care, and this perpetually.

Verses 4, 5. *If thou wilt walk before me, &c.*—He shows him that he and his people were for the future upon their good behaviour: Let them not be secure now, as if they might conduct themselves as they please, having the temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord among them, Jer. vii. 4. No: this house was designed to protect them in their allegiance to God, not in their rebellion against him, or disobedience to him. *As David thy father walked*—Who, though he foully miscarried in some things, yet in the general course of his life was upright and faithful, especially in things relating to the worship of God and civil government. *Then will I establish the throne of thy kingdom*—Upon that condition, and not otherwise; for my promise to David was conditional, Psa. cxxxii. 12. If we

A. M. 3012. B. C. 992. kingdom upon Israel for ever, ^k as I promised to David thy father, saying, There shall not fail thee a man upon the throne of Israel.

6 ^l But if ye shall at all turn from following me, ye or your children, and will not keep my commandments and my statutes, which I have set before you, but go and serve other gods, and worship them :

7 ^m Then will I cut off Israel out of the land which I have given them ; and this house which I have hallowed ⁿ for my name, will I cast out of my sight ; ^o and Israel shall be a proverb and a by-word among all people :

8 And ^p at this house, which is high, every one that passeth by it shall be astonished, and shall hiss ; and they shall say, ^q Why hath the LORD done thus unto this land, and to this house ?

^k 2 Sam. vii. 12, 16 ; Chap. ii. 4 ; vi. 12 ; 1 Chron. xxii. 10 ; Psalm cxxii. 12. — ^l 2 Sam. vii. 14 ; 2 Chron. vii. 19 ; Psalm lxxxix. 30, &c. — ^m Deut. iv. 26 ; 2 Kings xvii. 23 ; xxv. 21. — ⁿ Jer. vii. 14.

perform our part of the condition, God will not fail to perform his. If we improve the grace God has given us, he will confirm us to the end. Let not the children of godly parents expect the entail of the blessing, unless they tread in the steps of those that are gone before them, and keep up the virtue and piety of their ancestors.

Verses 6, 7. *If you shall at all turn from following me*—Hebrew, *If in turning you turn from me* ; that is, if you assuredly, and indeed, or, as some understand it, *altogether turn from me* ; if you forsake my service, desert my altar, and go and serve other gods ; (for that was the covenant-breaking sin ;) if you or your children break off from me, and knowingly and wilfully violate my laws, this house will not save you. *Then will I cut off Israel*—By one judgment after another, till they become the most despicable people under the sun, though they be now the most honourable. This implies the destruction of the royal family, though it is not particularly threatened ; for the king is of course undone if his kingdom be destroyed. *And this house will I cast out of my sight*—I will not regard it, but will take away my presence and protection from it : it shall be abandoned and laid desolate. *And Israel shall be a proverb*—Their calamities and miseries shall be mentioned proverbially, to express extreme affliction and distress. *And a by-word among all people*—Who would mock at their calamitous and deplorable state.

Verses 8, 9. *And at this house, which is high*—Exalted in its privileges, and renowned for its riches and splendour, and the great resort of people to it. They gloried in the stateliness and magnificence of the structure ; but God here lets them know it was

9 And they shall answer, Because ^{A. M. 3012. B. C. 992.} they forsook the LORD their God, who brought forth their fathers out of the land of Egypt, and have taken hold upon other gods, and have worshipped them, and served them : therefore hath the LORD brought upon them all this evil.

10 ¶ And ^r it came to pass at the end of twenty years, when Solomon had built the two houses, the house of the LORD, and the king's house,

11 (^s Now Hiram the king of Tyre had furnished Solomon with cedar-trees and fir-trees, and with gold, according to all his desire,) that then King Solomon gave Hiram twenty cities in the land of Galilee.

12 And Hiram came out from Tyre to see the cities which Solomon had given him ; and they ^t pleased him not.

^r Deuter. xxviii. 37 ; Psalm xlv. 14. — ^s 2 Chron. vii. 21. — ^t Deut. xxix. 24, 25, 26 ; Jer. xxii. 8, 9. — Chapter vi. 37, 38 ; vii. 1 ; 2 Chron. viii. 1. — ^u 2 Chron. viii. 2. — ^v Heb. were not right in his eyes.

not so high as to be out of the reach of his judgments, which should assuredly fall upon it and them, if they vilified it so as to exchange it for groves and idol-temples, and yet, at the same time, most inconsistently and absurdly magnified it, so as to suppose it would secure the favour of God to them, although they ever so much corrupted themselves. *Every one that passeth by it shall be astonished*—At its unexpected and wonderful ruin. As they who now pass by it are astonished at the bulk and beauty, the richness, contrivance, and workmanship of it, and call it a stupendous fabric ; so, if you forsake God, its height will make its fall the more amazing, and they that pass by will be as much astonished at its ruins. *And shall hiss*—By way of contempt and derision ; *and shall say, Why hath the Lord, &c.*—What is the reason that this famous place, which boasted so much of the favour and protection of God, is thus laid in ruins ? *And they shall answer, Because they forsook, &c.*—The guilty, self-convicted, self-condemned Israelites will be forced to acknowledge with shame, that they themselves were the ruin of it. See Deut. xxix. 24. Their sin will be read in their punishment. They deserted the temple, and therefore God deserted it ; they profaned it with their sins, and laid it common ; and therefore God profaned it with his judgments, and laid it waste. Of this God thus gave Solomon fair warning, now he had newly built and dedicated it, that he and his people might not be high-minded, but fear.

Verses 11–14. *Solomon gave Hiram twenty cities in the land of Galilee*—Or, near the land of Galilee, bordering upon it ; in those parts which were near, and adjoining to, Hiram's dominions : with the cities, understand the territories belonging to them.

A. M. 3012. B. C. 992. 13 And he said, What cities *are* these which thou hast given me, my brother? And he called them the land of ² Cabul unto this day.

14 And Hiram sent to the king sixscore talents of gold.

15 ¶ And this *is* the reason of ³ the levy which King Solomon raised; for to build the house of the LORD, and his own house, and ⁴ Millo, and the wall of Jerusalem, and ⁵ Hazor, and ⁶ Megiddo, and ⁷ Gezer.

¹ Josh. xix. 27.—² That is, *displeasing*, or, *dirty*.—³ Chap. v. 13.—⁴ Verse 24; 2 Samuel v. 9.—⁵ Joshua xix. 36.—⁶ Joshua xvii. 11.

These cities, though they were within those large bounds which God fixed to the land of promise, (Gen. xv. 18; Josh. i. 4,) yet were not within those parts which were distributed by lot in Joshua's time. It is probable they were not inhabited by Israelites, but by Canaanites, or other heathen; who having been subdued and made tributary by David or Solomon, those cities became a part of their dominions; and afterward were reckoned a part of Galilee, as Josephus notes. *They pleased him not*—Were not suitable to his desire, and the genius of his people. *He called them the land of Cabul*—A Phœnician word, says Josephus, which signifies displeasing. But Rabbi Salomon writes that the land was so called because it was "quasi compedita, id est, argillacea, tenax, et infrugifera," bound, stiff, clayey, and unfruitful. Hiram did not like it, because, though it might be very good, yet being a thick and stiff clay, and therefore requiring great pains to cultivate and manure it, it was very unsuitable to the disposition of the Tyrians, who were delicate, and lazy, and luxurious, and wholly given to merchandise. And, on his returning them, there is no doubt but Solomon gave him an equivalent, more to his taste. *And Hiram sent to the king*—Or rather, *For Hiram had sent, &c.* And this seems to be here added, both to declare the quantity of the gold sent, which had been only named before, (verse 11,) and as the reason why he resented Solomon's action, because so great a sum required a better recompense.

Verse 15. *This is the reason of the levy, &c.*—That the raising of a great tribute upon the people, and employing so many men in his works, might not seem strange, the sacred writer here shows the cause of it; which was, his great and numerous buildings, suitable to the high dignity to which God had advanced him. The Hebrew word, מס, *mass*, here rendered levy, as Mr. Selden hath shown, by many instances, is not only used for pecuniary tribute, but also for bodily labour; it means a levy of men as well as a levy of money. And he thus interprets this clause: *This is the cause of requiring the labour of so many men; it was to build, &c.* Having thus declared the cause, the historian proceeds (verse 20) to relate who they were that he employed in this

16 For Pharaoh king of Egypt had ¹ gone up, and taken Gezer, and burnt ² it with fire, ³ and slain the Canaanites that dwelt in the city, and given it *for* a present unto his daughter, Solomon's wife.

17 And Solomon built Gezer, and ⁴ Beth-horon the nether,

18 And ⁵ Baalath, and Tadmor in the wilderness, in the land,

19 And all the cities of store that Solomon had, and cities for ⁶ his chariots, and cities for his

¹ Josh. xvi. 10; Judg. i. 29.—² Josh. xvi. 10.—³ Joshua xvi. 3; xxi. 22; 2 Chron. viii. 5.—⁴ Josh. xix. 44; 2 Chron. viii. 4, 6, &c.—⁵ Chap. iv. 26.

service. *And Millo*—David had built *round about Zion, from Millo inward*, (2 Sam. v. 9,) but had left the structure of Millo itself imperfect, which Solomon now completed, with a particular respect to Pharaoh's daughter, whose house was near it, verse 24. It seems, from chap. xi. 27, and 2 Chron. xxxii. 5, to have been an eminent, large, and strong fort, or castle, in that part of Jerusalem termed *the city of David*, where the fortress which David took from the Jebusites anciently stood. Here, it is thought, the people of Israel assembled when there was any consultation to be made about public affairs. The name מילו, *Millo*, appears to be derived from the word מלא, *malee*, which signifies *full*. Kimchi thinks it was so called because it was frequently full of people, being "locus amplius et latus, comitiis et conventibus publicis destinatus," a large and open place, appointed for holding public courts and assemblies. *And the wall of Jerusalem*—Which was a great structure: for there were three walls, one within another, as Abarbinel and Joseph Ben-Gorion explain it; the inner wall encompassing the house of God and the house of the king; the middle wall encompassing the houses of great persons; (termed the College, 2 Kings xxii. 14;) and the third the houses of all the people. *And Hazor*—Which had been a very eminent city, and the head of some kingdoms before the conquest of Canaan, (Josh. xi. 10,) and was given to the tribe of Naphtali, Josh. xix. 36. *Megiddo*—A city in the tribe of Manasseh, Josh. xvii. 11. *And Gezer*—In the tribe of Ephraim, Josh. xxi. 21.

Verse 16. *For Pharaoh had gone up and taken Gezer, &c., and slain the Canaanites*—For the Israelites did not dispossess the Canaanites, but they continued to dwell in Gezer in Joshua's time and after, Josh. xvi. 10; Judges i. 29. And, it seems, neither David nor Solomon expelled them, but only kept them under tribute; till Pharaoh, upon some provocation which is not recorded, extirpated them, and burned their city. This, Sir John Marsham thinks, was the first expedition which the Egyptians made out of their own country.

Verses 17-19. *And Beth-horon the nether*—The lower Beth-horon, which was in the tribe of Benjamin, Josh. xviii. 13. *Baalath*—A city in the tribe

A. M. 3012. horsemen, and ³ that which Solomon
B. C. 992. ¹ desired to build in Jerusalem, and in

Lebanon, and in all the land of his dominion.

20 ¶ ² And all the people that were left of the Amorites, Hittites, Perizzites, Hivites, and Jebusites, which were not of the children of Israel,

21 Their children ^b that were left after them in the land, ¹ whom the children of Israel also were not able utterly to destroy, ^b upon those did Solomon levy a tribute of ¹ bond-service unto this day.

22 But of the children of Israel did Solomon ^a make no bond-men: but they were men of war, and his servants, and his princes, and his

^a Heb. the desire of Solomon which he desired.—^f Verse 1. ² Chron. viii. 7, &c.—^b Judg. i. 21, 27, 29; iii. 1.—¹ Josh. xv. 63; xvii. 12.—² Judges i. 28.—³ Gen. ix. 25; Ezra ii. 55, 56; Neh. vii. 57; xi. 3.

of Dan, Josh. xix. 44. *And Tadmor in the wilderness*—The name of this city signifies *wonderful*, or *admirable*, and it was so named, probably, from the singularity of the thing, in finding here springs and wells of water, and other conveniences to subsist a city, among such horrid and parched sands, with which it was on all sides surrounded. It is probable that Solomon built this city among the deserts to hinder the communication between the Syrians and the inhabitants of Mesopotamia, that they might not join their forces in confederacy together against the Israelites, as they had done in the time of David. This city appears to have been the same which was afterward called Palmyra by the Greeks, the ruins of which still remain. Some English gentlemen of credit and fortune visited it about the year 1750, who have published such a description of the exceeding magnificence and beauty of its ruins, at this day, as is astonishing. We refer our readers to that publication, not only that they may receive great pleasure, but great improvement; since it is not possible to conceive higher ideas of Solomon's magnificence than these ruins present, nor more humiliating ideas of the vanity and weakness of all human splendour. See Messrs. Dawkin's and Wood's *Ruins of Palmyra*. *In the land*—Of Hamath—Zoba, a part of Syria, as is said 2 Chron. viii. 3, 4, which country Solomon had conquered. *And all the cities of store that Solomon had*—Where he laid up corn against a time of need; or arms and ammunition in case of war. *And cities for his chariots and—his horsemen*—Which he had in great numbers.

Verses 20, 21. *All the people that were left of the Amorites*—Who, it is likely, by this time were become proselytes to the Jewish religion, as the Gibeonites were, or at least renounced their idolatry. *Upon those did Solomon levy a tribute*—He used them as bond-men, and imposed bodily labours upon them. "But why did not Solomon destroy them, as God had commanded, when now it was fully in his

captains, and rulers of his chariots, A. M. 3012.
and his horsemen. B. C. 992.

23 These were the chief of the officers that were over Solomon's work, ^a five hundred and fifty, which bare rule over the people that wrought in the work.

24 ¶ But ^o Pharaoh's daughter came up out of the city of David unto ^p her house which Solomon had built for her: ^q then did he build Millo.

25 ¶ ^r And three times in a year did Solomon offer burnt-offerings and peace-offerings upon the altar which he built unto the LORD, and he burnt incense ^s upon the altar that was before the LORD. So he finished the house.

^a Leviticus xxv. 39.—² Chron. viii. 10.—^o Chap. iii. 1; 2 Chron. viii. 11.—^p Chap. vii. 8.—^q 2 Samuel v. 9; Chap. xi. 27; 2 Chron. xxxii. 5.—^r 2 Chron. viii. 12, 16.—^s Heb. upon it.

power to do so?" The command to destroy them, (Deut. vii. 2,) did chiefly, if not only, concern that generation of Canaanites who lived in or near the time of the Israelites entering into Canaan. And that command seems not to have been absolute, but conditional, and with some exception for those who should submit and embrace the true religion, as may be gathered both from Josh. xi. 19, and from the history of the Gibeonites. For if God's command had been absolute, the oaths of Joshua, and of the princes, could not have obliged them, nor dispensed with such a command.

Verses 22, 23. *Of the children of Israel did Solomon make no bond-men*—He spared them, and did not employ them in any servile labours about his public works, but put them into nobler offices, as it here follows. *They were men of war*—Which was accounted an honourable employment. *And his servants*—Officers in his court. *And his princes*—Governors of provinces. *And his captains, &c.*—Commanders of his guards. *Five hundred and fifty*—In 2 Chron. viii. 10, they are said to be but two hundred and fifty. But perhaps the meaning there is, that there were two hundred and fifty set over those that wrought in the temple; the rest probably being employed in overseeing his public works in other places. And it must be observed also, that there were far greater numbers employed when the temple work was carried on with great speed.

Verse 24. *Pharaoh's daughter came up, &c.*—In 2 Chron. viii. 11, we learn the reason why she did not continue in the house where David had dwelt; which was because it was a kind of holy place, where it was not fit she should remain, the ark of God having dwelt there.

Verse 25. *Three times in a year did Solomon offer burnt-offerings*—That is, at least three times, namely, at the three solemn feasts which God had commanded to be observed by all the people. Then he offered sacrifices suitable to those great mercies

A. M. 3012. 26 ¶ And ^a King Solomon made a
B. C. 992. navy of ships in ^b Ezion-geber, which
is beside Eloth, on the ^c shore of the Red sea,
in the land of Edom.

27 ^a And Hiram sent in the navy his servants,

^a 2 Chron. viii. 17.—^b Num. xxxiii. 35; Deut. ii. 8; Chap.

which were at these seasons commemorated, and to the great blessings which God had bestowed on his family. But undoubtedly he also offered at all other appointed times. *And he burned incense upon the altar*—In the holy place, before the ark. The meaning is not that he burned it himself, but only that he gave it to the priests at his own charge, to be offered with a particular respect to him. This he probably did every morning and evening. *So he finished the house*—This, though said before, is now repeated, because, after he had kept the three great festivals there, the temple was not only consecrated, but all divine offices had been performed in it, and nothing more was to be added.

Verses 26, 27. *King Solomon made a navy of ships*—Not now, in the order in which it is placed in the history, but in the beginning of his reign; as appears from this consideration, that the almug-trees, used in the work of the Lord's house, were brought in this navy from Ophir, (chap. x. 11, 12; 2 Chron. ix. 10, 11,) which was a three years voyage, verse 22. *And Hiram sent in the navy his servants*—The navy was Solomon's, who had servants of his own on board the ships, to manage the traffic; but as they had no skill in navigation, Hiram sent as many sailors as were necessary to man the ships, the Tyrians being in general bred at sea, and famous for their knowledge in maritime affairs.

Verse 28. *They came to Ophir*—A place famous for gold, which was found there in great plenty, and peculiarly fine. It is highly probable that this place

shipmen that had knowledge of the ^a A. M. 3012.
sea, with the servants of Solomon. ^b B. C. 992.

28 And they came to ^a Ophir, and fetched from thence gold, four hundred and twenty talents, and brought *it* to King Solomon.

xxii. 48.—^a Or, *lip*.—^b Chapter x. 11.—^c Job xxii. 24.

was in India, but in what part of it is not easy to determine. Bochart thinks it was Taprobana, now called Ceylon, and shows that the account which the ancients give of the former, answers to that which the moderns give of the latter. It is certain that this island affords gold, ivory, and precious stones. The authors of the *Universal History* after confuting at large those opinions which seemed to them less probable, observe as follows: "Ophir appears most likely to have been in some of those remote, rich countries of India beyond the Ganges, and perhaps as far as China or Japan; which last still abounds with the finest gold, and several other commodities in which Solomon's fleet dealt, as silver, precious stones, ebony, and other valuable sorts of wood, to say nothing of spices, peacocks, parrots, apes, and other such creatures; and by its distance best answers to the length of the voyage." *Gold, four hundred and twenty talents*—It is said (2 Chron. viii. 18) that they brought four hundred and fifty; but we may well suppose that thirty talents might be partly spent in the charges of the voyage to and fro, and partly allowed to Hiram and his men; so that only four hundred and twenty came clear into the king's treasury. This, however, was a prodigious sum, being calculated to be above three millions two hundred thousand pounds sterling. How they obtained this vast quantity of gold, whether by exchanging various merchandises for it, or by finding out mines, or procuring it from the natives, does not appear.

CHAPTER X.

The queen of Sheba's interview with Solomon, 1–10. His riches, 11–15. Targets, ivory throns, vessels, 16–23. Presents, chariots and horses, tribute, 24–29.

A. M. 3012. **AND** when the ^a queen of Sheba
B. C. 992. heard of the fame of Solomon
concerning the name of the LORD, she came

^a 2 Chron. ix. 1, &c.; Matt. xii. 42; Luke xi. 31.

NOTES ON CHAPTER X.

Verse 1. *The queen of Sheba*—Probably of that part of Arabia called Sabæa, which bordered upon the Red sea. Hence our Lord terms her *the queen of the south*, and says she *came from the uttermost parts of the earth*, (Matt. xii. 42,) which answers exactly to Arabia Felix, for it lies south of Judea, is

^b to prove him with hard questions. ^a A. M. 3012.
^b B. C. 992. 2 And she came to Jerusalem with
a very great train, with camels that bare spices,

^b Judges xiv. 12; Prov. i. 6.

at a great distance from it, and is limited by the ocean. Add to this, that it abounded in all the commodities which she brought, gold, precious stones, and all kinds of spices and fine perfumes, more than Ethiopia, (from whence some have thought she came,) or any country thereabouts. *Heard of the fame of Solomon*—Probably she heard of his fame by the

A. M. 3012. and very much gold, and precious
B. C. 992. stones: and when she was come to
Solomon, she communed with him of all that
was in her heart.

3 And Solomon told her all her ¹ questions: there was not *any* thing hid from the king, which he told her not.

4 ¶ And when the queen of Sheba had seen all Solomon's wisdom, and the house that he had built,

5 And the meat of his table, and the sitting of his servants, and the ² attendance of his ministers, and their apparel, and his ³ cup-

¹ Or, words.—² Or, standing.—³ Or, butlers.—^c 1 Chron. xxvi. 16.—^d Heb. word.

ships that went to Ophir, for they sailed by her coast, and, in all likelihood, spread his fame there and in all other places where they touched, proclaiming his magnificence, and especially his wisdom, and the glorious temple which he had built, or was building, for the worship of his God, whose praise they set forth as far above all gods. *Concerning the name of the Lord*—That is, concerning God, the *name of God* being often put for God; concerning Solomon's deep knowledge in the things of God. For it is very probable she had, as had divers other *heathen*, some knowledge of the true God, and an earnest desire to know more concerning him. Indeed, if she came from Arabia, as we see there is reason to think she did, it is not improbable but she was a descendant of Abraham by his wife Keturah, one of whose sons begat Sheba, who seems to have been the first planter of this country. If so, "she might," as Dr. Dodd observes, "have some knowledge of revealed religion, by tradition at least, from her pious ancestors. And this verse seems more than to intimate that the design of her visit to Solomon was not so much to gratify her curiosity, as to inform her understanding in matters relating to piety and divine worship. And what our Saviour speaks respecting her rising in judgment against the men of that generation, seems plainly to intimate that the wisdom she came to hear was of a much more important kind than that of merely enigmatical questions." See Calmet's *Comment.* and *Dict.* on the word *Sheba*, and Saurin's *Discourses*, vol. v. p. 261. *She came to prove him with hard questions*—Concerning natural, and civil, and especially divine things, that she might not only try whether he was as wise as report made him, but might receive instruction from him.

Verses 2, 3. *She communed with him of all that was in her heart*—Of all the doubts and difficulties wherewith her mind was perplexed. She had liberty to propound whatsoever she desired to be resolved about. *Solomon told her all her questions*—Answered them to her satisfaction. *There was not any thing—which he told her not*—There was

bearers, ^c and his ascent by which he ^{A. M. 3012.}
went up unto the house of the LORD; ^{B. C. 992.}
there was no more spirit in her.

6 And she said to the king, It was a true ⁴ report that I heard in mine own land of thy ⁵ acts and of thy wisdom.

7 Howbeit, I believed not the words, until I came, and mine eyes had seen *it*: and behold, the half was not told me: ⁶ thy wisdom and prosperity exceedeth the fame which I heard.

8 ^d Happy *are* thy men, happy *are* these thy servants, which stand continually before thee, *and* that hear thy wisdom.

⁴ Or, sayings.—⁶ Heb. thou hast added wisdom and goodness to the fame.—^d Prov. viii. 34.

nothing concerning which she inquired, however difficult, which he did not reveal to her.

Verses 4, 5. *When the queen—had seen all Solomon's wisdom*—Had fully discovered the wonderful variety of knowledge wherewith he was endowed. *And the house that he had built—Or, the houses*, the temple and the king's house, in both which there were evidences of singular wisdom. *The sitting of his servants*—The order and manner in which his courtiers, or other subjects, (who all were his servants in a general sense,) sat down at meals, at several tables in his court. *The attendance of his ministers*—Who waited on him at his table, in his chamber, and in his court; as also when he went abroad to the temple or other places. *And their apparel*—The costliness, and especially the agreeableness of it to their several places and offices. *The ascent by which, &c.*—The state, pomp, and solemnity with which he went up to the house of the Lord. But the ancients, and some others, translate the words thus: *and the burnt-offerings which he offered up in the house of the Lord*; under which, as the chief, all other sacrifices are understood. When she saw the manner of his offering sacrifices to the Lord, which doubtless she would not neglect to see, and in the ordering of which she might discern many characters of excellent wisdom, especially when she had so excellent an interpreter as Solomon was, to inform her of the reasons of all the circumstances of that service; *there was no more spirit in her*—She was perfectly astonished, and could scarcely determine whether she really saw these things, or whether it was only a pleasant dream. Or it may be rendered, There was no more pride, or high-mindedness in her; that is, she was humbled under a consciousness that the riches of her own dominions, and the magnificence in which she herself lived, were not comparable to those of Solomon.

Verses 7, 8. *I believed not the words*—Which were told me concerning thee: they seemed incredible, and above the perfection of human nature. *Thy wisdom and prosperity*—Hebrew, ויב, *ratob*,

A. M. 3012. 9 • Blessed be the LORD thy God, which delighted in thee, to set thee on the throne of Israel: because the LORD loved Israel for ever, therefore made he thee king, ^f to do judgment and justice.

10 ¶ And she ^g gave the king a hundred and twenty talents of gold, and of spices very great store, and precious stones: there came no more such abundance of spices as these which the queen of Sheba gave to King Solomon.

11 ^h And the navy also of Hiram, that brought gold from Ophir, brought in from Ophir great plenty of ⁷ almug-trees, and precious stones.

* Chapter v. 7.—^f 2 Sam. viii. 15; Psa. lxxii. 2; Prov. viii. 15.—^g Psa. lxxii. 10, 15.—^h Chap. ix. 27.—⁷ 2 Chron. ii. 8; ix. 10; *algum-trees*.

and goodness, may be intended to signify either happiness or virtue. *Exceeded the fame which I heard*—This was remarkable, for people commonly find things to fall far short of their expectations. *Happy are thy men*—Thy subjects, especially those that are about thy person, and minister unto thee; who have an opportunity every day of hearing thy wise sayings and discourses. With much more reason may we say this of Christ's servants: *Blessed are they that dwell in thy house; they will be always praising thee.*

Verse 9. *Blessed be the Lord thy God*—All blessing and praise are due to him, for delighting to honour and advance so worthy a person. *To set thee on the throne of Israel*—It was God's special act to make him king rather than his elder brother. *To do judgment and justice*—To execute just judgment among them, to govern them according to right and equity. Thus she tacitly admonishes Solomon that he was not made king that he might live in ease, and pleasure, and splendour, but for the good of his people. Such views even the wise heathen had, considering civil government as appointed of God, not for the emolument or aggrandizement of the governor, but for the good of society. Thus Aristotle, in a letter to Alexander, exhorts him to keep in mind, that his kingdom was given him by God for the sake of mankind, that he might do them good, and not tyrannise over them.

Verse 10. *She gave the king a hundred and twenty talents of gold, &c.*—These magnificent presents show that this queen was exceeding rich: her country, without doubt, abounded in gold at that time, as well as in cinnamon, myrrh, and frankincense, in vast plenty. *There came no more such abundance of spices, &c.*—For, it seems, the Jews maintained no trade with this country.

Verses 11, 12. *The navy of Hiram—brought great plenty of almug-trees*—It is very uncertain what these almug-trees were, or algum-trees, as they are termed 2 Chron. ii. 8, by a transposition of let-

12 ⁱ And the king made of the almug-trees ⁸ pillars ⁹ for the house of the LORD, and for the king's house, harps also and psalteries for singers: there came no such ² almug-trees, nor were seen unto this day.

13 And King Solomon gave unto the queen of Sheba all her desire, whatsoever she asked, besides *that* which Solomon gave her ¹⁰ of his royal bounty. So she turned and went to her own country, she and her servants.

14 ¶ Now the weight of gold that came to Solomon in one year was six hundred threescore and six talents of gold,

15 Besides *that he had* of the merchantmen, and of the traffic of the spice-merchants, and

¹ 2 Chronicles ix. 11.—⁸ Or, rails.—⁹ Hebrew, a prop. ² 2 Chronicles ix. 10.—¹⁰ Heb. according to the hand of King Solomon.

ters. Dr. Waterland renders the expression *gum-trees*, and Houbigant *ligna citra*, citron-wood. But Dr. Castell thinks it was the wood called *sanctulum*, which is proper for all the uses mentioned in the next verse, and is still in India. *The king made of the almug-trees pillars for the house*—There is nothing said from whence we can form any conjecture what is meant by these pillars or props, or how or where they were applied.

Verse 13. *Solomon gave unto the queen all her desire*—By their mutual presents they testified their friendship to each other; wishing by these things to be remembered. *Whatsoever she asked, besides what Solomon gave her of his royal bounty*—He desired to know what things would be acceptable to her among all the rarities she had seen, and those he bestowed upon her: besides which he added other things of value, which, it is likely, she had not in her own country. Thus they who apply to our Lord Jesus will find him not only greater and wiser than Solomon, but *more kind*. Whatsoever we ask, it shall be done for us; nay, he will, out of his divine bounty, which infinitely excels royal bounty, even that of Solomon, do for us *more than we are able to ask or think*. Reader, hast thou no wants? no desires? Wilt thou not apply to him? *Ask, and it shall be given thee.*

Verse 14. *Now the weight of gold, &c.*—The history of the queen of Sheba being ended, the writer returns to give an account of Solomon's riches and magnificence, which he had begun to set forth before. And first he relates what a vast quantity of gold was brought into his kingdom every year, not only from Ophir, but from other countries, into which, perhaps, the queen of Sheba opened him a way, and particularly from Arabia and Ethiopia, which then were replenished with gold, though exhausted by the insatiable avarice of succeeding ages. *Six hundred threescore and six talents*—Which amount to about three millions of our money.

Verse 15. *Besides that he had of the merchant-*

A. M. 3012. ¹ of all the kings of Arabia, and of the B. C. 992. ¹¹ governors of the country.

16 ¶ And King Solomon made two hundred targets of beaten gold; six hundred *shekels* of gold went to one target.

17 And he made ² three hundred shields of beaten gold; three pounds of gold went to one shield: and the king put them in the ³ house of the forest of Lebanon.

18 ¶ Moreover, the king made a great throne of ivory, and overlaid it with the best gold.

19 The throne had six steps, and the top of the throne was round ¹² behind: and there were

¹² 2 Chronicles ix. 24; Psalm lxxii. 10.—¹¹ Or, captains. ² Chapter xiv. 26.—³ Chapter vii. 2.—² 2 Chronicles ix. 17, &c.

men—Who paid custom for the goods they brought from divers countries. Hebrew, כְּאֹנְשֵׁי הַתְּרִיב, *meanshee hattarim*, from the *men*, the searchers. Merchants may be so called, because they search for commodities and articles of traffic. Or rather, the gatherers of the king's revenues are intended, who used to search narrowly into all wares, that the king might not be defrauded of his rights. *Of the traffic of the spice-merchants*—Or rather, of the *merchants* in general, as the word רֹכְלִים, *rochelim*, is continually used; for there is no reason why it should be confined to those that traded in spices. *Of all the kings of Arabia*—Who sent him presents. We must not suppose that these in general were kings of large dominions; most of them were only rulers of cities, and the territories belonging to them, such as were formerly in Canaan, and were anciently called kings. *And of the governors of the country*—Or, of the *land*, namely, the land of Arabia; some parts of which were so far conquered, that he had governors of his own placed over them, each of whom was to take care of the king's revenue in his jurisdiction; and some parts only so far, that they still had kings of their own, but such as were tributaries to him.

Verses 16, 17. *Solomon made two hundred targets of beaten gold*—For pomp and magnificence, and to be carried before him by his guard when he went abroad. The Roman magistrates had rods and axes carried before them, in token of their power to correct the bad; but Solomon shields and targets, to show he took more pleasure in his power to defend and protect the good. *Three hundred shields*—Smaller than targets. *The king put them in the house of the forest of Lebanon*—Where, it is likely, he kept his most precious treasures.

Verses 18–20. *The king made a great throne of ivory*—We never read of ivory till about Solomon's time; who, perhaps, brought elephants out of India, or at least took care to have a great deal of ivory imported from thence; for we read of *ivory palaces* Psa. xlv. 9, whose walls were overlaid with ivory;

¹³ stays on either side on the place A. M. 3012. of the seat, and two lions stood beside B. C. 992. the stays.

20 And twelve lions stood there on the one side and on the other upon the six steps: there was not ¹⁴ the like made in any kingdom.

21 ¶ ¹⁵ And all King Solomon's drinking vessels were of gold, and all the vessels of the house of the forest of Lebanon were of pure gold; ¹⁶ none were of silver: it was nothing accounted of in the days of Solomon.

22 For the king had at sea a navy of ¹⁷ Tharshish with the navy of Hiram: once in three years came the navy of Tharshish, bringing

¹³ Heb. on the hinder part thereof.—¹⁴ Or, bands.—¹⁵ Heb. so.—¹⁶ 2 Chron. ix. 20, &c.—¹⁷ Or, there was no silver in them.—¹⁸ Gen. x. 4; 2 Chron. xx. 36.

which was more precious than gold in ancient times, as Pliny tells us in many places. *And overlaid it with the best gold*—Not entirely, so as to cover the ivory, for in that case it might as well have been made of wood; but here and there, and with curious ornaments. Thus, the throne appeared the more beautiful by this mixture of gold and ivory, with which, at due distances, it was studded. It was in the form of a niche, and the top of it was round behind—Making a half circle over his head. It was placed in the porch, mentioned chap. vii. 7, which was very magnificent, being both the king's seat of judgment, and the public audience, where he showed himself either to the nobles, or to the strangers that resorted to him. Here it stood "in the midst of a flight of rich pillars of cedar, curiously carved and covered, or rather inlaid, with gold. The ascent to it was by six steps, each step being supported, on either side, by a small lion, and the arms of the seat with two large ones, as big as life. All these, and even the steps themselves, were covered with ivory and gold."—Dodd. *There was not the like made in any kingdom*—That is, in those times there was none to be compared to it: but in after ages there were, perhaps, some equally glorious. For Athæneus says, "The throne of the Parthian kings was of gold, encompassed with four golden pillars, adorned with precious stones; and that the Persian kings sat in judgment under a golden vine, and other trees of gold, the bunches of whose grapes were made of several sorts of precious stones."

Verse 21. *It was nothing accounted of in the days of Solomon*—Comparatively, and about his palace; for it is not to be supposed that all his subjects had so much gold as to make no account of silver. But if gold in abundance would make silver seem so despicable, shall not wisdom and grace, and the foretastes of heaven, make gold seem much more so?

Verse 22. *For the king had at sea a navy of Tharshish*—Ships that went to Tharshish. For Tharshish was the name of a place, upon the sea,

A. M. 3012. gold, and silver, ¹⁶ ivory, and apes,
B. C. 992. and peacocks.

23 So ^r King Solomon exceeded all the kings of the earth for riches and for wisdom.

24 ¶ And all the earth ¹⁷ sought to Solomon, to hear his wisdom, which God had put in his heart.

25 And they brought every man his present, vessels of silver, and vessels of gold, and garments, and armour, and spices, horses, and mules, a rate year by year.

26 ¶ ^a And Solomon ^b gathered together

¹⁶ Or, elephants' teeth.—^r Chapter iii. 12; iv. 30.—¹⁷ Heb. sought the face of.—Chapter iv. 26; 2 Chron. i. 14; ix. 25. ^a Deut. xvii. 16.

famous for its traffic with merchants, and a place very remote from Judea, as appears from the three years usually spent in that voyage. But whether it was Spain, where in those times there was abundance of gold and silver, as Strabo and others affirm; or some place in the Indies, it is as needless as it is difficult, if not impossible, to determine. These words are here added to give a further account how Solomon came to have gold in such abundance: he trafficked for it in another fleet, besides that which went to Ophir. *Once in three years came the navy of Tharshish, bringing gold, &c.*—It is likely a great part of this time was spent in digging for the gold, or in hunting the elephants, apes, and peacocks, and in other transactions of commerce. *And apes*—The Hebrew word כֹּפִים, *kophim*, is both by the ancients and moderns translated *apes*; which creature Pliny calls *cephus*, and says they were seen but once at Rome in his days, and that they came from Ethiopia. *And peacocks*—These, being so beautiful a bird, might very probably be brought from foreign countries into Judea as a great rarity, there being none there before.

Verses 23–25. *For riches and for wisdom*—The latter of which he asked of God, who graciously promised to add the former, and did so to a great degree. But what is here said is not to be taken in too strict a sense, but only as intending that he was richer than the kings of the earth in general were at that time. *And all the earth sought to Solomon, &c.*—That is, all the kings of the earth, as it is expressed 2 Chron. ix. 23; namely, of those parts of the earth, or of the neighbouring countries, and the great men thereof. They came, as the queen of Sheba did, to be acquainted with his wisdom, which they heard was a supernatural gift, and to receive an increase of knowledge thereby. *They brought every man his present—a rate year by year*—By this conclusion it seems as if the persons here spoken of were tributary to him.

Verse 26. *Solomon gathered together chariots and horsemen*—Ah! what availed thy boasted wisdom, Solomon, when thou forsookest the only true wisdom, obedience to the commandment of the

chariots and horsemen: and he had a thousand and four hundred chariots, and twelve thousand horsemen, whom he bestowed in the cities for chariots, and with the king at Jerusalem.

27 ¶ ^a And the king ¹⁸ made silver *to be* in Jerusalem as stones, and cedars made *he to be* as the sycamore-trees that *are* in the vale, for abundance.

28 ¶ ^x And ¹⁹ Solomon had horses brought out of Egypt, and ^y linen yarn: the king's merchants received the linen yarn at a price.

^a 2 Chronicles i. 15–17.—¹⁸ Heb. gave.—^x Deut. xvii. 16; 2 Chron. i. 16; ix. 28.—¹⁹ Heb. *And the going forth of the horses which was Solomon's.*—^y Ezek. xxvii. 7.

Lord! Ah! what availed it that thou wast *wiser than all the children of the east*; that thou couldst speak of trees, *from the cedar-tree that was in Lebanon, even unto the hyssop—and of beasts, and of fowls, and of creeping things*; when thou forgottest the beginning and the end of wisdom, *the fear of the Lord*? God had commanded that the kings of Israel should not *multiply horses*, (Deut. xvii. 16.) and here we find the wisest of their kings multiplying them to a vast extent! Nor did he stop here, but having disobeyed in one point, he soon proceeded to transgress in another. Contrary to the divine prohibition, he also *multiplied wives*, and the consequence was, as the Lord predicted it would be in such a case, his wives *turned away his heart after their gods*. And, shameful to tell! the wise Solomon, who not long before had professed that there was *no god in heaven above or in the earth beneath*, but the God of Israel, is persuaded by his wives to erect altars to Ashtaroth, to Milcom, to Chemosh, and to Molech, and other abominable idols of the heathen, and that even in the hill before Jerusalem, the city of God, the holy city, joining the altars of devils to the altars of the TRUE and ONLY GOD! O sad change! and shameful stupidity! O shocking blindness! and this found in one of the wisest men! Alas! what is man! and what his best wisdom, when he forsakes the word of the Lord! Jer. viii. 9. What a striking example have we here, that a wilful departing from the commandments of God even in the smallest point at the beginning, may, and probably will, by degrees, lead into the greatest errors, the foulest crimes, and consequently the greatest misery!

Verses 27, 28. *The king made silver to be in Jerusalem as stones*—An hyperbolic expression, signifying a great plenty of it. *Solomon had horses brought out of Egypt, and linen yarn*—The two chief commodities of Egypt. *The king's merchants received the linen yarn at a price*—Agreed on between Pharaoh and Solomon, who gave this privilege to his merchants for a tribute to be paid out of this commodity. Most think *byssus*, fine linen, is here meant, one of the principal of the Egyptian merchandises.

A. M. 3012. 29 And a chariot came up and went
B. C. 992. out of Egypt for six hundred *shekels*
of silver, and a horse for a hundred and fifty :

* Josh. i. 4 ; 2 Kings vii. 6.

Verse 29. *A chariot came up—out of Egypt for six hundred shekels of silver, &c.*—Egypt being then the most famous country in the world for horses and chariots, and all Asia being supplied from thence, Solomon, who possessed, as it were, the gate of Egypt, by being master of that one only passage, the distance between the Red and the Mediterranean sea, took, it seems, an advantage of this, to lay an excessive high tribute on all that were brought out of Egypt that way, to supply Asia and the neighbouring nations ; and perhaps he fixed this tribute so high, not only for the sake of gain, but to be a means of preventing the neighbouring nations from increasing their cavalry and chariots

* and so for all the kings of the Hittites, and for the kings of Syria, did they bring *them* out ²⁰ by their means.

²⁰ Heb. by their hand.

of war to too formidable a degree. Poole, however, thinks that this great price is not to be understood as paid for the chariots and horses themselves, but for the lading of the chariots and horses, which, consisting of fine linen and silk, was of great value : and that the king's custom, together with the charges of the journey, amounted to these sums. *And so for all the kings of the Hittites*—A people dwelling principally in the northern and eastern parts of Canaan, (Josh. i. 4,) the posterity of those Hittites who were driven out by the Israelites, and who afterward increased and grew potent, and, it may be, sent out colonies, after the manner of ancient times, into some parts of Syria and Arabia.

CHAPTER XI.

Solomon's many wives turn his heart from God, 1-8. God reproves and threatens him, 9-13. Stirs up Hadad and Rezon against him, 14-25. An account of Jeroboam, 26-40. Solomon's death and burial, 41-43.

A. M. 3012. **B**UT ^a King Solomon loved ^b many
B. C. 992. strange women, ¹ together with
the daughter of Pharaoh, women of the Moabites, Ammonites, Edomites, Zidonians, and Hittites ;

2 Of the nations concerning which the LORD said unto the children of Israel, ^c 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.

3 And he had seven hundred wives, princesses, and three hundred concubines : and his wives turned away his heart.

^a Neh. xiii. 29.—^b Deut. xvii. 17 ; Eccles. xlvii. 16.

¹ Or, besides.—^c Exod. xxxiv. 16 ; Deut. vii. 3, 4.

NOTES ON CHAPTER XI.

Verse 1. *King Solomon loved many strange women*—It was not a fault in him that he married Pharaoh's daughter ; she being a proselyte, as is generally supposed, to the Jewish religion. But in marrying so many other women besides, he committed two sins against the law ; one in multiplying wives, and another in marrying those of strange nations, who still retained their idolatrous religion ; which was expressly against the law, as the next verse declares.

Verse 2. *Concerning which the Lord said—Ye shall not go in unto them*—This relates especially to the Hittites and the Zidonians, and consequently the rest of the seven nations of Canaan, with whom they were forbidden to make any marriage, (Exod. xxxiv. 16 ; Deut. vii. 3,) for the weighty reason here mentioned. For though they might marry women of other nations, if these women embraced the true religion, yet of the seven nations of Canaan they might not, although they were converted to their religion ; lest the venom should lurk and lie hid, and

at last break out and infect them. Great was the foresight wherewith God endowed Moses in giving this precept, as Grotius remarks ; and the not observing it was of fatal consequence to the Israelites, and laid the foundation of their utter ruin. *Solomon clave unto these in love*—Was extravagantly fond of them. He had much knowledge ; but to what purpose, when he knew not how to govern his appetites ?

Verse 3. *He had seven hundred wives, princesses, and three hundred concubines*—This was multiplying them prodigiously indeed, and pouring contempt on the divine prohibition in the most notorious manner. David had multiplied wives too, although to no such extent as this ; but probably the bad example which he had set in this particular, had encouraged Solomon to think it, if not lawful, yet a lesser evil than it really was. One ill act of a good man may do more mischief than twenty of a wicked man. "Without knowing the customs of the princes of the East," says Dr. Dodd, "their pomp and sumptuousness of living, one might be tempted to wonder

A. M. 3020. 4 For it came to pass, when Solomon was old, ^d that his wives turned away his heart after other gods: and his ^e heart was not perfect with the LORD his God, ^f as was the heart of David his father.

5 For Solomon went after ^g Ashtoreth the goddess of the Zidonians, and after ^h Milcom the abomination of the Ammonites.

6 And Solomon did evil in the sight of the LORD, and ⁱ went not fully after the LORD, as *did* David his father.

7 ^j Then did Solomon build a high place

^d Deut. xvii. 17; Neh. xiii. 26.—^e Chap. viii. 61.—^f Chap. ix. 4.—^g Ver. 33; Judg. ii. 13; 2 Kings xxiii. 13.—^h Called Molech, Verse 7.

of what possible use was this *milliad* of wives and concubines. But as Solomon was between forty and fifty years old before he ran into this excess, we cannot but think that he kept this multitude of women more for state than otherwise. Darius Codomanus was wont to carry along with him in his camp no less than three hundred and fifty concubines in time of war; nor was his queen offended at it, for the women used to reverence and adore her, as if she had been a goddess. Father Le Compte, in his history of China, tells us that the emperor has a vast number of wives, chosen out of the prime beauties of the country, many of which he never so much as saw in his whole life: and, therefore, it is not improbable that Solomon, as he found his riches increase, might enlarge his expenses, and endeavour to surpass all the princes of his time in this, as well as in all other kinds of pomp and magnificence." He was guilty, however, of a flagrant violation of the divine law.

Verse 4. *For it came to pass when Solomon was old, &c.*—Having now reigned nigh thirty years, when it might have been expected that experience would have made him wiser; then God suffered him to fall so shamefully, that he might to all succeeding generations be an example of the folly and weakness of the wisest and the best men, when left to themselves. *His wives turned away his heart after other gods*—Not that they altered his judgment respecting the true God and idols, which is not credible; but they obtained from him a public indulgence for their idol-worship, and possibly persuaded him to join with them sometimes in the outward acts of it; or at least, in their feasts upon their sacrifices, which was a participation of their idolatry. *And his heart was not perfect with the Lord his God*—He did not entirely forsake the service of Jehovah, but joined the worship of other gods with him, which he never could have done, after the true knowledge which he had of God, and the solemn profession he had made of adherence to him, unless he had been greatly fallen.

Verses 5-7. *Solomon went after Ashtoreth*—Called also Astarte. See on Judges ii. 13. *And after*

for ⁱ Chemosh, the abomination of A. M. 3020. Moab, in ^k the hill that is before B. C. 984. Jerusalem, and for Molech, the abomination of the children of Ammon.

8 And likewise did he for all his strange wives, which burnt incense and sacrificed unto their gods.

9 ¶ And the LORD was angry with Solomon, because ^l his heart was turned from the LORD God of Israel, ^m which had appeared unto him twice,

10 And ⁿ had commanded him concerning

^g Heb. fulfilled not after, Num. xiv. 24.—^h Num. xxxiii. 52. ⁱ Num. xxi. 29; Judg. xi. 24.—^k 2 Kings xxiii. 13.—^l Verses 2, 3.—^m Chap. iii. 5; ix. 2.—ⁿ Chap. vi. 12; ix. 6.

Milcom—The same, it is thought, with Molech, who is here called an abomination, because highly detested by God. *Solomon built a high place for Chemosh*—That is, an altar upon a high place, as the manner of the heathen was. Concerning Chemosh, see Num. xxi. 29. *In the hill that is before Jerusalem*—In the mount of Olives, which was nigh to Jerusalem, as if to confront the temple. From this act this hill was called *the mount of corruption*, 2 Kings xxiii. 13. O sad effects of riches and prosperity on mankind! How insolent do they make them, and how forgetful of God! Wisely did Agar pray, *Give me not riches, lest I be full and say, Who is the Lord?*

Verse 8. *And likewise did he for all his strange wives*—For what he granted to one, the others would be disposed to claim, or else complain of his unkindness to them. One would have expected from his wisdom and piety rather to have found him instrumental in converting them all to his religion, than to be himself seduced to theirs! But, alas! he does not appear to have taken any pains with them for any such purpose, being too much given up to his pleasures, and thinking, perhaps, that he could reconcile his religion with theirs, and find a good meaning in all their superstitions. *And sacrificed unto their gods*—See what need those have to stand upon their guard, who have been eminent for religion. The devil will set upon them most violently; and if they miscarry, the reproach is the greater. It is the evening that commends the day. Let us therefore fear, lest, having run well, we come short.

Verses 9, 10. *The Lord was angry with Solomon*—Displeased with his actions, and determined to punish him for them; in which sense we are generally to understand such expressions, for we must always remember that human passions can have no place in God. *Because his heart was turned from the Lord, who had appeared to him twice*—First at Gibeon, in the beginning of his reign, (chap. iii. 5,) and then at Jerusalem, after the building of the temple. *And had commanded him concerning this thing*—For in both those visions, the happiness promised him was declared to depend upon his observing God's

A. M. 3020. this thing, that he should not go after
B. C. 984. other gods : but he kept not that which
the LORD commanded.

11 Wherefore the LORD said unto Solomon,
Forasmuch as this ⁴ is done of thee, and thou
hast not kept my covenant and my statutes
which I have commanded thee, ^o I will surely
rend the kingdom from thee, and will give it to
thy servant.

12 Notwithstanding, in thy days I will not
do it for David thy father's sake : but I will
rend it out of the hand of thy son.

13 ^p Howbeit, I will not rend away all the
kingdom ; but will give ^a one tribe to thy son,
for David my servant's sake, and for Jerusa-
lem's sake ^r which I have chosen.

⁴ Heb. is with thee.—^o Verse 31 ; Chap. xii. 15.—^r 1 Sam.
vii. 15 ; Psa. lxxxix. 33.—^a Chap. xii. 20.

statutes. And when he began to build the temple,
he was divinely admonished that he had better des-
ist than go on in that work, unless he purposed to
walk according to all God's commandments, chap.
vi. 12, 13. *But he kept not, &c.*—Which was the
greater crime, because God had so often admon-
ished him of his duty, and done such great things
for him.

Verses 11–13. *Wherefore the Lord said unto Solomon*—Probably by some prophet. *I will surely
rend the kingdom from thee, and give it to thy ser-
vant*—Namely, Jeroboam, whom God permitted to
rise into power and influence, that he might take the
greatest part of his kingdom from him. This was
enough to astonish Solomon, or any man, to hear
that all his splendour should be so soon eclipsed !
Notwithstanding, in thy days I will not do it—Or,
not suffer it to be done ; for in this sense these ex-
pressions are to be taken. *For David thy father's
sake*—For my promise made to him. *But will give
one tribe to thy son*—The tribe of Judah. Benjamin
was not entirely his, but part of it adhered to Jer-
oboam, as Beth-el, chap. xii. 29 ; and Hebron, 2
Chron. xiii. 19 ; both which were towns of Benjamin.
For David my servant's sake—Who, though he was
guilty of great sins, yet never forsook God to follow
the abominations of idols ; nor ever swerved long
from God's commandments, but made haste to repent
and amend his ways, whenever he offended. *And
for Jerusalem's sake which I have chosen*—Not liter-
ally, for the sake of the city Jerusalem, but for the
great and precious purposes to mankind in general,
which God intended to bring about, in his divine
providence, by keeping up the knowledge of himself
at Jerusalem.

Verse 14. *The Lord stirred up an adversary to
Solomon*—All his glory, and riches, and human wis-
dom availed nothing to preserve his kingdom entire
to his posterity, when he turned away from keeping
God's covenant, and fell into idolatry. *Hadad the*

14 ¶ And the LORD ^a stirred up an A. M. 3020.
adversary unto Solomon, Hadad the B. C. 984.
Edomite : he *was* of the king's seed in Edom.

15 ⁴ For it came to pass, when David was
in Edom, and Joab the captain of the host was
gone up to bury the slain, ^a after he had smit-
ten every male in Edom ;

16 (For six months did Joab remain there
with all Israel, until he had cut off every male
in Edom :)

17 That Hadad fled, he and certain Edom-
ites of his father's servants with him, to go into
Egypt ; Hadad *being* yet a little child.

18 And they arose out of Midian, and came
to Paran : and they took men with them out
of Paran, and they came to Egypt, unto

^a Deut. xii. 11.—⁴ 1 Chron. v. 26.—^a 2 Sam. viii. 14 ; 1 Chron.
xviii. 12.—^a Num. xxiv. 19 ; Deut. xx. 13.

Edomite—A young prince of the royal family of
Idumea, who fled into Egypt when David conquered
that country ; and, finding favour with the king,
settled there.

Verses 15–17. *When David was in Edom*—By
his army to war against it ; and *Joab was gone up
to bury the slain*—The Israelites who were slain in
the battle, (2 Sam. viii. 13, 14,) whom he honourably
interred in some certain place, to which he is said to
go up for that end. And this gave Hadad the op-
portunity of making his escape, while Joab and his
men were all employed in the solemnity. *After he
had smitten, &c.*—Or, *and he smote*, as it is in the
Hebrew : which is here observed as the cause of
Hadad's flight ; he understood what Joab had done
in part, and intended further to do, even to kill all
the males, and therefore fled for his life. *With all
Israel*—That is, with all his army. *Until he had
cut off every male*—That bore arms ; for it is hardly
to be thought that they cut off all the male children
and youths. *That Hadad fled*—While Joab was
busy in giving a solemn burial to the Israelites, cer-
tain Edomites took the opportunity to carry Hadad
into Egypt.

Verse 18. *They arose out of Midian*—They first
went into Midian and stayed there a while, probably
that they might send from thence to know whether
Pharaoh would give them entertainment and protec-
tion. *And came to Paran*—Another country in the
road from Edom to Egypt, where he hired men to
attend him, probably either as guides, or that, mak-
ing his entrance into Egypt in some degree like a
prince, he might find more favour from the king and
people. *Which gave him a house, &c.*—According
to the manner of generous princes, who pity noble
persons that are in distress, Pharaoh not only as-
signed him a house, and kept a table for him, that
he might want nothing, but also gave him land, that
out of the revenues of it he might provide himself
an equipage suitable to his quality.

A. M. 3020. Pharaoh king of Egypt; which gave
B. C. 984. him a house, and appointed him
victuals, and gave him land.

19 And Hadad found great favour in the sight of Pharaoh, so that he gave him to wife the sister of his own wife, the sister of Tahpenes the queen.

20 And the sister of Tahpenes bare him Genubath his son, whom Tahpenes weaned in Pharaoh's house: and Genubath was in Pharaoh's household among the sons of Pharaoh.

21 * And when Hadad heard in Egypt that David slept with his fathers, and that Joab the captain of the host was dead, Hadad said to Pharaoh, ^b Let me depart, that I may go to mine own country.

22 Then Pharaoh said unto him, But what hast thou lacked with me, that, behold, thou seekest to go to thine own country? And he

* 1 Kings ii. 10, 34.—^b Heb. *Send me away.*—^c Heb. *Not.*
† 2 Sam. viii. 3.

Verses 19, 20. *Hadad found great favour in the sight of Pharaoh*—God so disposing Pharaoh's heart, that Hadad might be a scourge to Solomon for his impieties. Here Hadad married the sister of Tahpenes the queen, who bare him a son. *Whom Tahpenes weaned in Pharaoh's house*—Having as great a fondness for the child, as the king had for his father; and kept the feast generally made at the weaning of a child. In all these things the providence of God was conspicuous, thus causing Hadad and his family to rise into power and influence, that he might give the greater trouble to Solomon.

Verses 21, 22. *Hadad said—Let me depart, that I may go to my own country*—To Edom, which he hoped to recover, now that the great enemies of it, David and Joab, (whom he feared as much as David,) were dead, and Solomon was young. Thither he accordingly came; and was there even from the beginning of Solomon's reign. And, it is probable, by the near relation which was between his wife and Solomon's, and by Pharaoh's intercession, he obtained his kingdom with condition of subjection and tribute to be paid by him to Solomon; which condition he kept till Solomon fell from God, and then began to be troublesome and dangerous to his house and kingdom.

Verses 23, 24. *Which fled from his lord Hadadezer*—When David had defeated him. *King of Zobah*—A part of Syria, between Damascus and Euphrates. *And he gathered men unto him*—Some of those that fled when David defeated Hadadezer, 2 Sam. x. 18. *And became captain over a band*—Who listed themselves under him as their commander, with others, who readily joined them, and lived by robbery, as many Arabians did. *And they went to*

answered, ^c Nothing: howbeit, let me go in any wise. A. M. 3020. B. C. 984.

23 ¶ And God stirred him up *another* adversary, Rezon the son of Elidah, which fled from his lord ' Hadadezer king of Zobah:

24 And he gathered men unto him, and became captain over a band, * when David slew them of *Zobah*: and they went to Damascus, and dwelt therein, and reigned in Damascus.

25 And he was an adversary to Israel all the days of Solomon, besides the mischief that Hadad *did*: and he abhorred Israel, and reigned over Syria.

26 ¶ And * Jeroboam the son of Nebat, an Ephrathite of Zereda, Solomon's servant, whose mother's name was Zeruah, a widow woman, even he ^b lifted up *his* hand against the king.

27 And this *was* the cause that he lifted up *his* hand against the king: ^c Solomon built

* 2 Samuel viii. 3; x. 8, 18.—^a Chap. xii. 2; 2 Chron. xiii. 6.
^b 2 Sam. xx. 21.—^c Chap. ix. 24.

Damascus—And took it while Solomon was wallowing in luxury: David had put a garrison into Damascus, and brought the people under tribute, 2 Sam. viii. 5, 6; and so they probably continued during his life, and were subject to Solomon after his death, till that prince, doting upon strange women, minded not the defence of his conquests. This Rezon took advantage of, and invaded and got possession of Damascus, and reigned there, as Hadad did in Edom.

Verse 25. *He was an adversary to Israel all the days of Solomon*—This, perhaps, is not to be understood of the whole reign of Solomon, which for the most part was peaceable, but of all the days which remained of his life, from the time that his wives publicly exercised their idolatry, unto the day of his death. Or, it may mean, that he was a secret enemy all that time, and when Solomon had forsaken God, he showed himself openly. *Besides the mischief that Hadad did*—This infelicity was added to the former; while Hadad molested him in the south, Rezon threatened him in the north. But what hurt could Hadad or Rezon have done to so powerful a king as Solomon, if he had not by sin made himself mean and weak? If God be on our side, we need not fear the greatest adversary; but if he be against us, he can make us fear the least; yea, *the grasshopper shall be a burden. And reigned over Syria*—Over all that part of Syria, enlarging his empire the more, and thereby laying a foundation for much misery to Solomon's kingdom.

Verses 26–28. *Even he lifted up his hand against the king*—Probably made some secret attempts to raise a dissatisfaction against Solomon; for we do not read of any open attempt. *And this was the*

A. M. 3024. Millo, and ⁷ repaired the breaches of
B. C. 950. the city of David his father.

28 And the man Jeroboam *was* a mighty man of valour: and Solomon seeing the young man that he ⁸ was industrious, he made him ruler over all the ⁹ charge of the house of Joseph.

About 29 And it came to pass at that time
B. C. 950. when Jeroboam went out of Jerusalem, that the Prophet ⁴ Ahijah the Shilonite found him in the way; and he had clad himself with a new garment; and they two *were* alone in the field:

30 And Ahijah caught the new garment that *was* on him, and ⁶ rent it in twelve pieces:

31 And he said to Jeroboam, Take thee ten pieces: for ¹ thus saith the LORD, the God of Israel, Behold, I will rend the kingdom out of the hand of Solomon, and will give ten tribes to thee:

32 (But he shall have one tribe for my servant David's sake, and for Jerusalem's sake, the city which I have chosen out of all the tribes of Israel:)

¹ Heb. closed.—² Heb. did work.—³ Heb. burden.—⁴ Chap. iv. 2.—⁵ 1 Sam. xv. 27; xxiv. 5.—⁶ Verses 11, 13.

cause, &c.—This was the occasion of Jeroboam's advancement, as it follows in the next verse. *Solomon built Millo, &c.*—Solomon, being engaged in many buildings, made choice of such as he judged were fit persons to oversee his works; among whom Jeroboam was one. *A mighty man of valour*—Of great courage and strength of body. *Solomon seeing—that he was industrious*—Very diligent in the business wherein he had employed him, of overlooking his works. *He made him ruler, &c.*—Set him over those of the tribe of Benjamin who were employed in carrying stones, &c., for Solomon's buildings; or over the taxes and tributes which were to be collected of the house of Joseph, that is, of Ephraim and Manasseh, or of Ephraim only, termed here, as often elsewhere, *the house of Joseph*.

Verse 29. *When Jeroboam went out of Jerusalem*—Probably to execute his charge. *The Prophet Ahijah found him*—Met with him as he was going along. “Ahijah was a native of Shiloh, and one of those who wrote the annals of King Solomon's reign, 2 Chron. ix. 29. And he is thought to have been the person who spake twice to Solomon from God, once while he was building the temple, (chap. vi. 12.) and again when he fell into his irregularities,” verse 11. *They two were alone in the field*—Having gone aside for private conference; for otherwise Jeroboam's servants, (it being most likely he had servants attending him,) if they heard not the words, might have seen the action of rending his coat, and thus the matter might have come to Solomon's ears.

33 ⁵ Because that they have for- A. M. 3024.
saken me, and have worshipped B. C. 950.

Ashtoreth the goddess of the Zidonians, Chemosh the god of the Moabites, and Milcom the god of the children of Ammon, and have not walked in my ways, to do *that which is* right in mine eyes, and *to keep* my statutes and my judgments, as *did* David his father.

34 Howbeit, I will not take the whole kingdom out of his hand: but I will make him prince all the days of his life for David my servant's sake, whom I chose, because he kept my commandments and my statutes:

35 But ¹¹ I will take the kingdom out of his son's hand, and will give it unto thee, *even* ten tribes.

36 And unto his son will I give one tribe, that ¹ David my servant may have a ¹⁰ light always before me in Jerusalem, the city which I have chosen me to put my name there.

37 And I will take thee, and thou shalt reign according to all that thy soul desireth, and shalt be king over Israel.

⁵ Verses 5, 7.—⁶ Chap. xii. 16.—⁷ 1 Kings xv. 4; 2 Kings viii. 19: Psa. cxxxii. 17.—⁸ Heb. lamp, or, candle.

Verses 30–32. *And rent it in twelve pieces*—An emblem of what he was to acquaint him with; or rather a prediction of it. For there were two ways, in those ancient times, of foretelling future events; one in express words, the other by signs and resemblances, many instances of which we have often after this of Ahijah. *And will give ten tribes to thee*—Hence it is generally called, *the kingdom of the ten tribes*. *But he shall have one tribe*—Besides his own. Or Benjamin and Judah may be looked upon as but one tribe, both of them having a share in the city of Jerusalem, and lying near one another.

Verse 34. *I will not take the whole kingdom out of his hands*—Solomon held even the ten tribes as long as he lived. *But I will make him prince all the days of his life*—This was an admonition to Jeroboam not to molest Solomon in his life-time, by raising a rebellion against him; and also to walk in God's ways as David did, and not fall into idolatry; for which sin God resolved to punish Solomon so severely as to rend the greatest part of his kingdom from his posterity. *For David my servant's sake*—Not for his own sake; he had forfeited his crown to the justice of God; but for his father's sake. “Children that do not tread in their parents' steps,” says Henry, “yet often fare the better in this world for their good parents' piety.”

Verse 37. *I will take thee*—From the condition wherein thou art, and place thee on a throne, as here follows. *Thou shalt reign according to all*

A. M. 3024. B. C. 980. 38 And it shall be, if thou wilt hearken unto all that I command thee, and wilt walk in my ways, and do *that is* right in my sight, to keep my statutes and my commandments, as David my servant did; that ^kI will be with thee, and ^lbuild thee a sure house, as I built for David, and will give Israel unto thee.

39 And I will for this afflict the seed of David, but not for ever.

40 Solomon sought therefore to kill Jeroboam. And Jeroboam arose, and fled into Egypt, unto

^k Joshua i. 5.—^l 2 Samuel vii. 11, 27.—^m 2 Chron. ix. 29.
¹¹ Or, words, or, things.

thy soul desireth—According to thy utmost wishes and desires. It appears from this that he was a very aspiring and ambitious man, fond of power and pre-eminence; and it is not unlikely but he might at this time be plotting against Solomon, and contriving to rise to the throne. The Jews say, that when he was employed by Solomon in repairing and building Millo, as the expenses attending the work were very great, he took opportunities of reflecting upon Solomon as oppressive to his people, and of suggesting that which he thought would alienate them from his government, and infuse a spirit of sedition and revolt. He complained heavily, especially to his brethren of the tribe of Ephraim, “of the hard labour to which they were forced to submit, and the taxes they were obliged to pay; and to represent the whole affair as a work of vanity, merely to gratify a proud foreign woman, and a silly, doting king; for Solomon filled up a part of the valley of Millo to build a palace for Pharaoh’s daughter. By these insinuations, it is thought, Jeroboam wrought in the people a disaffection to Solomon and his government.” See Calmet’s *Dict.* under the word MILLO.

Verse 38. *If thou wilt hearken to all that I command thee, &c.*—He is hereby given to understand, that the grant of the crown to him and his descendants will be conditional, and that he and they will be upon their good behaviour.

Verse 39. *I will for this*—For Solomon’s sin, mentioned verse 33; *afflict the seed of David*—By rending the greatest part of the kingdom from them; *but not for ever*—A time shall come when the seed of David shall not be thus molested by the kingdom of Israel, but shall flourish again in great power and prosperity; which it did in many illustrious kings of Judah, who reigned in glory when Jeroboam’s family was extirpated. And at last the Messiah came, who united together the broken sticks of Judah and Joseph, and rules over Jews and Gentiles also.

Verse 40. *Solomon sought therefore to kill Jeroboam*—How Solomon came to know what was secretly transacted between Ahijah and Jeroboam alone, is a great question: perhaps the prophet

Shishak king of Egypt, and was in Egypt until the death of Solomon. A. M. 3024. B. C. 980.

41 ¶ And ^mthe rest of the ¹¹acts of Solomon, and all that he did, and his wisdom, *are* they not written in the book of the acts of Solomon?

42 ⁿAnd the ¹²time that Solomon reigned in Jerusalem over all Israel *was* forty years.

43 ^oAnd Solomon slept with his fathers, and was buried in the city of David his father: and ^pRehoboam his son reigned in his stead. B. C. 957.

ⁿ 2 Chronicles ix. 30.—¹¹ Heb. *days*.—^o 2 Chronicles ix. 31.
^p Matt. i. 7; called *Roboam*.

made no scruple to report what he had delivered in the name of the Lord. Or, Jeroboam himself, being puffed up with the expectation of ascending the throne, could not conceal it, nor keep his own counsel, but told the matter to some of his confidants, who spread it abroad. But that Solomon should ever entertain a thought of endeavouring to defeat the purpose of God, is astonishing indeed! *Jeroboam arose and fled*—unto *Shishak king of Egypt*—Solomon’s brother-in-law, as is probable, who yet might be jealous of him, or alienated from him, because he had taken so many other wives to his sister; or might cast a greedy eye upon the great riches which Solomon had amassed together, and upon which, presently after Solomon’s death, he laid violent hands, 2 Chron. xii. 9. We may observe here that all the kings of Egypt, from the time of Abraham, are in the sacred history called by the name of Pharaoh, unless Rameses (mentioned Gen. xviii.) be the name of a *king*, not of a *country*; so that this is the first we meet with called by his proper name, different from the rest of the Pharaohs. The opinion is pretty general that this was the great king, called by the Greeks Sesostris, who, having subdued Ethiopia, extended his conquests into Asia, as far as the Assyrians and Medes, as Josephus tells us, who calls him Sethosis.

Verse 41. *The rest of the acts of Solomon, &c.*—It is probable that Solomon employed a chronologer, or historiographer, to write the annals of his reign, which public record is here termed, *The book of the acts of Solomon*. And out of these annals the sacred writer of this history took what he judged most useful, and omitted the rest, which he did not think so necessary to be related, or so instructive.

Verses 42, 43. *The time that Solomon reigned—was forty years*—His reign was as long as his father’s, but not his life: sin shortened his days. *And Solomon slept with his fathers*—This expression is promiscuously used concerning good and bad, and signifies only, that they died as their fathers did. *And was buried in the city of David his father*—Thus concludes the history of this great man; without any the least mention of his repentance, or of his bringing forth any of the proper fruits of re-

penance, such as pulling down the high places he had built for the worship of idols, and abandoning his idolatrous wives and concubines. Many Jews and Christians, however, think it extremely probable that he was awakened to a sense of his sin and misery by means of the message which God sent him, as recorded verse 11; and that he humbled himself before him, and became a true penitent from that time. They even judge that this is put out of dispute by the book of Ecclesiastes, written after his fall, as, they say, is evident, not only from the unanimous testimony of the Hebrew writers, but also from the whole strain of that book, which was manifestly composed long after he had finished all his works, and after he had liberally drunk of all sorts of sensual pleasures, and sadly experienced the bitter effects of the love of women. Now in this book he appears greatly to lament his own folly and madness, chap. vii. 25-28; and warns others to take heed of the like evil courses, and to fear God and keep his commandments, in consideration of the judgment to come, chap. xi. 9, 10, and xii. 13, 14. They think it probable, therefore, that as David wrote Psalm li., so Solomon wrote this book, as a public testimony

and profession of his repentance. On the other hand, many are of opinion, that the silence of the divine historian on this subject is an insuperable objection to all this, and that if he had truly repented, so considerable a circumstance of his life would not have been omitted, and that we should, at least, have been informed of his abolishing all the monuments of his idolatry, and those of his wives and concubines. Perhaps, as Dr. Dodd observes, "this is one of those questions which will for ever be a field of controversy, as we have no certain guide from the Scripture to direct us." We may, however, safely conclude, that if Solomon did repent, yet as the sacred writer has not recorded that he did, but suffered the important circumstance to remain doubtful, he intended to leave a blot upon his memory, that all posterity might have before their eyes an awful example of human weakness, even in a man of the greatest endowments; and might learn thereby to watch and pray lest they should enter into temptation; and to beware of the beginnings and infatuations of vice, since even Solomon was not secure against its delusions; and, once unhappily immersed in it, perhaps, was never disengaged from it

CHAPTER XII.

Rehoboam succeeds to the throne, and Jeroboam returns out of Egypt, 1, 2. The people's petition to Rehoboam, and his answer, 3-15. Ten tribes revolt and make Jeroboam king, 16-20. God forbids Rehoboam to make war upon them, 21-24. Jeroboam sets up two golden calves, 25-33.

A. M. 3029.
B. C. 975. **AND** Rehoboam went to Shechem: for all Israel were come to Shechem to make him king.

2 And it came to pass, when Jeroboam the

son of Nebat, who was yet in Egypt, A. M. 3029.
B. C. 975. heard of it, (for he was fled from the presence of King Solomon, and Jeroboam dwelt in Egypt;)

* 2 Chron. x. 1, &c.—^b Chap. xi. 26.

^c Chap. xi. 40.

NOTES ON CHAPTER XII.

Verse 1. *Rehoboam went to Shechem*—With a view to be there declared Solomon's successor by the people, and made king. It does not appear that he called the people thither, but went thither because they had prevented him, and pitched upon that place rather than upon Jerusalem, because it was most convenient for all, being in the centre of the kingdom; and because, as it was in the potent tribe of Ephraim, they supposed they might there more securely propose their grievances, which they were resolved to do, and use a greater freedom of speech than they could at Jerusalem, where the family of David was more powerful, more numerous, and better supported. And it is not improbable but Jeroboam had a hand in this, and that it was partly at least by his management, or that of some of his friends, who durst not, perhaps, venture themselves at Jerusalem, that this city was made choice of as a

place of general convention. The glory of the kingdom of Israel was in its height and perfection in Solomon's reign. It was long in coming to it, but it soon declined and began to sink and wither under Rehoboam his successor, as we find in this chapter, in which we see the kingdom divided, and thereby weakened, and made little in comparison of what it had been. Solomon probably supposed that by taking to himself seven hundred wives that were princesses, he should greatly strengthen his power, and enlarge his kingdom; and that from them and his three hundred concubines he should have a numerous progeny to perpetuate that power and dominion, in all its extent, to the latest generations. But if so, he was sadly disappointed: of these thousand women, it appears, he had but one son, and he a fool! and two daughters, mentioned chap. iv. 11, 15, to bear up his name, and continue his race. "Sin," says Henry, "is an ill way of building up a family."

A. M. 3029. 3 That they sent and called him.
B. C. 975.

And Jeroboam and all the congregation of Israel came, and spake unto Rehoboam, saying,

4 Thy father made our yoke grievous: now therefore make thou the grievous service of thy father, and his heavy yoke which he put upon us, lighter, and we will serve thee.

5 And he said unto them, Depart yet for three days, then come again to me. And the people departed.

6 ¶ And King Rehoboam consulted with the old men that stood before Solomon his father while he yet lived, and said, How do ye advise that I may answer this people?

7 And they spake unto him, saying, * If thou wilt be a servant unto this people this day, and wilt serve them, and answer them, and

* 1 Sam. viii. 11-18; Chap. iv. 7.

Verse 3. *They sent and called him*—When the people sent Jeroboam word of Solomon's death, they also sent a message to him to desire he would attend their general meeting at Shechem, and assist them to get their grievances redressed. For they judged that the presence and countenance of a man of such great interest and reputation might lay the greater obligation upon Rehoboam to grant them ease and relief. Some suppose that they had heard of what had passed between the Prophet Ahijah and him, and had an inclination to fulfil what the prophet had foretold to him; which is not unlikely. *And all the congregation came*—That is, all their elders, and the heads of their tribes. These, it appears, chose Jeroboam to be their speaker.

Verse 4. *Thy father made our yoke grievous*—By heavy taxes and impositions, not only for the temple and his magnificent buildings, but for the expenses of his numerous court, and of so many wives and concubines, and the maintenance of so many chariots and horses. Thus they began with a complaint against the former government; and, as Solomon had so grossly forsaken God, it is no wonder if he oppressed the people. The burdens, however, of which they complain, could not be so heavy as they represented them, considering the peace and plenty which they enjoyed, (chap. iv. 25,) and the vast riches he brought into the kingdom; and it is expressly said, (chap. ix. 22,) that Solomon made no Israelite a bondman. But to those desirous of a change, a light cause seems sufficient. *Make thou the grievous service of thy father lighter, &c.*—They promise to submit to Rehoboam as their king, and be his faithful subjects, if he would promise to ease them of those burdens which his father had imposed on them.

Verses 6, 7. *Consulted with the old men that stood before—his father*—Solomon, in his best days, though

speak good words to them, then they will be thy servants for ever. A. M. 3029. B. C. 975.

8 But he forsook the counsel of the old men, which they had given him, and consulted with the young men that were grown up with him, and which stood before him:

9 And he said unto them, What counsel give ye that we may answer this people, who have spoken to me, saying, Make the yoke which thy father did put upon us lighter?

10 And the young men that were grown up with him spake unto him, saying, Thus shalt thou speak unto this people that spake unto thee, saying, Thy father made our yoke heavy, but make thou it lighter unto us; thus shalt thou say unto them, My little finger shall be thicker than my father's loins.

11 And now whereas my father did lade you

* 2 Chron. x. 7; Prov. xv. 1.

so wise, yet would not depend solely on his own wisdom, but had other wise men about him, with whom he advised, as his counsellors in all matters of moment. *If thou wilt be a servant unto this people this day, &c.*—By complying with their desires, and condescending to them for a time, till thou art better established in thy throne. They say, *This day*, that is, *now, for a short season*, foreseeing that some would dissuade him from this course, as below the majesty of a prince; and answer them, and speak good words—The service is not hard: it is only to give a few good words, which it is as easy to give as bad ones. This was most wise advice, and if Rehoboam had pursued this method, by his mild behaviour and kind speeches he would have won their hearts, and made them submit cheerfully to him, so that he would soon have had the same power over them which his father had.

Verse 8. *But he forsook the counsel of the old men*—Judging it unworthy of his majesty and authority, and likely to encourage the people in their insolent demands; and, being proud and vain, he scorned to condescend to them and court them in this way, but would have obedience paid to him as to an absolute monarch; and consulted with the young men—So called compared with the old men, otherwise, as they had grown up with him, they must have been near forty years old. They were, however, men who were unexperienced, and who understood not the humour of the people they had to do with. This is frequently the fault of new kings: to show their power, and gratify their dependants, they frequently change their counsellors and put in new officers; not considering who are wisest and worthiest, but who have been their companions.

Verses 10, 11. *My little finger shall be thicker, &c.*—Or, rather, *is thicker*, and therefore stronger, and more able to crush you, if you proceed in these

A. M. 3029. with a heavy yoke, I will add to your
B. C. 975. yoke: my father hath chastised you
with whips, but I will chastise you with scor-
pions.

12 ¶ So Jeroboam and all the people came
to Rehoboam the third day, as the king had
appointed, saying, Come to me again the third
day.

13 And the king answered the people
roughly, and forsook the old men's counsel
that they gave him;

14 And spake to them after the counsel of
the young men, saying, My father made your
yoke heavy, and I will add to your yoke: my

father *also* chastised you with whips, A. M. 3029.
but I will chastise you with scorpions. B. C. 975.

15 Wherefore the king hearkened not unto
the people: for the cause was from the LORD,
that he might perform his saying, which the
LORD spake by Ahijah the Shilonite unto Je-
roboam the son of Nebat.

16 ¶ So when all Israel saw that the king
hearkened not unto them, the people answered
the king, saying, What portion have we in
David? neither have we inheritance in the son
of Jesse: to your tents, O Israel: now see to
thine own house, David. So Israel departed
unto their tents.

¹ Heb. *hardly*.—¹ Verse 24; Judg. xiv. 4; 2 Chron. x. 15;

xxii. 7; xxv. 20.—² Chap. xi. 11, 31.—³ 2 Samuel xx. 1.

mutinous demands, *than his loins*—In which is the principal seat of strength. My father was young and weak, and had many enemies, when he first took the kingdom, but I am the undoubted heir, and I find the kingdom by his wise care, far better settled and fortified against all enemies, foreign or domestic, than he did. Or, they advise him, in these words, to threaten to lay burdens upon them as much heavier than his father's, as the loins of a man are thicker than his little finger. *I will add to your yoke*—That is, I will make it heavier and stronger, both to punish your petulance, and to curb and restrain you from seditious attempts. *My father chastised you with whips*—Punished and made you smart when you transgressed his laws or resisted his authority; but *I will chastise you with scorpions*—With such whips as will sting you like scorpions. If you proceed in these courses, I will most severely punish you. What sort of instrument is here meant by scorpions, cannot now be perfectly determined; though some authors think that whips with rowels in them, or sharp thorns tied to them, are intended by the expression. Undoubtedly it was a scourge, called so from its cruelty.

Verses 13–15. *The king answered the people roughly*—He affected to be haughty and imperious, and fancied he could carry all before him with a high hand, and therefore would rather run the risk of losing them, than deny himself so far as to give them good words. Thus many ruin themselves by consulting their humour more than their interest. *For the cause was from the Lord*—Who, having determined, in punishment of Solomon's idolatries and criminal pleasures, to take the greater part of the kingdom away from his son, did not restrain Rehoboam from following the dictates of his own imperious temper, and ambitious views; but gave him up to the foolish and fatal mistake of answering the people according to the advice of his young and hot-headed counsellors, whereby their affections were alienated from him, and he lost more than half of his empire. Thus God, in his adorable providence, serves his own wise and righteous purposes,

by the imprudences and iniquities of men, and snares sinners in the work of their own hands. They that lose the kingdom of heaven, throw it away as Rehoboam did his, by their own wilfulness and folly. Reader, take care that this be not thy case.

Verse 16. *So when all Israel saw that the king hearkened not unto them, &c.*—Here we see the divine threatening to Solomon by Ahijah beginning to take effect, and the important event of rending the kingdom of the ten tribes from the house of David, foretold by that prophet, on the point of being fulfilled. The people show themselves bold and resolute in the cause they had undertaken, and highly resent the provocation which Rehoboam had given them, concluding that a government, which in the beginning was so haughty, would be intolerably grievous in the progress of it. *What portion have we in David?*—In David's family and son; we can expect no benefit or relief from him, and therefore we renounce all commerce with him, and subjection to him. They named David rather than Rehoboam, to signify that they renounced not Rehoboam only, but all David's family. *Son of Jesse*—So they call David in contempt; as if they had said, Rehoboam hath no reason to carry himself with such pride and contempt toward his people; for if we trace his original, it was as mean and obscure as ours. *To your tents, O Israel*—Let us forsake him and go to our own homes, there to consider how to provide for ourselves. *Now see to thine own house, David*—Look to thine own affairs, and content thyself with reigning over the house of Judah; for thou shalt no longer rule over us. Thus they break out into actual and open rebellion against the family of David, to which they were under the greatest obligations: for surely no nation ever owed more to a prince, than the Israelites did to him. But how soon were all his benefits forgotten by this ungrateful people! ungrateful, not only to God, but to their best temporal benefactors. It is true their jealousy for their liberty and property well became them as a free people; but the rashness of their resolution is much to be blamed: for, in time, and by prudent man-

A. M. 3029. 17 But ¹as for the children of Israel
B. C. 975. which dwelt in the cities of Judah,
Rehoboam reigned over them.

18 Then King Rehoboam ²sent Adoram, who
was over the tribute; and all Israel stoned him
with stones, that he died. Therefore King
Rehoboam ³made speed to get him up to his
chariot to flee to Jerusalem.

19 So ¹Israel ³rebelled against the house of
David unto this day.

20 ¶ And it came to pass when all Israel
heard that Jeroboam was come again, that
they sent and called him unto the congrega-
tion, and made him king over all Israel: there
was none that followed the house of David, but
the tribe of Judah ^m only.

21 ¶ And when ^aRehoboam was A. M. 3029.
B. C. 975.
come to Jerusalem, he assembled all
the house of Judah, with the tribe of Benjamin,
a hundred and fourscore thousand chosen men,
which were warriors, to fight against the house
of Israel, to bring the kingdom again to Reho-
boam the son of Solomon.

22 But ^othe word of God came unto She-
maiah the man of God, saying,

23 Speak unto Rehoboam the son of Solo-
mon, king of Judah, and unto all the house of
Judah and Benjamin, and to the remnant of
the people, saying,

24 Thus saith the LORD, Ye shall not go up,
nor fight against your brethren the children of
Israel: return every man to his house; ^p for

¹ Chap. xi. 13, 36.—² Chap. iv. 6; v. 14.—³ Heb. strengthened
himself.—¹ 2 Kings xvii. 21.—² Or, fell away.

^a Chapter xi. 13, 32.—² 2 Chron. xi. 1.—^o 2 Chron. xi. 2.
^p Verse 15.

agement, they might have settled matters with Re-
hoboam to mutual satisfaction. Had they inquired
who gave him this advice, and taken a course to re-
move those evil counsellors from about him, the rup-
ture might have been prevented. It is no marvel,
however, that Israel fell away from the house of
David, when the house of David fell from God, and
from the great ends of their advancement, which
was, to be *ministers of God to the people for good*.

Verse 18. *Then Rehoboam sent Adoram, who was
over the tribute*—To pursue the counsel which he
had resolved upon, say some; to execute his office,
and exact their tribute with rigour, and, if need
were, with violence. But it is much more probable
that he sent him to treat with them; which was a
new piece of imprudence when they were so highly
exasperated. And to send the person for this pur-
pose, that was *over the tribute*, with promises, per-
haps, of easing them, when it was too late, was cer-
tainly the height of folly; for people generally
hate those that are any way employed in collecting
the tributes and taxes imposed upon them. *And all
Israel stoned him with stones, that he died*—He was
so odious among them that the very sight of him
made them outrageous, and in a general tumult; they
committed this barbarous act, and thereby violated
the law of all nations, which prohibits any injury to
be offered to the person of a king's ambassador.
*Therefore King Rehoboam made speed to flee to
Jerusalem*—From Shechem, where he yet was with
his friends and guards about him. For, it seems,
he had continued there in the midst of his kingdom,
and among the seditious tribes, that he might over-
awe them by his presence, and repress any tumults
in their first rise: but from thence, as soon as he
saw himself in danger, he fled away in his chariot,
with all speed, in the most cowardly manner, not-
withstanding the haughtiness he had lately mani-
fested, and the big words he had spoken. This
seems to have been a still further degree of impru-

dence; for he should, if possible, have maintained
his ground, and kept footing, as we speak, in the
country of Israel, from whence it might not have been
easy for them to expel him: but *fear is a bad ad-
viser*. This is the first time that we find a king
riding in a chariot; for we never read of Saul, or
David, or Solomon riding in one. But after the di-
vision of the kingdom there is frequent mention of
the use of chariots, both by the kings of Judah and
Israel.

Verse 19. *So Israel rebelled against the house of
David*—And thereby fulfilled God's threatening de-
nounced to Solomon. Nevertheless their conduct
in this was sinful, as they did not revolt in compli-
ance with God's counsel, but to gratify their own
passions.

Verse 20. *When all Israel heard that Jeroboam
was come*—From Egypt; which was known to the
great men, and to such as met at Shechem before,
and was now spread over the country; *they sent*
—To his tent, or habitation, to which he had retired
from Shechem, as the others, who had met there
had generally done. *And called him unto the con-
gregation*—Which had been summoned by the
elders of the several tribes, to consider how to settle
their affairs, which they easily agreed to do, by con-
ferring the crown on Jeroboam, according to God's
promise made to him. *None followed the house of
David*—No entire tribe; *but the tribe of Judah*—
Which comprehended Benjamin also, being one
with it, as was observed before, chap. xi. 32. And
it was by the singular providence of God that they
did not also desert such a haughty prince as Reho-
boam was. There were, however, many families
and individuals of some of the other tribes, espe-
cially of Levi and Simeon, which dwelling in the
cities of Judah, continued to be subject to Reho-
boam, see verse 17.

Verses 22–24. *The word of God came to Shema-
iah the man of God*—The prophet so called, partly

A. M. 3029.
B. C. 975. this thing is from me. They hearkened therefore to the word of the LORD, and returned to depart, according to the word of the LORD.

25 ¶ Then Jeroboam ^a built Shechem in mount Ephraim, and dwelt therein; and went out from thence, and built ^r Penuel.

26 ¶ And Jeroboam said in his heart, Now shall the kingdom return to the house of David.

27 If this people ^a go up to do sacrifice in the

^a Judges ix. 45.—^r Judges viii. 17.—^s Deut. xii. 5, 6.

to distinguish him from others of that name, (see Neh. vi. 10; Jer. xxix. 31,) and partly to add more weight to his words. It appears this prophet was very well known in the reign of Rehoboam, whose annals he is supposed to have written. Of what authority he was in Judah, we may learn from this passage, in which he is represented as prevailing with the king, and a hundred and fourscore thousand men, to lay down their arms, and return home, instead of proceeding to make war on their brethren as they had intended, merely by declaring that the division which had happened was by the order and appointment of God.—Calmet. *This thing is from me*—This event is from my counsel and providence, to punish Solomon's apostacy. *They hearkened therefore to the word of the Lord*—Either from a conscientious regard to their duty, or because they durst not oppose so potent an adversary.

Verse 25. *Jeroboam built Shechem*—He repaired, enlarged, and fortified it; for it had been ruined long since, Judg. ix. 45. He might choose it as a place both auspicious, because here the foundation of his monarchy was laid; and commodious, as being near the frontiers of his kingdom. *And built Penuel*—A place beyond Jordan; to secure that part of his dominions.

Verse 26. *Jeroboam said in his heart*—Reasoned within himself. The sacred historian shows, by this phrase, the fountain of his error, that he did not consult God, who had given him the kingdom, as in all reason, and justice, and gratitude, he ought to have done; nor believed in and relied on God's promises, chap. xi. 38, but on his own carnal policy. God had told him he would build him *a sure house*, if he would walk in his ways and keep his statutes, yet he could not depend on this, but, agreeably to the propensity of his fallen nature, studied to establish his throne by his own wisdom, and so brought evil upon himself, and introduced an idolatry into his kingdom which in the end proved its ruin.

Verse 27. *If this people go up to do sacrifice at Jerusalem, &c.*—All the people of Israel being bound, at the three great feasts, to go up to Jerusalem; and on other solemn occasions devout persons being used to go thither to offer gifts and sacrifices; he was afraid lest, if they should continue to go, they should be so taken with the magnificence of the temple and the royal city, and should so recall

A. M. 3029.
B. C. 975. house of the LORD at Jerusalem, then shall the heart of this people turn again unto their lord, *even* unto Rehoboam king of Judah, and they shall kill me, and go again to Rehoboam king of Judah.

28 Whereupon the king took counsel, and ^a made two calves of gold, and said unto them, It is too much for you to go up to Jerusalem: ^a behold thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt.

^a 2 Kings x. 29; xvii. 16.—^b Exod. xxxii. 4, 8.

to mind the famous acts of David and Solomon who were buried there, as, by degrees, to be alienated from him, and brought back to their former allegiance to the family of David. And he the rather feared this, because their going to Jerusalem, and attending divine worship there, would have afforded to Rehoboam many occasions of showing them kindness and winning their affections; and to the priests and Levites, the sure and faithful friends of David's house, many opportunities of soliciting them to unite themselves again to Judah, which tribe must have appeared to them to have the better cause, because it had the temple in possession in which God dwelt. But whatever reasons there might have been for his conjectures and apprehensions, and whatever prudence and policy may appear in his contrivance, considering the providence of God, by which the hearts of all men, and the affairs of all kingdoms are governed, and of which he had lately seen so eminent an instance, the course he took was foolish as well as wicked.

Verse 28. *The king took counsel, and made two calves*—In imitation of Aaron's golden calf, and of the worship of the Egyptians, from whose country he had lately come. These calves were of the same matter with Aaron's, and made for the same reason: his because Moses, the minister of God and medium of divine communication, was absent, and these because the holy city, where the temple, altar, and priests of God were, was distant, and could not be visited with safety. It is not improbable but, as some learned men have conjectured, it was in imitation of the Egyptians that he made *two* calves, and was not content with forming one. For they had a couple of oxen which they worshipped, namely, Apis at Memphis, the metropolis of the upper Egypt, and Mnevis at Hierapolis, which was the chief city of the lower. Jeroboam probably the rather presumed to make these images, because he knew the people of Israel were generally prone to idolatry; and that Solomon's example had exceedingly strengthened those inclinations; and therefore that they were prepared for such an attempt, especially when his proposition tended to their own ease, and safety, and profit, which he knew was much dearer to them, as well as to himself, than their religion. *It is too much for you to go to Jerusalem*—Too great a trouble and charge, and neither necessary nor safe as things now stand. *Behold*

A. M. 3029.
B. C. 975.29 And he set the one in * Beth-el,
and the other put he in † Dan.

30 And this thing became * a sin: for the

* Gen. xxviii. 19; Hos. iv. 15.—† Judges xviii. 29.

thy gods, O Israel!—Not as if he thought to persuade the people that these calves were that very God of Israel who brought them out of Egypt: which was so monstrously absurd and ridiculous, that no Israelite in his right senses could have believed it, and to have intimated it would have been so far from satisfying the people, that it would have made him both hateful and contemptible to them; but his meaning was, that these images were visible representations, by which he designed to worship the true God of Israel. This appears, partly from that parallel place, Exod. xxxii. 4; partly, because the priests and worshippers of the calves are said to worship Jehovah, and upon that account are distinguished from those belonging to Baal, 1 Kings xviii. 21, and xxii. 6, 7; and partly, from Jeroboam's design in this work, which was, to quiet the people's minds, and remove their scruples about going to Jerusalem to worship their God in that place, as they were commanded. This he endeavoured to do by signifying to them that he did not intend any alteration in the substance of their religion, nor to draw them from the worship of the true God, to the worship of any of those Baals which were set up by Solomon; but to worship that self-same God whom they worshipped in Jerusalem, even the true God who brought them out of Egypt: only to vary a circumstance; and that, as they worshipped God at Jerusalem, before one visible sign, even the ark and the sacred cherubim there, so his subjects should worship God by another visible sign, even that of the calves, in other places. And as for the change of the place, he might suggest to them that God was present in all places, where men with honest minds called upon him; that before the temple was built, the best of kings, and prophets, and people, did pray and sacrifice to God, in divers high places, without any scruple: and that God would dispense with them also in that matter: because going to Jerusalem was dangerous to them at this time, and God would have mercy rather than sacrifice.

Verse 29. *He set the one in Beth-el, &c.*—Which two places he chose for the people's convenience, *Beth-el* being in the southern, and *Dan* in the northern part of his kingdom. Add to this, that as *Beth-el* was in every body's opinion a sacred place, having been consecrated by God's appearing there more than once to Jacob; so *Dan* had been famous for the teraphim of Micah, unto which there had been great resort for a long time, Judg. xviii. 30. For such reasons as these it is likely he waived his royal city, which was Shechem, and chose these two places for the worship of the Divine Majesty, whom he pretended he did not forsake, but worshipped by these symbols of his presence.

Verse 30. *This thing became a sin*—An occasion of great wickedness, not only of idolatry, which

people went to worship before the A. M. 3029.
one, even unto Dan. B. C. 975.

31 And he made a * house of high places,

* Chap. xiii. 34; 2 Kings xvii. 21.—† Chap. xiii. 32.

is called *sin* by way of eminence; nor only of the worship of the calves, wherein they pretended to worship the true God; but also of the worship of Baal, and of the utter desertion of the true God; and of all sorts of impiety. *The people went to worship before the one even unto Dan*—Which is not here mentioned exclusively, for they went also to *Beth-el*, (verses 32, 33;) but for other reasons, either because that of *Dan* was first made, the people in those parts having been long leavened with idolatry, or to show the people's readiness and zeal for idols; that those who lived in or near *Beth-el*, had not patience to stay till that calf was finished, but all of them were forward to go as far as *Dan*, which was in the utmost borders of the land, to worship an idol there; when it was thought too much for them to go to Jerusalem to worship God in the manner he had prescribed. The reader will easily observe here, as we have already intimated, that the sin of Jeroboam and the people did not consist in worshipping strange and false gods, but in setting up images, or representations of the true God, and worshipping him under the similitude of a corporeal form, which he had himself expressly forbidden, (Exod. xx. 4,) and had severely punished in the case of Aaron; so that the people did not offend through ignorance, because their sacred records informed them of the terrible punishment which God had inflicted before for the like offence, whereby he made it evident how displeasing it was to him.

Verse 31. *And he made a house of high places*—That is, saith *Abarbinel*, he made a house or temple at *Dan*, wherein there was not one altar only, as there was at Jerusalem, but a great many altars or high places, probably complaining of it as an inconvenience, that in the temple at Jerusalem there was but one. The multiplying of altars passed with some as a piece of devotion; but God, by the prophet, puts another construction upon it, *Hosea* viii. 11, *Ephraim has made many altars to sin. And made priests of the lowest of the people*—“And the lowest of the people,” says *Henry*, “were good enough, and too good, to be priests to his calves.” They who understand the words in this sense suppose he did this, either, 1st, Because the better sort refused the office as below their quality; or, 2d, Because such would be satisfied with mean allowances or small wages; and so he could put into his own purse a great part of the revenues of the Levites, which doubtless he seized upon when they forsook him and went to Jerusalem, (2 Chron. xi. 13;) or, 3d, Because mean persons would depend upon his favour, and therefore be pliable to his humour and firm to his interest. But it must be observed here, that the words *מִקְצוֹת הָעָם*, *meketsoth hagnam*, properly signify, *from the ends of the people*, and may be rendered, *out of all the people*,

A. M. 3029. ^b and made priests of the lowest of
 B. C. 975. the people, which were not of the
 sons of Levi.

32 And Jeroboam ordained a feast in the eighth month, on the fifteenth day of the month, like unto ^c the feast that is in Judah, and he ^d offered upon the altar. So did he in Beth-el, ^e sacrificing unto the calves that he had made :

^b Num. iii. 10 ; Chap. xiii. 33 ; 2 Kings xvii. 32 ; 2 Chron. xi. 14 ; Ezek. xlv. 7. — ^c Lev. xxiii. 33 ; Numbers xxix. 12 ; Chap. viii. 2, 5.

that is, promiscuously out of every tribe : an exposition which Bochart hath justified by a great many examples, showing that the same words are used in this sense in divers other places. Indeed, this exposition seems to be confirmed by the following clause, added to explain these words, *which were not of the sons of Levi*—Though they were not of the tribe of Levi, to whom the office of the priesthood was confined by God's express command. So that Jeroboam's sin, as to this particular, was not that he chose mean persons, for many of the Levites were such ; and his sin would not have been the less if he had chosen the noblest and greatest persons ; as we see in the example of Uzziah : but in that he chose men of other tribes, contrary to God's appointment, which restrained that office to that tribe. Thus, as he transferred the kingdom from the house of David, so he transferred the priesthood from the family of Aaron ; and left it open, that any body might be admitted to that honourable employment ; which was a very popular thing, and ingratiated him, no doubt, with the people.

Verse 32. *Jeroboam ordained a feast on the eighth month, &c.*—The feast of tabernacles ; which by the law was to be celebrated on the fifteenth day of the seventh month. His chief intention in this change, no doubt, was to alienate the people from the rites observed at Jerusalem. "Some suppose, with Mr. Locke, that as this feast was appointed by God to be observed after the gathering in of the fruits, which might be sooner ripe about Jerusalem than in the northern parts of the country ; so Jeroboam might pretend that the eighth month would be a better time for it than the seventh, because then they would everywhere be gathered." Add to this, he might possibly have two other reasons for making this alteration : 1st, Lest he should seem directly to oppose the God of Israel, who had in a special

^d and he placed in Beth-el the priests of
 the high places which he had made. A. M. 3029.
 B. C. 975.

33 So he ^e offered upon the altar which he had made in Beth-el the fifteenth day of the eighth month, *even* in the month which he had ^f devised of his own heart ; and ordained a feast unto the children of Israel : and he offered upon the altar, ^g and ^h burnt incense.

^e Or, *went up to the altar, &c.*—^f Or, *to sacrifice.*—^g Amos vii. 13.—^h Or, *went up to the altar, &c.*—ⁱ Numbers xv. 39. ^j Heb. *to burn incense.*—^k Chap. xiii. 1.

manner commanded all the people to go up to Jerusalem on the fifteenth day of the seventh month, if he should require their attendance to celebrate the feast elsewhere at the same time : and, 2d, That by appointing his feast to be kept a month after that at Jerusalem was past, he might give those of the people of Judah an opportunity of attending it, whose curiosity might lead them so to do ; and thereby might ensure the presence of a greater concourse of people to honour his institution. *On the fifteenth day*—And so forward till the seven days were ended. *Like that in Judah*—From whence he took his pattern, to show that he worshipped the same God, and professed the same religion, for substance, which they did, however he differed in circumstances. *He offered upon the altar*—With his own hands, as appears from chap. xiii. 1-4, which he did to give the more countenance to his newly-devised solemnity. And it is no marvel, that he, who assumed a power to make priests, should undertake to do the priests' work with his own hands. *So he (Jeroboam) did in Beth-el*—Sacrificing there also, as well as in Dan, *to the calves that he had made*—Or, to Jehovah, as he pretended, under the image of these calves. *And he placed in Beth-el the priests of the high places*—Having built a house or temple there also, as well as in Dan, and set up many altars in it where these priests officiated, as was done in other high places.

Verse 33. *Which he had devised of his own heart*—Out of his own will and pleasure, against the express ordinance of God. *And ordained a feast*—To be observed, it is likely, every year in Beth-el, as well as in Dan, as the feast of tabernacles was at Jerusalem, like which it also lasted many days. *And he offered upon the altar, and burned incense*—Thus performing the highest part of the priest's office.

CHAPTER XIII.

A prophet threatens Jeroboam's altar, and gives a sign, which immediately comes to pass, 1-5. He restores Jeroboam's withered hand, and leaves Beth-el, 6-10. The old prophet deceives and entertains him, 11-19. He is threatened with death, 20-23. Slain by a lion and buried, 24-32. Jeroboam is hardened in his idolatry, 83, 84.

A. M. 3029.
B. C. 975. **AND** behold, there ^a came a man of

God out of Judah by the word of the LORD unto Beth-el: ^b and Jeroboam stood by the altar ¹ to burn incense.

2 And he cried against the altar in the word of the LORD, and said, O altar, altar! thus saith the LORD; Behold, a child shall be born unto the house of David, ^a Josiah by name; and upon thee shall he offer the priests of the high places that burn incense upon thee, and men's bones shall be burnt upon thee.

3 And he gave ^d a sign the same day, saying, This *is* the sign which the LORD hath spoken; Behold, the altar shall be rent, and the ashes

^a 2 Kings xxiii. 17.—^b Chap. xii. 32.—¹ Or, to offer.

NOTES ON CHAPTER XIII.

Verse 1. *Behold, there came a man of God*—A holy prophet; for none are called *men of God* in the Old Testament, but prophets. *By the word of the Lord*—By divine inspiration and command. "There is no foundation for so much as conjecture who this prophet was. His prophecy, however, is one of the most remarkable which we have in sacred writ. It foretels an action that exactly came to pass above three hundred and forty years afterward. It describes the circumstances of the action; and specifies the very name of the person who was to do it; and therefore every considerate Jew, who lived in the time of its accomplishment, must have been convinced of the divine authority of a religion founded on such prophecies as this; since none but God could foresee, and consequently none but God could foretel events at such a distance."—Le Clerc, Calmet, and Dodd. *Jeroboam stood by the altar to burn incense*—Upon the feast day which he had instituted.

Verse 2. *He cried against the altar*—And consequently against all the worship performed at it. *O altar, altar*—He directs his speech against the altar, because the following signs were to be wrought upon it. *Behold, a child shall be born, &c.*—This prophecy is the more wonderful, because it foretels of what family the child should spring, and what should be his name; and in the accomplishment of it we see the absolute certainty of God's providence and foreknowledge, even in the most contingent things. For the particulars here mentioned, namely, the having a child, and the giving it this name, were in themselves things as uncertain, dependant on man's will, and contingent as any events can be; and yet God exactly foretold them, and they came to pass accordingly. God therefore can foresee how the will of man, and of numbers of men, whose wills are dependant on each other, will be influenced in all possible circumstances, and that for ages to come; or, he can certainly and effectually, and yet without infringing or violating man's liberty, overrule his will which way he pleaseth; otherwise it was possible this prediction might have been false, which it would

that *are* upon it shall be poured out. A. M. 3029.
B. C. 975.

4 And it came to pass when King Jeroboam heard the saying of the man of God, which had cried against the altar in Beth-el, that he put forth his hand from the altar, saying, Lay hold on him. And his hand, which he put forth against him, dried up, so that he could not pull it in again to him.

5 The altar also was rent, and the ashes poured out from the altar, according to the sign which the man of God had given by the word of the LORD.

6 And the king answered and said unto the

^a 2 Kings xxiii. 15.—^d Isa. vii. 14; John ii. 18; 1 Cor. i. 22.

be blasphemy to assert. *Upon it shall he offer the priests*—The meaning is not that he should offer or burn the priests alive, but that he should slay the priests of the high places, and then burn their bones, as he did the bones of those that had been buried, and thereby should defile this altar. How bold was the man that durst thus attack the king in his pride, and interrupt the solemnity in which he gloried! Those who are sent on God's errand, must not fear the faces of men. Although it was so many a generation this prophecy was to be fulfilled, the time is spoken of as sure and nigh at hand. For a thousand years are with God as one day.

Verse 3. *He gave a sign the same day*—That is, he then wrought a miracle to assure them of the truth of his prophecy. *Saying, this is the sign, &c.*—A proof that I speak from God, and not from myself. *The altar shall be rent, &c.*—This could not be effected but by the power of God, who hereby demonstrated that he had sent this prophet to speak these words which were presently fulfilled.

Verses 4, 5. *He put forth his hand*—To point out the man on whom he would have the people to lay hands. *From the altar*—Where he stood, and where his hand was employed in offering something upon it. *And his hand dried up*—Or withered, the muscles and sinews, the instruments of motion, shrinking up or becoming relaxed. This God did, not only to give another token, besides those which the man of God had mentioned, that his words would be fulfilled; but also to chastise Jeroboam for offering violence to the Lord's prophet; to secure the prophet against further violence; and that in this example God might show how highly he resents the injuries done to his ministers for the faithful discharge of their office. *The altar also was rent, &c.*—This train of miracles, instantly wrought, and confirming so evidently the prophet's mission, so amazed all the people, that we do not find any of them attempted to lay hold on him. And Jeroboam himself, for the present, was astonished and confounded at the sight of the effects produced by God's miraculous power.

Verse 6. *The king said, Entreat now the face of*

A. M. 3029. man of God, ° Entreat now the face
B. C. 975.

of the LORD thy God, and pray for me, that my hand may be restored me again. And the man of God besought ² the LORD, and the king's hand was restored him again, and became as *it was* before.

7 ¶ And the king said unto the man of God, Come home with me, and refresh thyself, and I will give thee a reward.

8 And the man of God said unto the king, If thou wilt give me half thy house, I will not go in with thee, neither will I eat bread nor drink water in this place :

9 For so was it charged me by the word of the LORD, saying, ³ Eat no bread, nor drink water, nor turn again by the same way that thou camest.

10 So he went another way, and returned not by the way that he came to Beth-el.

° Exod. viii. 8 ; ix. 28 ; x. 17 ; Numbers xxi. 7 ; Acts viii. 24 ; James v. 16.—² Heb. *the face of the LORD*.

the Lord thy God—Of him who hath manifested himself to be thy God and friend in a singular manner; and therefore will hear thy prayers for me, though he will not regard mine, because I have forsaken him and his worship. *The man of God besought the Lord*—This he did to assure Jeroboam that what he had said was not from ill-will to him, and that he heartily desired his reformation, not his ruin. *And the king's hand was restored*—God showed him this mercy, 1st, Because he repented of the violence intended against the prophet, for which his hand had been dried up: 2d, To assure him that the stroke was from God: and, 3d, That this goodness of God to him might lead him to repentance, or if he continued impenitent, might leave him without excuse.

Verses 7-9. *I will give thee a reward*—He desires to requite the instrument, but takes no notice of God, the chief cause and author of this wonderful mercy. *The man of God said, I will not go in with thee, &c.*—In obedience to God, he refuses to eat, or drink, or have any familiar society with him, against whom he had pronounced God's indignation. *For so it was charged me*—My refusal of thy favour is not from any contempt or hatred of thy person, but in compliance with the just command of my God, who hath forbidden me all further converse or communication with thee. *Saying, Eat no bread, nor drink water*—Namely, in that place, or with that people. Hereby God showed his detestation of their idolatry, not because it was as bad as that of the heathen, but because they were vile apostates from the true God, and embraced this idol-worship against the light of their own consciences, merely to comply with the king's humour and command; and because their vicinity and relation to Judah, exposed that tribe to

11 ¶ Now there dwelt an old pro- A. M. 3029.
phet in Beth-el; and his ³ sons came B. C. 975.
and told him all the works that the man of God had done that day in Beth-el: the words which he had spoken unto the king, them they told also to their father.

12 And their father said unto them, What way went he? for his sons had seen what way the man of God went which came from Judah.

13 And he said unto his sons, Saddle me the ass. So they saddled him the ass: and he rode thereon,

14 And went after the man of God, and found him sitting under an oak: and he said unto him, *Art* thou the man of God that camest from Judah? And he said, *I am*.

15 Then he said unto him, Come home with me, and eat bread.

¶ 1 Sam. ix. 7 ; 2 Kings v. 15.—³ Numbers xxii. 18 ; xxiv. 13.
¹ 1 Cor. v. 11.—² Heb. *son*.

the danger of being infected by their idolatry. God also intended hereby to teach his people in all ages to *have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness*, lest they should either give encouragement to, or receive infection from, them. *Nor turn again by the same way thou camest*—That by avoiding the way that led him to Beth-el as execrable, although he went by God's special command, he might teach all others how much they ought to abhor that way, and all thoughts of going to that place, or to such idolatrous people, upon any unnecessary occasion.

Verse 11. *There dwelt an old prophet in Beth-el*—One to whom and by whom God did sometimes reveal his will, as is manifest from verses 20, 21; and one who had a respect to God's holy prophets, and gave credit to their predictions. But that he was not a truly and uniformly good and pious man is certain, because we here find him guilty of a downright lie, verse 18. And, although a holy prophet, who had lived there before, might possibly have continued in the kingdom of Israel after its separation from Judah, and defection from the true worship of God; yet such a one would not have chosen to reside at Beth-el, the chief seat of idolatry, unless with a design to preach against it: this, it is evident, he did not; for his sons, it appears, were present when Jeroboam stood at the altar, and therefore joined in that idolatrous worship, and yet their father was too timorous to reprove them. He was probably somewhat like the famous Balaam, who was commissioned to utter divers true prophecies, but nevertheless loved the wages of unrighteousness, and was a wicked man.

Verse 14. *And found him sitting under an oak*—Being faint and weary with his journey, and possibly with the heat also, (which made him choose to

A. M. 3029. 16 And he said, ⁱ I may not return
B. C. 975. with thee, nor go in with thee: neither
will I eat bread nor drink water with thee in
this place:

17 For ⁴ it was said to me ^k by the word of
the LORD, Thou shalt eat no bread nor drink
water there, nor turn again to go by the way
that thou camest.

18 He said unto him, I *am* a prophet also
as thou *art*; and an angel spake unto me
by the word of the LORD, saying, Bring him
back with thee into thy house, that he may
eat bread and drink water. *But* he lied unto
him.

19 So he went back with him, and did eat
bread in his house and drank water.

20 ¶ And it came to pass, as they sat at the
table, that the word of the LORD came unto the
prophet that brought him back:

ⁱ Verses 8, 9.—⁴ Heb. a word was.

rest in this shady place,) and especially with hunger
and thirst, verse 9. And the old prophet might
easily guess that this was the prophet from Judah,
by his age and carriage, and, it may be, by his prophetic
mantle, and by the character which his sons
had given of him.

Verse 18. *But he lied unto him*—And yet, proba-
bly, not with any evil design, but out of curiosity,
to know from his own mouth the truth and all the
particulars of the message which he had just deliv-
ered to Jeroboam; and to express his kindness to
him, and relieve his hunger and weariness, whereby,
possibly, he thought he should please God. In this,
however, he greatly erred, and involved both him-
self and the prophet from Judah in guilt and wrath.

Verse 19. *So he went back with him*—Too readily
hearkening to his words, and not considering that
what God himself had expressly commanded, noth-
ing but the express command of the same God
could set aside: otherwise the commands of God
might be made of none effect by any one who
should feign to have a divine commission.

Verses 20–22. *The word of the Lord came, &c.*
—God obliged the prophet, who had caused him to
sin, to denounce a punishment against him for it,
that it might the more affect him; nothing being
more piercing than to be reflected on by those who
have caused us to err. *And he cried unto the man
of God*—With a loud voice, the effect of his passion,
both for his own guilt and shame, and for the prop-
het's approaching misery. *Forasmuch as thou
hast disobeyed the mouth of the Lord*—That is, the
word of command coming out of his mouth; *thy
carcass shall not come into the sepulchre of thy fa-
thers*—Thou shalt not die a natural, but a violent
death, and that in this journey, before thou returnest
to thy own habitation.

21 And he cried unto the man of ^{A. M. 3029.}
God that came from Judah, saying, ^{B. C. 975.}

Thus saith the LORD, Forasmuch as thou hast
disobeyed the mouth of the LORD, and hast not
kept the commandment which the LORD thy
God commanded thee,

22 But camest back, and hast eaten bread and
drunk water in the place, ¹ of the which *the
LORD* did say to thee, Eat no bread, and drink
no water; thy carcass shall not come unto the
sepulchre of thy fathers.

23 ¶ And it came to pass, after he had eaten
bread, and after he had drunk, that he saddled
for him the ass, *to wit*, for the prophet whom
he had brought back.

24 And when he was gone, ^m a lion met him
by the way, and slew him: and his carcass was
cast in the way, and the ass stood by it, the lion
also stood by the carcass.

^k Chap. xx. 35; 1 Thess. iv. 15.—¹ Ver. 9.—^m Chap. xx. 36.

Verses 23, 24. *He saddled for him the ass*—But it
is observable, he does not accompany him: his guilty
conscience making him fear to be involved in the
same judgment with him. *A lion met him by the
way, and slew him*—There was a wood not far from
Bethel, out of which the two she-bears came, men-
tioned 2 Kings ii. 24; and, it is not unlikely, that
out of the same wood came the lion that slew this
prophet. *His carcass was cast in the way*—His
dead body fell to the ground, and lay in the place
where the soul left it. *The lion also stood by the
carcass*—Which plainly showed that he was sent by
God to execute only what God had threatened, and
not to move one step beyond that commission,
otherwise, agreeable to his nature and fierceness, he
would certainly have devoured the carcass and torn
the ass. "Some have thought," says Dr. Dodd,
"that this prophet's was a small offence to have met
with so severe a punishment: but the true state of
the case is this: the prophet from Judah had suffi-
cient evidence of the truth of his own revelation;
had sufficient cause to suspect some corrupt ends in
the prophet who came to recall him; and had suffi-
cient reason to expect an interposition of the same
power that gave him the injunction to repeal it; and,
therefore, his crime was an easy credulity, a com-
plying with an offer merely to gratify a petulant
appetite, which he knew was repugnant to a divine
command. It argued a great levity, if not infidelity,
of his own revelation, to listen to the pretended one
of another man." It must be acknowledged, how-
ever, to be strange, that the lying prophet should
escape, while he, who, notwithstanding this error,
was truly a man of God, is so severely punished.
But judgment must begin at the house of God: God
must correct his own children first. And there is a
judgment to come, when these things shall be called

A. M. 3029.
B. C. 975. 25 And behold, men passed by, and saw the carcass cast in the way, and the lion standing by the carcass: and they came and told it in the city where the old prophet dwelt.

26 ¶ And when the prophet that brought him back from the way heard *thereof*, he said, It is the man of God, who was disobedient unto the word of the LORD: therefore the LORD hath delivered him unto the lion, which hath ⁵ torn him, and slain him, according to the word of the LORD, which he spake unto him.

⁵ Heb. broken.

over again, and when those who sinned most and suffered least in this world, will receive according to their works. This punishment of the prophet was a very striking admonition to Jeroboam of what he might expect, since God spared not a less guilty offender. And we may all learn from God's severity, in this instance, 1st, Not to suffer our faith to be perverted by any suggestions made against a revelation of uncontested divine authority; and, 2d, Always to pay a strict regard and obedience to all the known commands of God.

Verses 25, 26. *They came and told it in the city*—As a wonderful thing that the lion should neither fall upon his prey, nor hurt them who passed by, but suffer them to go on quietly. *Who was disobedient unto the word of the Lord*—Which was the true reason why he was so severely punished, in order that other prophets might not, upon any pretence or excuse, neglect punctually to attend to, and observe all the divine injunctions; for, had they not been deterred from neglecting and disregarding them, the authority of prophecy would have been soon lessened, and consequently the people have sooner or more readily fallen into idolatry. *Which hath torn and slain him, according to the word of the Lord*—God had not expressly said that a lion should tear him; but, that he should suffer a violent death in some way, was implied in the threatening that his carcass should not come into the sepulchre of his fathers.

Verse 28. *He found, &c.*—Here was a concurrence of miracles: that the ass did not run away from the lion, according to his nature, but boldly stood still, as waiting to carry the prophet to his burial; that the lion did not devour his prey, nor tear the ass, nor meddle with the travellers that passed by, nor hurt the old prophet, when he came to the spot, nor his ass; nor yet go away, when he had done his work, but stood still, as if, 1st, To preserve the carcass of the prophet, whom he had slain, from other wild beasts or fowls: 2d, As an evidence that the prophet's death was not casual, nor the effect of a lion's ravenous disposition, but of God's singular and just judgment, who had directed the lion, by a supernatural power, how far to go, and where to stop; and, consequently, that the prophet's predic-

A. M. 3029.
B. C. 975. 27 And he spake to his sons, saying, Saddle me the ass. And they saddled him.

28 And he went and found his carcass cast in the way, and the ass and the lion standing by the carcass: the lion had not eaten the carcass, nor ⁶ torn the ass.

29 And the prophet took up the carcass of the man of God, and laid it upon the ass, and brought it back; and the old prophet came to the city, to mourn and to bury him.

30 And he laid his carcass in his own grave;

⁶ Heb. broken.

tion was divine, and would be infallibly accomplished in its proper time: and 3d, As a token of God's favour to the deceased prophet, of whose very carcass he took such special care; thereby signifying, that, although for wise and just reasons he thought fit to take away his life, yet his remains were precious to him.

Verses 29, 30. *The prophet, (namely, the old prophet,) took up the carcass of the man of God*—“If there were any truth,” says Henry, “in the vulgar opinion, sure the corpse bled afresh when he touched it; for he was, in effect, the murderer.” *He laid his carcass in his own grave*—A poor reparation this of the injury done him in deceiving him, and persuading him to disobey the command of God to his ruin. Hereby, however, the divine threatening, (in verse 22,) was fulfilled; and withal, the memory of his prophecy was revived from time to time, by the sight of his grave, and preserved among them; and even his carcass, resting there, might be a witness of their madness and desperate wickedness, in continuing to practise their abominable, idolatrous worship, after such an assurance of the dreadful effects of it. *They mourned over him*—Namely, the old prophet and his sons, and others, whom common humanity taught to lament the untimely death of so worthy a person. *Saying, Alas! my brother*—Which was a usual form of expression in funeral lamentations. “The case, indeed, was very piteous,” says Henry, “that so good a man, so faithful a prophet, and one so bold in God's cause, should, for one offence, die as a criminal, while an old, lying prophet lived at ease, and an idolatrous prince in pomp and power. *Thy way, O God, is in the sea, and thy path in the great waters!* We cannot judge of men by their sufferings, nor of sins by their present punishments. With some the flesh is destroyed, that the spirit may be saved; while, with others, the flesh is pampered, that the soul may ripen for hell.” The reader will be pleased to see a similar reflection by Dr. Dodd. “Upon a review of this narrative, who can fail to admire the unsearchable secrets of the divine justice? Jeroboam revolts from his lawful sovereign, forsakes the worship of the true God, engages the people in gross idolatry, and is himself

A. M. 3029. and they mourned over him, saying;
B. C. 975. ^a Alas, my brother!

31 And it came to pass, after he had buried him, that he spake to his sons, saying, When I am dead, then bury me in the sepulchre wherein the man of God is buried; ^o lay my bones beside his bones.

32 ^p For the saying which he cried by the word of the LORD against the altar in Beth-el, and against all the houses of the high places

^a Jer. xxii. 18.—^o 2 Kings xxiii. 17.—^p Ver. 2; 2 Kings xxiii. 16, 19.—^q Ch. xvi. 24.—^r Ch. xii. 31; 2 Chr. xi. 15; xiii. 9.

hardened by the menaces and miracles of the prophet, who was sent to him; a false prophet deceives an innocent man with a lie, and draws him into an act of disobedience, contrary to his inclination; yet this wicked Jeroboam, and this seducing prophet, escape immediate punishment, while the other, who might mean no ill, perhaps, in turning back, is slain by a lion, and his body deprived of the sepulchre of his fathers! We must acknowledge, indeed, that the depths of the judgments of God are an abyss which our understandings cannot fathom; but nothing certainly can be a more sensible proof of the certainty of another life, and of the eternal recompenses or punishments which attend it, than to see the righteous so rigorously treated here, for slight offences, while, sentence not being speedily executed against evil men, we have an assurance from thence that *God will bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good or evil, Eccles. xii. 14.*"

Verses 31, 32. *When I am dead, &c.*—Though he was a lying prophet, yet he desired to die the death of a true prophet. Gather not my soul with the sinners of Beth-el, but with this man of God: because, *what he cried against the altar of Beth-el shall surely come to pass*—Which he might easily conclude, both from the miracles wrought by the prophet of Judah, and from the wonderful particulars of his death. *And against all the high places which are in the cities of Samaria*—That is, of the kingdom of Samaria, as it was called, though not when this fact was done, yet before these books were written. Samaria was properly the name of one city; but, as it became the capital of the kingdom of Israel, that whole kingdom was so called from it. The prophet of Judah had not indeed threatened as much as the prophet of Beth-el here mentions, (unless he said more than is related verse 2,) but it

which are in the cities of ^q Samaria, A. M. 3029.
B. C. 975. shall surely come to pass.

33 ¶ ^r After this thing Jeroboam returned not from his evil way, but ^t made again of the lowest of the people priests of the high places: whosoever would, he ^u consecrated him, and he became *one* of the priests of the high places.

34 ^v And this thing became sin unto the house of Jeroboam, even ^w to cut it off, and to destroy it from off the face of the earth.

^r Heb. returned and made.—^s Heb. filled his hand, Judg. xvii. 12.
^t Chap. xii. 30.—^u Chap. xiv. 10.

might easily be inferred from what he had predicted. Thus, by the mouth of two witnesses, was it established, if possible, to convince Jeroboam.

Verse 33. *After this*—That is, after all these things; the singular number being put for the plural; after so many evident and successive miracles; *Jeroboam returned not from his evil ways*—He was not at all changed in his principles or practice, but continued in his idolatry. *Made again of the lowest of the people, &c.*—He abated not so much as a circumstance in his idolatrous worship. *Whosoever would he consecrated him, &c.*—Without any respect to tribe, or family, or integrity of body, or mind, or life, all which things were to be regarded in the priesthood.

Verse 34. *This thing became sin to the house of Jeroboam*—An occasion of sin, and a mean of hardening all his posterity in their idolatry; or, rather, it became a punishment, as the word sin often signifies. This his obstinate continuance in his idolatry, after such warnings, brought dreadful punishments upon his family, and these not of an ordinary kind; but such as effected its utter extirpation. We may reflect here with Ostervald, on the astonishing blindness and ingratitude of Jeroboam. "Instead of relying on the promises which God had made him, to preserve the kingdom in his family, if he continued faithful, fearing lest his subjects should forsake him, if they went to worship at Jerusalem; out of a false policy he set up an idolatrous worship in his kingdom, which occasioned the ruin of his family, and at last the ruin of the kingdom of the ten tribes. Thus men, instead of trusting to God, in the faithful discharge of their duty, for security, have recourse to ill methods, whereby they draw upon themselves, at length, those very misfortunes they mean to avoid." Indeed, all those betray themselves effectually, who endeavour to support themselves or families by any sin.

CHAPTER XIV.

Jeroboam sends to the prophet to inquire concerning his sick son, 1-6. The destruction of Jeroboam's house foretold, 7-16. The death of his child, 17, 18. The conclusion of his reign, 19, 20. The declension of Rehoboam's house and kingdom, 24-28. The conclusion of his reign, 29-31.

A. M. 3048.
B. C. 956.

AT that time Abijah the son of Jeroboam fell sick.

2 And Jeroboam said to his wife, Arise, I pray thee, and disguise thyself, that thou be not known to be the wife of Jeroboam; and get thee to Shiloh: behold, there is Ahijah the prophet, which told me that *“I should be king over this people.”*

3 ^b And take ¹ with thee ten loaves, and ² cracknels, and a ³ cruise of honey, and go to him: he shall tell thee what shall become of the child.

4 And Jeroboam's wife did so, and arose, ^c and went to Shiloh, and came to the house of Ahijah. But Ahijah could not see; for his eyes ^d were set by reason of his age.

5 ¶ And the LORD said unto Ahijah, Behold,

* Chapter xi. 31.—^b 1 Samuel ix. 7.—^c Heb. in thine hand.
^d Or, cakes.—^e Or, bottle.—^f Chap. xi. 29.

NOTES ON CHAPTER XIV.

Verse 1. *At that time*—Presently after the things related in the foregoing chapter, which, though apparently connected with the beginning of his reign, yet might possibly be done a good while after it, and so Ahijah the prophet be very old, as he is described to be, verse 4. It is probable this Abijah was Jeroboam's eldest son.

Verse 2. *Jeroboam said to his wife, Arise, &c.*—“He most probably sent his wife to consult the prophet at Shiloh, because this was a secret not to be intrusted with any body else; a secret which, had it been divulged, might have endangered his whole government; because, if once his subjects came to understand that he himself had no confidence in the calves which he had set up, but in any matter of importance had recourse to true worshippers of God, it can hardly be conceived what an inducement this would have been for them to forsake these senseless idols, and to return to the worship of the God of Israel, whom they had imprudently forsaken. The queen then was the only person in whom he could have confidence. As a mother he knew she would be diligent in her inquiry; and as a wife faithful in her report.”—Dodd. *Disguise thyself*—Change thy habit and voice, and go like a private and obscure person. This caution proceeded, first, from the pride of his heart, which made him unwilling to confess his folly in worshipping such helpless idols, and to give glory to the God whom he had forsaken: secondly, from jealousy and suspicion, lest the Prophet Ahijah, (who he knew was greatly offended at him for the idolatry he had introduced,) if he knew her to be his wife, should either give her no answer, or make things worse than indeed they were.

Verse 3. *Take with thee ten loaves, &c.*—It was usual for those that went to inquire of a prophet to make him some present as a token of their respect for him, 1 Sam. ix. 7. The present which she was

the wife of Jeroboam cometh to ask a thing of thee for her son; for he is sick: thus and thus shalt thou say unto her: for it shall be, when she cometh in, that she shall feign herself to be another woman.

6 And it was so, when Ahijah heard the sound of her feet, as she came in at the door, that he said, Come in, thou wife of Jeroboam; why feignest thou thyself to be another? for I am sent to thee with ^e heavy tidings.

7 Go tell Jeroboam, Thus saith the LORD God of Israel, ^d Forsasmuch as I exalted thee from among the people, and made thee prince over my people Israel,

8 And ^e rent the kingdom away from the house of David, and gave it thee: and yet thou hast not been as my servant David, ^f who kept

* Heb. stood for his hoariness.—^b Heb. hard.—^c 2 Sam. xii. 7; Chap. xvi. 2.—^d Chap. xi. 31.—^e Chap. xi. 33, 36; xv. 5.

here directed to take, was of such things as suited the disguise in which she was to go, and were calculated to make Ahijah think her a country woman rather than a queen. *And go to him*—To inquire the event of this sickness, as the following words imply. It would have been more pious to have inquired why God contended with him; to have desired the prophet to pray for him, and to have cast away his idols; then the child might have been restored to him, as his hand was: “but most people,” says Henry, “would rather be told their fortune, than told their faults, or their duty.”

Verse 4. *But Ahijah could not see*—He not only lived obscure and neglected in Shiloh, but was blind through age: yet he was still blessed with the visions of the Almighty; which require not bodily eyes; but are rather favoured by the want of them, the eyes of the mind being then most intent and least diverted. *His eyes were set, &c.*—Hebrew, קמו כשיבו, *kamu misheibo*, stood for his hoariness—No longer performed their office, by reason of his great age. Perhaps the fibres and muscles by which the eyes and eye-lids are moved, were contracted and withered, the optic nerves become effete, or film or cataract was grown over his eyes.

Verse 6. *Come in, thou wife of Jeroboam*—He called her aloud by her name before she entered the house, doubtless to her great surprise, and thus not only showed that he knew her, notwithstanding the disguise in which she had come, but discovered to all about him who she was. By which discovery he both reproved their folly, who thought to conceal themselves from God, and withal gave her assurance of the truth and certainty of that message which he was to deliver, that she might give the greater credit to his words.

Verse 8. *Thou hast not been as my servant David*—Who, though he fell into some sins, yet, 1st, He constantly persevered in the true worship of

A. M. 3048. my commandments, and who followed me with all his heart, to do *that* only *which was* right in mine eyes;

9 But hast done evil above all that were before thee: ^e for thou hast gone and made thee other gods, and molten images, to provoke me to anger, and ^h hast cast me behind thy back:

10 Therefore behold, ⁱ I will bring evil upon the house of Jeroboam, and ^k will cut off from Jeroboam him that pisseth against the wall, ^l and him that is shut up and left in Israel, and will take away the remnant of the house of Jeroboam, as a man taketh away dung, till it be all gone.

11 ^m Him that dieth of Jeroboam in the city shall the dogs eat; and him that dieth in the

^e Chap. xii. 28; 2 Chron. xi. 15. — ^h Neh. ix. 26; Psa. l. 17; Ezek. xxiii. 35. — ⁱ Chap. xv. 29. — ^k Chap. xxi. 21; 2 Kings ix. 8. — ^l Deut. xxxiii. 36; 2 Kings xiv. 26.

God; from which thou art revolted; 2d, He heartily repented of, and turned from all his sins, whereas thou art obstinate and incorrigible.

Verse 9. *But hast done evil above all that were before thee*—Above all the judges and former kings of my people, none of whom set up images, and persuaded the people to worship them. *For thou hast made thee other gods, and molten images*—Namely, the golden calves: not as if they thought them to be other gods in a proper sense, but only representations of the true God; for it is apparent they still pretended to worship the God of their fathers; but because God rejected their whole worship, and, howsoever they accounted it, he reckoned it a manifest defection from him, and a betaking themselves to *other gods, or devils*, as they are called 2 Chron. xi. 15, whom alone they served and worshipped therein, whatsoever pretences they had to the contrary. *To provoke*—Whereby thou didst provoke me. For otherwise this was not Jeroboam's design in it, but only to establish himself in the throne. *And hast cast me behind thy back*—Despised and forsaken me, and my commands, and my worship, as we do things which we cast behind our backs.

Verses 10, 11. *Will cut off him that is shut up*—Those who had escaped the fury of their enemies invading them, either because they were *shut up* in caves, or castles, or strong towns: or, because they were *left, overlooked, or neglected* by them, or spared as poor, impotent, helpless creatures. But now, saith he, they shall be all searched out, and brought to destruction. *As a man taketh away dung*—Which they remove as a loathsome thing, out of their houses, and that thoroughly and universally. *Shall the fowls of the air eat*—So both sorts shall die and lie on the ground unburied.

Verse 12. *When thy feet enter into the city*—Or, rather, *when thy feet have entered*: that is, presently

field shall the fowls of the air eat: A. M. 3048. for the LORD hath spoken it. B. C. 958.

12 Arise thou therefore, get thee to thine own house: *and* ^a when thy feet enter into the city, the child shall die.

13 And all Israel shall mourn for him, and bury him: for he only of Jeroboam shall come to the grave, because in him ^o there is found *some* good thing toward the LORD God of Israel in the house of Jeroboam.

14 ^p Moreover, the LORD shall raise him up a king over Israel, who shall cut off the house of Jeroboam that day: but what? even now.

15 For the LORD shall smite Israel, as a reed is shaken in the water, and he shall ^q root up Israel out of this ^r good land, which he gave to

^a Chap. xvi. 4; xxi. 24. — ^o Verse 17. — ^o 2 Chron. xii. 12; xix. 3. — ^p Chap. xv. 27, 28, 29. — ^q 2 Kings xvii. 6; Psal. liii. 5. — ^r Josh. xxiii. 15, 16.

upon thy entrance into the city; when thou art gone but a little way in it, even as far as the threshold of the king's door, (verse 17,) *the child shall die*—And by this judge of the truth of the rest of my prophecy.

Verse 13. *All Israel shall mourn for him*—For the loss of so worthy and hopeful a person, and for the sad calamities which will follow his death, which possibly his moderation, and wisdom, and virtue, might have prevented. So they should mourn, not simply for him, but for their own loss in him. *He only shall come to the grave*—Shall have the honour of burial. *In him is found some good*—Pious intentions of taking away the calves, and of permitting or obliging his people to go up to Jerusalem to worship, if God gave him life and authority to do it, and of trusting God with his kingdom. *In the house of Jeroboam*—Which is added for his greater commendation; he was good in the midst of so many temptations and wicked examples; a good branch of a bad stock.

Verse 14. *The Lord shall raise him up a king*—This king was Baasha, chap. xv. 27. *Who shall cut off the house of Jeroboam that day*—When he is so raised up, in the very beginning of his reign. *But what?*—Do I say *he shall raise*, as if it were a thing to be done at a great distance of time? The man is now in being, if not in power, who shall do this: this judgment shall be shortly executed. Sometimes God makes quick work with sinners. He did so with the house of Jeroboam. It was not twenty-four years from his first elevation to the final extirpation of his family.

Verses 15, 16. *For the Lord shall smite Israel*—For consenting to that idolatrous worship which Jeroboam set up. *As a reed is shaken in the water*—Hither and thither, with every wind. So shall the kingdom and people of Israel be always in an unquiet and unsettled state, tossed to and fro by

A. M. 3043.
B. C. 956.

their fathers, and shall scatter them * beyond the river, † because they have made their groves, provoking the LORD to anger.

16 And he shall give Israel up because of the sins of Jeroboam, † who did sin, and who made Israel to sin.

17 ¶ And Jeroboam's wife arose, and departed, and came to † Tirzah: and † when she came to the threshold of the door, the child died:

18 And they buried him; and all Israel mourned for him, † according to the word of the LORD, which he spake by the hand of his servant Ahijah the prophet.

† 2 Kings xv. 29.—† Exod. xxxiv. 13; Deut. xii. 3.—† Chap. xii. 30; xiii. 34; xv. 30, 34; xvi. 2.—† Ch. xvi. 6, 8, 15, 23.

foreign invasions and civil wars; by opposite kings and factions, and by the dissensions of the people. The emblem expresses very forcibly the ease with which God could punish the Israelites and overturn their state, notwithstanding all their greatness, even as easily as a reed is shaken with the wind. *He shall root up Israel out of this good land*—Which God began to do first by Tiglath-Pileser, king of Assyria, 2 Kings xv. 29; and then finished it by Sardanapater, 2 Kings xvii. 5, 6, &c. *And shall scatter them beyond the river*—That is, Euphrates, so called by way of eminence, they being carried, as the forenamed places tell us, into the country of the Medes. *Because they have made their groves*—For the worship of their idols. God having before condemned the making and worshipping of the calves, by which they pretended to worship the true God; he now takes notice that they were not contented with the calves, but (as it is in the nature of idolatry, and all sin, to proceed from evil to worse) were many of them fallen into a worse kind of idolatry, even their worship of the heathenish *Baals*, which they commonly exercised in groves. *Who made Israel to sin*—By his invention, and making the occasion of their sin, the calves; by his example, encouraging those and only those that worshipped the calves; and by his authority requiring and compelling them to do it. This is mentioned as a monstrous aggravation of his wickedness, that he was not content to sin himself, but was a great author of drawing others into sin, and of corrupting and undoing the whole kingdom; which therefore God would never forgive him, but upon all occasions mentions him with this eternal brand of infamy upon him.

Verse 17. *And come to Tirzah*—An ancient and royal city, in a pleasant place, where the kings of Israel had a palace, whither Jeroboam was now removed from Shechem, either for his pleasure, or for his son's recovery, by the healthfulness of the place. *When she came to the threshold*—Of the king's house, which probably was upon or by the wall of the city, and near the gate.

19 ¶ And the rest of the acts of A. M. 3048.
B. C. 956.
Jeroboam, how he † warred, and how he reigned, behold, they are written in the book of the Chronicles of the kings of Israel.

20 And the days which Jeroboam reigned were two and twenty years: and he † slept with his fathers; and Nadab his son reigned in his stead.

21 ¶ And Rehoboam the son of Solomon reigned in Judah. † Reho- About
B. C. 975.
boam was forty and one years old when he began to reign; and he reigned seventeen years in Jerusalem, the city † which the LORD did choose out of all the tribes of Israel, to put his

† Verse 12.—† Verse 13.—† 2 Chron. xiii. 2, &c.—† Heb. lay down.—† 2 Chron. xiii. 13.—† Chap. xi. 36.

Verse 18. *All Israel mourned for him*—And justly: not only for the loss of a hopeful prince, but because his death plucked up the flood-gates at which an inundation of judgments broke in. *According to the word of the Lord by Ahijah*—Thus by accomplishing the predictions of his prophet concerning the death and burial of the child, and the lamentation which the people made for him, God confirmed all the rest of his threatenings against the house of Jeroboam and the people of Israel.

Verse 19. *Behold, they are written in the book of the Chronicles*—Not that canonical book of Chronicles, for that was written long after this book; but a book of civil records, the annals, wherein all remarkable passages were recorded by the king's command from day to day; out of which the sacred penman, by the direction of God's spirit, took those passages which were most useful for God's honour, and men's edification.

Verse 20. *Jeroboam reigned two and twenty years*—So he lived till the second year of Asa, chap. xv. *He slept with his fathers*—He died as his fathers did, or perhaps the expression also implies, that he was buried with his ancestors. Their sepulchre, however, may appear too mean for a great king. It is probable that he died soon after his son: and we read, (2 Chron. xiii. 20,) *The Lord struck him*; probably with some sudden and sore disease, which soon cut him off. He left his crown to Nadab his son, who lost it, and his life too, and the lives of all his family, within ten years after. *The triumphing of the wicked is short, and the joy of the hypocrite but for a moment*, Job xx. 5.

Verse 21. *Rehoboam was forty and one years old when he began to reign*—Although many learned men are of opinion that there is an error in the text here in regard to the age of Rehoboam when he began to reign, and some think the reading should be *twenty-one*, while Houbigant, following the Seventy, reads *sixteen years*; yet as they do not seem to give sufficient reasons for the alteration, it is certainly safest to abide by the Hebrew text. According to this, he was born in the last year of David's life, and

A. M. 3032. name there: ^d and his mother's name
B. C. 972. *was Naamah an Ammonitess.*

22 ^o And Judah did evil in the sight of the LORD, and they ^fprovoked him to jealousy with their sins which they had committed, above all that their fathers had done.

23 For they also built them ^e high places, and ^g images, ^h and groves, one very high hill, and ⁱ under every green tree.

24 ^k And there were also sodomites in the

^d Verse 31.—^e 2 Chron. xii.—^f Deut. xxxii. 21; Psalm lxxviii. 58; 1 Cor. x. 22.—^g Deuteron. xii. 2; Ezek. xvi. 24.
^h Or, standing images, or, statues.

certainly had his education, and the forming of his mind, in the best days of Solomon; and yet, with all the advantages he enjoyed, he was a weak and inconsiderate prince, who, instead of being a blessing, proved a curse to his kingdom. Probably Solomon's defection, in the latter part of his life, did more to corrupt him than his prior wisdom and devotion had done to render him wise and virtuous. *He reigned seventeen years in Jerusalem, the city, &c.*—Where he had opportunities in abundance to know his duty, had he but had a heart to practise it. *His mother was Naamah an Ammonitess*—She was probably the daughter of Shobi, the Ammonite, who was so kind to David in Absalom's rebellion. And as there is reason to think Shobi had become a proselyte to the true religion, it is likely that gratitude for his kindness moved David to take his daughter, though an Ammonitess, to be the wife of his son Solomon. It is very doubtful, however, whether ever she cordially embraced the religion of the Israelites, and as Solomon worshipped the gods of the Ammonites, among his other idols, it is not improbable that she was concerned in seducing him. None can imagine how lasting and how fatal the consequences may be, of being unequally yoked with an unbeliever.

Verses 22, 23. *Judah did evil in the sight of the Lord*—In contempt and in defiance of him, and the tokens of his special presence. *They provoked him to jealousy*—By joining other gods together with him, as the adulterous wife provokes her husband by breaking the marriage covenant. *They also built them high places*—Followed the example of the Israelites, although they were better instructed, had the temple in their kingdom, and liberty of access to it, and the privilege of worshipping God in his own way; together with the counsels, sermons, and examples, of the priests and Levites, and the dreadful example of Israel's horrid apostacy, to caution and terrify them. *High places*—Which were unlawful, and now especially when the temple was built, and ready to receive them, and unnecessary, and therefore in building them they expressed a greater contempt of God and his express command. *Groves*—Not only after the manner of the heathen and Israelites, but against a direct and particular prohibition. *Under every green tree*—The people

land: and they did according to all the abominations of the nations which the LORD cast out before the children of Israel.

25 ^l And it came to pass in the fifth year of King Rehoboam, that Shishak king of Egypt came up against Jerusalem:

26 ^m And he took away the treasures of the house of the LORD, and the treasures of the

^l 2 Kings xvii. 9.—^m Isa. lvii. 5.—ⁿ Deut. xxiii. 17; Chap. xv. 12; xxii. 46; 2 Kings xxiii. 7.—^o Chap. xi. 40; 2 Chron. xii. 2.—^p 2 Chron. xii. 9, 10, 11.

were universally corrupted, which is prodigious, all things considered, and is a clear evidence of the greatness and depth of the original corruption of man's nature.

Verse 24. *There were also sodomites in the land*—The kind of wickedness here referred to often attended idolatry, chap. xv. 12; 2 Kings xxiii. 7; for among the heathen the most filthy things were practised in these shady, dark places, their groves: and such wickedness, it appears from the passages now quoted, existed at this time among the Israelites, who, out of devotion to some false god or other, prostituted their bodies, contrary to nature, to be abused in honour of those gods, in direct opposition to the law, Deut. xxiii. 17. *They did according to all the abominations of the nations, &c.*—They dishonoured God by the sin of idolatry, and therefore God left them to dishonour their own bodies in this abominable manner.

Verse 25. *In the fifth year of King Rehoboam*—Presently after his and his people's apostacy, which was not till his fourth year; while apostate Israel enjoyed peace, and some kind of prosperity; of which difference two reasons may be given: first, Judah's sins were committed against clearer light, and more powerful means and remedies of all sorts, and therefore deserved more severe and speedy judgments. Secondly, God discovered more love to Judah in chastising them speedily, that they might be humbled, reformed, and preserved, as it happened; and more anger against Israel, whom he spared to that total destruction which he intended to bring upon them. *Shishak*—He is thought to be Solomon's brother-in-law; but how little such relations signify among princes, when their interest is concerned, all histories witness: besides, Rehoboam was not Solomon's son by Pharaoh's daughter, and so the relation was in a manner extinct. *Came up*—Either from a desire to enlarge his empire; or by Jeroboam's instigation; or from a covetous desire of possessing those great treasures which David and Solomon had left; and, above all, by God's providence disposing his heart to this expedition, for Rehoboam's punishment.

Verse 26. *And he took, &c.*—Rehoboam, according to Josephus, delivered up the city to him without striking a stroke; which may seem strange, con-

A. M. 3033.
B. C. 971. king's house; he even took away all: and he took away all the shields of gold ^a which Solomon had made.

27 And King Rehoboam made in their stead brazen shields, and committed *them* unto the hands of the chief of the ^b guard, which kept the door of the king's house.

28 And it was *so*, when the king went into the house of the LORD, that the guard bare them, and brought them back into the guard-chamber.

^a Chap. x. 17.—^b Heb. *runners*.—^c 2 Chron. xii. 15.—^d 2 Chron. xii. 24; xv. 6; 2 Chron. xii. 15.

Considering the great strength of it, and how much time it took Nebuchadnezzar and Titus to become masters of it. But it is probable that David and Solomon, in their building and altering the city, had more respect to state and magnificence than to its defence, as having no great cause to fear the invasion of any enemies: and it is certain that after the division between Judah and Israel, the kings of Judah added very much to the fortifications of it. Add to this, that this Shishak had a vast army, as we read 2 Chron. xii. 2, and so powerful, that as Herodotus, who calls him Sesostris, tells us, with it he conquered Asia. *He took away the treasures of the Lord's house*—Within twenty-five years after it was finished, he plundered it, as also the king's house, of all the wealth which they contained, and which had been amassed by David and Solomon. This, it is probable, had tempted Shishak to make this descent, and this Rehoboam tamely resigned to him, to prevent still worse consequences. Who that had seen the glory, the riches, the magnificence, the power of Solomon, would not have concluded, as the queen of Sheba seems to have done, that a long and lasting state of security and happiness was entailed on this people? But the Holy Scriptures inform us, that at the very time when every one was admiring and extolling Solomon's glory and happiness, it was denounced unto him by the Lord himself, that if either he or his children should turn aside from following the Lord, and go after other gods, they should certainly and soon fall from their glory, and be a proverb and by-word among all people, chap. xi. 6, &c.; and that even that house, which was viewed by all the nations around as a prodigy of magnificence and strength, should be so reduced and brought to desolation, that every one that pass-

29 ¶ Now the rest of the acts of Rehoboam, and all that he did, *are* <sup>A. M. 3033.
B. C. 971.</sup> they not written in the book of the Chronicles of the kings of Judah?

30 And there was ^a war between Rehoboam and Jeroboam all *their* days.

31 ^b And Rehoboam slept with his fathers, and was buried with his fathers in the city of David. ^c And his mother's name *was* Naamah an Ammonitess. And ^d Abijam his son reigned in his stead.

^a 2 Chron. xii. 16.—^b Verse 21.—^c 2 Chron. xii. 16, *Ahijah*; Matt. i. 7, *Abid*.

ed by should be astonished and hiss at it. Human foresight, doubtless, then perceived no likelihood of any such change taking place; but the event soon showed that its security and continuance depended on something more than human means.

Verse 27. *Rehoboam made in their stead brazen shields*—This was an emblem of the diminution of his glory. Sin makes the gold become dim: it changes the most fine gold, and turns it into brass. *And committed them into the hands of the chief of the guard*—Hebrew, שׂר ורצים, *saree haratsim*, the rulers, or chiefs, of the runners, so called, because they ran, some before and others behind the king, and were what we now call a body-guard.

Verse 28. *When the king went to the house of the Lord*—It appears from this, that he had not quite forsaken the worship of God; but still, at least occasionally, attended at the temple: or, if he had forsaken it, the chastisement he had received by the instrumentality of the king of Egypt had done him some good, and brought him back to that worship.

Verses 29, 30. *Are they not written, &c.*—A register was kept of the acts of the kings of Judah, as well as of those of the kings of Israel. *And there was war, &c.*—But how does this agree with chap. xii. 23, &c., where God forbids Rehoboam and his people to go up and fight against their brethren? We must observe, that though the Jews were forbidden to make war upon the Israelites, they were not forbidden to defend themselves, in case the Israelites should make war on them. "And considering that they were now become two rival nations, they might, upon the borders, be continually endeavouring to gain ground upon each other, and so run into frequent acts of hostility, without ever once engaging in a pitched battle."—Dodd.

CHAPTER XV.

The reigns of Abijam and Aza over Judah, 1–24. Of Nadab and Baasha over Israel, 25–34.

A. M. 3046.
B. C. 958. **N**OW ^a in the eighteenth year of King Jeroboam the son of Nebat reigned Abijam over Judah.

2 Three years reigned he in Jerusalem. ^b And his mother's name was ^c Maachah, the daughter of ^d Abishalom.

3 And he walked in all the sins of his father, which he had done before him : and ^e his heart was not perfect with the LORD his God, as the heart of David his father.

4 Nevertheless, ^f for David's sake did the LORD his God give him a ¹ lamp in Jerusalem, to set up his son after him, and to establish Jerusalem :

5 Because David ^g did that which was right in the eyes of the LORD, and turned not aside from any thing that he commanded him all the days of his life, ^h save only in the matter of Uriah the Hittite.

^a 2 Chron. xiii. 1.—^b 2 Chron. xi. 20-22.—^c 2 Chron. xiii. 2, Michaiā the daughter of Uriel.—^d 2 Chron. xi. 21, Absalom.
^e Chap. xi. 4 ; Psalm cxix. 80.—^f Chap. xi. 32, 36 ; 2 Chron. xxi. 7.—^g Or, candle, Chap. xi. 36.

NOTES ON CHAPTER XV.

Verses 1, 2. *Reigned Abijam over Judah*—So his reign began with Jeroboam's eighteenth year, continued his whole nineteenth year, and ended within his twentieth year, in which also Asa's reign began ; and thus one and the same year may be attributed to two several persons. *Three years reigned he, &c.*—That is, part of three years. *The daughter of Abishalom*—Or, of Absalom, as he is called 2 Chron. xi. 21 ; and because he is here mentioned as a known person, without any addition of his kindred or quality, some conceive that this was Absalom's daughter, called properly Tamar, (2 Sam. xiv. 27,) and from her royal grandmother, (2 Sam. iii. 3,) Maacah.

Verse 4. *And the Lord gave him a lamp*—A son and successor, to perpetuate his name and memory, which otherwise had gone into obscurity. *Jerusalem*—That he might maintain that city, and temple, and worship, as a witness for himself in the world, against the Israelites and heathen world.

Verse 5. *Save only in the matter of Uriah*—This, and the like phrases, are not to be understood as exclusive of every sinful action, but only of an habitual and continued apostacy from God, as the very phrase of *turning aside* from God, or from his commands, doth generally imply : and thus it is most true ; for David's other sins were either sudden and transient acts, soon repented of and blotted out, as in the cases of Nabal and Achish, or mistakes of his judgment, which was not fully convinced of the sinfulness of such actions ; whereas that which concerned Uriah's wife was a designed and studied sin, long continued in, defended with a succession of other sins, presumptuous and scandalous to his government, and to the true religion.

6 ⁱ And there was war between Rehoboam and Jeroboam all the days of his life.

7 ¶ ^k Now the rest of the acts of Abijam, and all that he did, *are they not* written in the book of the Chronicles of the kings of Judah ? And there was war between Abijam and Jeroboam.

8 ^l And Abijam slept with his fathers ; and they buried him in the city of David : and Asa his son reigned in his stead.

9 ¶ And in the twentieth year of Jeroboam king of Israel reigned Asa over Judah.

10 And forty and one years reigned he in Jerusalem. And his ^m mother's name was Maachah, the daughter of Abishalom.

11 ⁿ And Asa did that which was right in the eyes of the LORD, as *did* David his father.

12 ^o And he took away the sodomites out of

ⁱ Chap. xiv. 8.—^j 2 Sam. xi. 4, 15 ; xii. 9.—^k Chap. xiv. 30.—^l 2 Chron. xiii. 2, 22.—^m 2 Chron. xiv. 1.—ⁿ That is, grandmother's, verse 2.—^o 2 Chron. xiv. 2.—^p Chapter xiv. 24 ; xxii. 46.

Verse 6. This was mentioned before, (chap. xiv. 30,) and therefore may seem to come in here improperly, because the historian is not speaking of Rehoboam, but of his son Abijam. Bochart thinks that *Rehoboam* stands here for the son of Rehoboam. But the meaning of these words seems rather to be, that though God was pleased, for David's sake, to continue a lamp, that is, a successor, to him in Jerusalem ; yet these successors were vexed with continual wars, as appeared both in the reign of Rehoboam and of Abijam, and did not enjoy their kingdom peaceably.

Verses 10, 11. *His mother's name*—That is, his grandmother's, as appears from verse 2. She is called his mother in the same sense in which David is called Abijam's father, verse 3 ; that is, his progenitor. And his grandmother's name may be here mentioned, rather than his mother's, because his mother was either an obscure person, or was dead, or unwilling to take care of the education of her son, and so he was educated by the grandmother, who, though she poisoned his father Abijam with her idolatrous principles, (verse 12,) yet could not infect Asa, nor withhold him from prosecuting his good purposes of reforming religion. *Asa did that which was right*—As to the government of his kingdom, and the reformation and establishment of God's worship ; *in the eyes of the Lord*—That is right indeed which is so in God's eyes. Those are approved whom he commendeth. *As did David his father*—Whom he made his pattern ; worshipping the Lord alone, and taking away all idols, as it here follows.

Verse 12. *He took away the sodomites*—All whom he could find out ; but some escaped his observation,

A. M. 3053. the land, and removed all the idols
B. C. 951. that his fathers had made.

13 And also ° Maachah his mother, even her be removed from *being* queen, because she had made an idol in a grove; and Asa ³ destroyed her idol, and ² burnt it by the brook Kidron.

14 ⁴ But the high places were not removed: nevertheless Asa's ¹ heart was perfect with the LORD all his days.

15 And he brought in the ⁴ things which his father had dedicated, and the things which himself had dedicated, into the house of the LORD, silver, and gold, and vessels.

16 ¶ And there was war between Asa and Baasha king of Israel all their days.

17 And ⁵ Baasha king of Israel went A. M. 3058.
up against Judah, and built ⁶ Ramah, B. C. 951.

⁷ that he might not suffer any to go out or come in to Asa king of Judah.

18 Then Asa took all the silver and the gold that were left in the treasures of the house of the LORD, and the treasures of the king's house, and delivered them into the hand of his servants: and King Asa sent them to ² Benhadad, the son of Tabrimon, the son of Hezion, king of Syria, that dwelt at ³ Damascus, saying,

19 *There is a league between me and thee, and between my father and thy father: behold, I have sent unto thee a present of silver and gold; come and break thy league with*

⁵ 2 Chronicles xv. 16.—⁶ Heb. cut off.—⁷ Exodus xxxii. 20.
⁸ Chap. xxii. 43; 2 Chron. xv. 17.—⁹ Verse 3.

⁴ Heb. holy.—⁵ 2 Chronicles xvi. 1, &c.—⁶ Joshua xviii. 25.
⁷ Chap. xii. 27.—⁸ 2 Chron. xvi. 2.—⁹ Chap. xi. 23.

as appears from chap. xxii. 46. *And removed all the idols his father had made*—If his father had made them, he had the more need to remove them, that he might cut off the entail of the curse.

Verse 13. *Her he removed from being queen*—He took from her either the name and authority of queen regent, which she, having been Rehoboam's wife, and Abijam's mother, took to herself during Asa's minority, or the dignity of the queen-mother, and those guards, or instruments of power, which she had enjoyed and misemployed. *She had made an idol*—Hebrew, a terror, or horror, that is, a horrible idol; which, it may be, is so called, because it was of a more terrible shape than ordinary, and not to be seen without horror. *Kidron*—That when it was burned to powder, it might be thrown into the water, and be unfit for any use.

Verse 14. *The high places were not removed*—2 Chron. xiv. 3. *He took away the altars of the strange gods, and the high places where they were worshipped: but as for those high places where the true God was worshipped, he did not take them away; partly, because he thought there was no great evil in them, which had been used by David and Solomon, and other good men; partly because he thought the removal of them might do more hurt than their continuance, by occasioning the total neglect of God's worship by many of the people, who either could not, or through want of faith and zeal would not, go up to Jerusalem to worship; now especially, when the Israelites, formerly their friends, were become their enemies, and watched all opportunities to invade or molest them. Asa's heart was perfect*—That is, he sincerely and constantly adhered to the worship of God. Though he could not hinder the people from using the high places, yet he entirely devoted himself to the worship of God in the manner and place prescribed by him.

Verse 15. *He brought in the things which his father had dedicated*—Namely, Abijam, when he was

in distress, and going to fight with Jeroboam, (2 Chron. xiii.,) though afterward he did not perform his vows, nor bring into the house of the Lord what he had devoted: probably he was prevented by death. Asa his son, however, made good his vow; and also himself brought in what he had dedicated to holy uses, namely, silver, and gold, and vessels, having gotten great spoil in his war with the Ethiopians, 2 Chron. xiv. 13, 14.

Verse 17. *Baasha built Ramah*—That is, repaired and fortified it. It was a city in the tribe of Benjamin, which either belonged to the kingdom of Israel, or he had taken it from Judah. *That he might not suffer any to go out, &c.*—That he might hinder all communication between his people and the people of Judah, and that his people might not go up to Jerusalem to worship. For this place lay in the confines of both kingdoms; and in such a strait, that a fortification being made there, none could pass to or fro without a license from Baasha.

Verse 18. *Asa took all the silver and gold that were left*—Which either Shishak had left, or Abijam or Asa or others, of both Israel or Judah, had dedicated; which probably was not inconsiderable, because Asa had got great spoils from Zarah, (2 Chron. xiv.) and he, and his numerous and prosperous people, did at this time express a great zeal for the house and worship of God. *Sent them*—Wherein he committed three great faults, among many others; 1st, He alienated things consecrated to God, without necessity. 2d, He did this out of distrust of that God whose power and goodness he had lately experienced. 3d, He did this for an ill intent, to hire him to the breach of his league and covenant with Baasha, (verse 19,) and to take away part of that land which by right, and the special gift of God, belonged to the Israelites.

Verse 19. *There is a league between me and thee*—In the latter end of Solomon's reign, the Syrians were enemies to him, chap. xi. 24, 25: but when

A. M. 3053. Baasha king of Israel, that he may
B. C. 951. ⁵depart from me.

20 So Benhadad hearkened unto King Asa, and sent the captains of the hosts which he had against the cities of Israel, and smote ^aIjon, and ^aDan, and ^bAbel-beth-maachah, and all Cinneroth, with all the land of Naphtali.

21 And it came to pass, when Baasha heard *thereof*, that he left off building of Ramah, and dwelt in Tirzah.

22 ^oThen King Asa made a proclamation throughout all Judah; none *was* ⁶exempted: and they took away the stones of Ramah, and the timber thereof, wherewith Baasha had builded; and King Asa built with them ^dGeba of Benjamin, and ^eMizpah.

23 ¶ The rest of all the acts of Asa, and all his might, and all that he did, and the cities which he built, *are* they not written in the

^a Hebrew, *go up*.—² Kings xv. 29.—³ Judges xviii. 29.
^b 2 Sam. xx. 14.—^c 2 Chron. xvi. 6.—^d Heb. *free*.—^e Josh. xxi. 17.—^f Josh. xviii. 26.—^g 2 Chron. xvi. 12.

he was dead, and the kingdom was divided, both Judah and Israel made peace with the Syrians; having enough to do to settle themselves in their own dominions. *Behold, I have sent thee a present come, break thy league with Baasha*—It is strange that Asa's conscience would suffer him, or that he, a professor of the true religion, was not ashamed to be guilty of such a wicked piece of policy as to tempt with money even a heathen to break his word, or league rather, which, no doubt, he had sworn to observe. This certainly was not the way to recommend the worship and service of Jehovah to the heathen nations around.

Verses 20, 21. *And smote Ijon and Dan, &c.*—He fell upon the northern part of the kingdom of Israel, which was nearest to Damascus; while Baasha was busy at Ramah, which was in the more southern part. *And dwelt in Tirzah*—Now the royal city of Israel. There he abode to defend his own kingdoms, and durst not return to oppose Asa, lest the Syrian king should make a second invasion. So Asa met with success in this ungodly course, as good men sometimes meet with disappointment in a good cause and course. So there is no judging of causes by events.

Verse 22. *None were exempted*—All sorts of persons were obliged to come, except those who were disabled by age, or infirmity, or absence, or by the public service of the king and kingdom in other places. *Built Geba, &c.*—Repaired and strengthened them, for they were built before; which he judged better than to perfect the fortifications of Ramah, which would have been a perpetual bone of contention (as we speak) between Judah and Israel.

book of the Chronicles of the kings A. M. 3053.
of Judah? Nevertheless ^fin the time B. C. 951.
of his old age he was diseased in his feet.

24 And Asa slept with his fathers, and was buried with his fathers in the city of David his father: ^gand ^hJehoshaphat his son reigned in his stead.

25 ¶ And Nadab the son of Jero- About
boam ⁷began to reign over Israel in B. C. 954.
the second year of Asa king of Judah, and reigned over Israel two years.

26 And he did evil in the sight of the LORD, and walked in the way of his father, and in ⁱhis sin, wherewith he made Israel to sin.

27 ¶ ^kAnd Baasha the son of Ahijah, of the house of Issachar, conspired against him; and Baasha smote him at ¹Gibbethon, which *belonged* to the Philistines; for Nadab and all Israel laid siege to Gibbethon.

² 2 Chron. xvii. 1.—⁴ Matt. i. 8, called *Josaphat*.—⁷ Heb. *reigned*.—¹ Chapter xii. 30; xiv. 16.—^k Chapter xiv. 16.
¹ Josh. xix. 44; xxi. 23; Chap. xvi. 15.

Verse 23. *Nevertheless he was diseased in his feet*—Notwithstanding the great things which he had done, and the glory and prosperity which he had enjoyed, he felt the effects of human infirmity, and of his own sins. He probably had the gout, which made him less active than he had been before this disease seized him.

Verses 25, 26. *And reigned over Israel two years*—Not complete, as appears from verses 28–33. *And walked in his sin*—In the worship of the calves which his father had made. If the death of his brother Abijah had had a due influence upon him, to make him religious, and the honour done to that well-disposed young man at his death had engaged him to follow his good example, his reign might have been long and glorious; but *he walked in the way of his father*, kept up the worship of the calves, and forbade his subjects to go up to Jerusalem to worship; sinned and made Israel to sin; and therefore God brought ruin upon him quickly, in the second year of his reign.

Verses 27, 28. *Baasha smote him at Gibbethon, which belonged to the Philistines*—This was a city in the tribe of Dan, given to the Levites, (Josh. xix. 44, and xxi. 23,) who quitted it, as they did the rest of their cities, when Jeroboam would not suffer them to execute their office, 2 Chron. xi. 14; and the Philistines, it is likely, seized upon it, being adjoining to their country. But, it appears, Nadab was now endeavouring to recover it out of their hands, as of right belonging to him; and here, in the midst of his army, did Baasha, with others, conspire against him, and kill him: and so little interest had he in the affections of his people, that his army not only did not avenge his death, but chose his

A. M. 3053. B. C. 951. **28** Even in the third year of Asa king of Judah did Baasha slay him, and reigned in his stead.

29 And it came to pass when he reigned, that he smote all the house of Jeroboam; he left not to Jeroboam any that breathed, until he had destroyed him, according unto the saying of the LORD, which he spake by his servant Ahijah the Shilonite:

30 Because of the sins of Jeroboam which he sinned, and which he made Israel sin, by his provocation wherewith he provoked the LORD God of Israel to anger.

^a Chap. xiv. 10, 14.—^b Chap. xiv. 9, 16.—^c Verse 16.

murderer his successor. Whether Baasha did this upon a personal pique against Nadab, or to be revenged on the house of Jeroboam for some affront received from them; or whether under pretence of freeing his country from the tyranny of an ill prince; or whether purely from a principle of ambition, to make way for himself to the throne, doth not appear; but having slain him, he reigned in his stead.

Verse 28. *Even in the third year of Asa did Baasha slay him*—It was threatened, (chap. xiv. 15,) that Israel should be as a reed shaken in the water. And so they were, when, during the single reign of Asa their government was in seven or eight different hands. Jeroboam was upon the throne at the beginning of his reign, and Ahab at the end of it; between whom were Nadab, Baasha, Elah, Zimri, Tibni, and Omri, undermining and destroying one another. This they got by deserting the house both of God and of David.

Verse 29. *He smote all the house of Jeroboam*—The first thing he did when he came to the crown was to cut off all that had any title to it, that he might secure himself in his usurped government. He did not think it enough to imprison or banish them, but he destroyed them; and carried his vengeance so far, that he left not only no males, as was

31 Now the rest of the acts of Nadab, and all that he did, are they not written in the book of the Chronicles of the kings of Israel?

32 And there was war between Asa and Baasha king of Israel all their days.

33 In the third year of Asa king of Judah began Baasha the son of Ahijah to reign over all Israel in Tirzah, twenty and four years.

34 And he did evil in the sight of the LORD, and walked in the way of Jeroboam, and in his sin wherewith he made Israel to sin.

^d Chap. xii. 28, 29; xiii. 33; xiv. 16.

foretold chap. xiv. 10, but not any that breathed. Herein he was barbarous; but God was righteous; and Jeroboam's sin was punished: for they that provoke God do it to their own confusion, Jer. vii. 19. *According to the word of the Lord, which he spake by Ahijah*—Baasha had no thought about fulfilling Ahijah's prophecy, but God overruled his ambition and cruelty to that end, and thereby executed on the house of Jeroboam, the judgments he had threatened, and that as speedily as Ahijah had foretold, (chap. xiv. 14,) for no word of God shall fall to the ground.

Verse 30. *Because of the sins of Jeroboam*—Thus that same wicked policy which he used to establish the kingdom in his family, proved his and their ruin; which is very frequently the event of ungodly counsels.

Verse 34. *And he walked in the way of Jeroboam*—This makes it evident that Baasha did not cut off Jeroboam's family because they were idolaters, but because he aspired to the throne; which, when he had obtained, he endeavoured to establish himself in by the same impious policy which Jeroboam had used: for he reformed nothing in religion, but continued the idolatrous worship of the calves which Jeroboam had set up, to keep the people from going to worship at Jerusalem.

CHAPTER XVI.

The ruin of Baasha's family foretold, 1-7; and executed by Zimri, 8-14. Zimri's short reign, 15-20. The struggle between Omri and Tibni, and Omri's reign, 21-28. The beginning of Ahab's reign, 29-33.

A. M. 3074. B. C. 930. **T**HEN the word of the LORD came to Jehu the son of Hanani against Baasha, saying,

^a Verse 7; 2 Chron. xix. 2; xx. 34.

NOTES ON CHAPTER XVI.

Verse 1. *The word of the Lord came to Jehu*—This Jehu was a prophet, and the son of a prophet.

2 Forasmuch as I exalted thee out of the dust, and made thee prince over my people Israel, and thou hast walked

^b Chap. xiv. 7.—^c Chap. xv. 34.

His father Hanani, who was a prophet before him, was sent to reprove Asa king of Judah for hiring Benhadad king of Syria to assist him against Baasha,

A. M. 3074. in the way of Jeroboam, and hast
B. C. 930. made my people Israel to sin, to pro-
voke me to anger with their sins;

3 Behold, I will ^dtake away the posterity of Baasha, and the posterity of his house; and will make thy house like ^ethe house of Jeroboam the son of Nebat.

4 ^fHim that dieth of Baasha in the city shall the dogs eat; and him that dieth of his in the fields shall the fowls of the air eat.

5 ¶ Now the rest of the acts of Baasha, and what he did, and his might, ^gare they not written in the book of the Chronicles of the kings of Israel?

6 So Baasha slept with his fathers, and was buried in ^hTirzah: and Elah his son reigned in his stead.

^a Verse 11.—^c Chapter xiv. 10; xv. 29.—^f Chapter xiv. 11.
^e 2 Chron. xvi. 1.—^h Chap. xiv. 17; xv. 21.

and for relying on the Syrians, instead of relying on the Lord, 2 Chron. xvi. 7. But Jehu, Hanani's son, who was young and more active, was sent on this longer and more dangerous expedition to Baasha, king of Israel. It appears, he continued long in his usefulness; for we find him reproving Jehoshaphat, above forty years after, and writing the annals of that prince, 2 Chron. xix. 2, and xx. 24. The gift of prophecy, thus happily entailed, and descending from the father to the son, was worthy of so much the more honour. It seems there was not wanting a succession of prophets, during the kingdoms of Israel and Judah, as Abarbanel has observed, their names being preserved in the Holy Scriptures.

Verse 2. *Forasmuch as I exalted thee out of the dust*—Probably from a mean family in the tribe of Issachar. Perhaps he was but a common soldier, or some very inferior officer in the army which besieged Gibbethon; but, being bold and daring, he formed a conspiracy against Nadab. The message which this prophet brought to Baasha is much the same with that which Ahijah sent to Jeroboam by his wife. 1st, He reminds him of the great things God had done for him: 2d, He charges him with high crimes and misdemeanours; and, 3d, He foretels the same destruction to come upon his family which he himself had been employed to bring on the family of Jeroboam. *And made thee prince over my people Israel*—But it may be asked, how Baasha's exaltation to the kingdom can be ascribed to God, when it is manifest he obtained it by his own treachery and cruelty? To this Mr. Poole replies, that "though the *manner* of invading the kingdom was from himself and his own wicked heart, yet, the translation of the kingdom from Nadab to Baasha, simply considered, was from God, who by his decree and providence ordered it, and disposed of all occasions, and of the hearts of all the soldiers, and the people so, that Baasha should have the opportunity

7 And also by the hand of the Pro- A. M. 3074.
phet ⁱJehu the son of Hanani came B. C. 930.

the word of the LORD against Baasha, and against his house, even for all the evil that he did in the sight of the LORD, in provoking him to anger with the work of his hands, ^kbeing like the house of Jeroboam; and because ^lhe killed him.

8 ¶ In the twenty and sixth year of Asa king of Judah began Elah the son of Baasha to reign over Israel in Tirzah, two years.

9 ^mAnd his servant Zimri, captain of half *his* chariots, conspired against him, as he was in Tirzah, drinking himself drunk in the house of Arza, ⁿsteward of *his* house in Tirzah.

10 And Zimri went in and smote him, and killed him, in the twenty and seventh year

ⁱ Verse 1.—^k Chap. xv. 27, 29; Hos. i. 4.—^l 2 Kings ix. 31.
^m Heb. *which was over*.

of executing God's judgment upon Nadab, and such success thereon, as should procure him a present and quiet possession of the kingdom." So that his accession to the kingdom was from the divine decree; but the *form* and *manner* of his accession was from himself, from his own ambition and covetousness, which induced him to kill Nadab; and as it was wicked and cruel, it is therefore charged upon him as a wilful murder, verse 7.

Verse 3. *Make thy house like the house of Jeroboam the son of Nebat*—This threat was exactly verified; for as Nadab the son of Jeroboam reigned but two years, so Elah the son of Baasha reigned no longer; and as Nadab was killed by the sword, so was Elah: thus remarkable was the similitude between Jeroboam and Baasha, in their lives and in their deaths; in their sons, and in their families. See Bishop Patrick.

Verse 7. *And also by the hand of the Prophet Jehu*—The order of the narrative seems to be here much confused, to restore which Houbigant places this seventh verse before the fifth and sixth. *Came the word of the Lord against Baasha*—The meaning is, the message which came from the Lord to Jehu, (verses 1-4,) was here delivered by the hand, that is, the ministry of Jehu unto Baasha. Jehu did what God commanded in this matter, though it was not without apparent hazard to himself. *And because he killed him*—That is, Nadab; who though he be not expressed, is sufficiently understood. But why is he punished for doing God's work? Because, 1st, Though God appointed that Jeroboam's family should be cut off, yet he did not give Baasha commission to do it. 2d, Baasha did this not to fulfil God's will, but his own lusts. See on verse 2.

Verses 8-10. *Began Elah to reign in Tirzah two years*—One complete and part of another. *Zimri, captain of half his chariots*—Of all his military chariots, and the men belonging to them;

A. M. 3075.
B. C. 929. of Asa king of Judah, and reigned
in his stead.

11 ¶ And it came to pass, when he began to reign, as soon as he sat on his throne, *that he slew all the house of Baasha*: he left him ^a not one that pisseth against a wall, ² neither of his kinsfolks, nor of his friends.

12 Thus did Zimri destroy all the house of Baasha, ^a according to the word of the LORD, which he spake against Baasha ³ by ^o Jehu the prophet,

13 For all the sins of Baasha, and the sins of Elah his son, by which they sinned, and by which they made Israel to sin, in provoking the LORD God of Israel to anger ² with their vanities.

14 Now the rest of the acts of Elah, and all that he did, *are they not written in the book of the Chronicles of the kings of Israel?*

15 ¶ In the twenty and seventh year of Asa king of Judah did Zimri reign seven days in Tirzah. And the people *were encamped*

^a 1 Samuel xxv. 22.—² Or, both his kinsmen and his friends.
³ Verse 3.—^o Heb. by the hand of.—^o Verse 1.

the chariots, or carriages for necessary things being put into meaner hands. *Conspired against him as he was in Tirzah*—While his forces were elsewhere employed, (verse 15,) which gave Zimri advantage to execute his design. *Zimri went in and smote him*—Here was a speedy execution of the vengeance threatened against him by Jehu.

Verses 11–13. *He slew all the house of Baasha, &c.*—He not only destroyed all that were descended from Baasha, as Baasha had destroyed the families of Jeroboam, but he extended the destruction, and increased it, as Abarbinel speaks, for he killed all that were of kin to Baasha, with all his friends, which Baasha did not when he seized the kingdom from Jeroboam. *According to the word of the Lord*—Thus fulfilling the divine threatening, but undesignedly by him, and merely for his own ends. *In provoking the Lord to anger with their vanities*—Idols, called vanities, because they are but imaginary deities, and mere *nothings*, having no power to do either good or hurt.

Verses 15–17. *The people were encamped against Gibbethon*—Which had been besieged many years before, but, it seems, was then relieved or afterward recovered by the Philistines, while the Israelites were in a distracted condition through civil broils and contentions. It was, however, now again invested. *The people heard say, Zimri has conspired, &c.*—Notice was soon brought to the camp that Zimri had slain their king, and set up himself in Tirzah, the royal city; whereupon they chose Omri king in the camp, that they might, without delay, avenge the death of Elah upon Zimri. Thus

^a against Gibbethon, which *belonged* to the Philistines. A. M. 3075.
B. C. 929.

16 And the people *that were* encamped heard say, Zimri hath conspired, and hath also slain the king: wherefore all Israel made Omri, the captain of the host, king over Israel that day in the camp.

17 And Omri went up from Gibbethon, and all Israel with him, and they besieged Tirzah.

18 And it came to pass when Zimri saw that the city was taken, that he went into the palace of the king's house, and burnt the king's house over him with fire, and died,

19 For his sins which he sinned in doing evil in the sight of the LORD, ¹ in walking in the way of Jeroboam, and in his sin which he did, to make Israel to sin.

20 Now the rest of the acts of Zimri, and his treason that he wrought, *are they not written in the book of the Chronicles of the kings of Israel?*

21 ¶ Then were the people of Israel divided

^p Deut. xxxii. 21; 1 Sam. xii. 21; Isa. xli. 29; Jonah ii. 8; 1 Cor. viii. 4; x. 19.—^q Ch. xv. 27.—^r Ch. xii. 28; xv. 26, 34.

proud aspiring men ruin one another, and involve others in ruin. *Omri went up from Gibbethon*—The siege of which was instantly quitted. *And all Israel with him*—All the army that were at the siege.

Verse 18. *When Zimri saw that the city was taken*—Tirzah, though a beautiful city, it seems, was not fortified; so that Omri soon made himself master of it, and forced Zimri into the palace; which, as he was unable to defend, and yet unwilling to surrender it, he burned, and himself in it: grudging that his rival should ever enjoy so sumptuous a palace, and fearing that if he fell into the hands of his enemies, either alive or dead, he should be ignominiously treated. See to what desperate practices men's wickedness sometimes brings them, and how it hurries them to their own ruin! See the disposition of incendiaries, who set palaces and kingdoms on fire, though they are themselves in danger of perishing in the flame!

Verse 19. *For his sins which he sinned*—Though he lived but a very short time after he usurped the crown, yet he gave sufficient demonstration of his resolution to continue the idolatry of Jeroboam; and therefore he was abandoned by God. Add to this, the whole course of his life seems to have been wicked, and this is justly charged upon him because of his impenitency.

Verse 21. *Then were the people of Israel divided into two parts*—Which contended, and went to war with each other about the person that should reign over them. For when it is said, (verse 16,) *all Israel made Omri king*, the meaning is, only the whole

A. M. 3075. into two parts: half of the people
B. C. 929. followed Tibni the son of Ginath to
make him king; and half followed Omri.

22 But the people that followed Omri pre-
vailed against the people that followed Tibni
the son of Ginath: so Tibni died, and Omri
reigned.

B. C. 925. 23 ¶ In the thirty and first year of
Asa king of Judah began Omri to
reign over Israel, twelve years: six years reign-
ed he in Tirzah.

24 And he bought the hill Samaria of She-
mer for two talents of silver, and built on the
hill, and called the name of the city which he
built, after the name of Shemer, owner of the
hill, 'Samaria.'

¶ Heb. *Shomeron*.—Ch. xiii. 32; 2 Kings xvii. 24; John iv. 4.

army, and such as attended them. *Half of the peo-
ple followed Tibni*—These, it is probable, did not
like to have a king imposed upon them by the soldi-
ery: and Tibni had as good a title as the other,
being also a valiant man, and the person, perhaps,
who succeeded Zimri, in his command, as captain of
half the king's chariots. The contest between him
and Omri lasted some years, and, it is likely, cost
much blood on both sides. But neither this civil
war, nor any other of God's dreadful judgments,
could bring them to repentance, which is an evidence
of their prodigious impiety and incorrigibility, and
how ripe they were for ruin.

Verse 22. *But the people that followed Omri pre-
vailed*—Partly because they had the army on their
side; and principally by the appointment of God,
giving up the Israelites to him who was much the
worse man, verses 25, 26. *So Tibni died*—A violent
death, it seems, in battle: and doubtless many of the
people died with him. But why, inquires Sir Wal-
ter Raleigh, (see his History of the World, l. 2, c.
19, § 6,) in all these confusions, and revolutions of
the kingdom of Israel, did they never think of re-
turning to the house of David? Probably, observes
he, because the kings of Judah assumed a more ab-
solute power over their subjects than the kings of
Israel. It was the heaviness of the yoke which they
complained of, when they first revolted from the
house of David. And it is not unlikely but the
dread of that made them averse to it ever after.

Verse 23. *Began Omri to reign—twelve years*—
That is, and he reigned twelve years: not from this
thirty-first year of Asa, for he died in his thirty-
eighth year, (verse 29,) but from the beginning of
his reign, which was in Asa's twenty-seventh year,
verses 15, 16. So he reigned four years in a state
of war with Tibni, and eight peaceably.

Verse 24. *He bought the hill Samaria of Shemer*
—Where he built the noted city of that name, which
ever after was the royal city of the kings of Israel,
the palace of Tirzah being burned. This city, in

25 ¶ But 'Omri wrought evil in A. M. 3079.
the eyes of the LORD, and did worse B. C. 925.
than all that were before him.

26 For he "walked in all the way of Jero-
boam the son of Nebat, and in his sin where-
with he made Israel to sin, to provoke the
LORD God of Israel to anger with their "vani-
ties.

27 ¶ Now the rest of the acts of Omri which
he did, and his might that he showed, are they
not written in the book of the Chronicles of the
kings of Israel?

28 So Omri slept with his fathers, and was
buried in Samaria: and Ahab his son reigned
in his stead.

29 And in the thirty and eighth year of Asa

¶ Micah vi. 16.—" Verse 19.—" Verse 13.

process of time, became so considerable, that it gave
name to the middle part of Canaan, which lay be-
tween Galilee on the north, and Judea on the south,
and to the inhabitants of that country, who were
called Samaritans. *For two talents of silver*—
Something more than seven hundred pounds sterling.
"Perhaps," says Henry, "Shemer let him have the
ground cheaper, on condition that it should be called
after his name: for it was called *Samaria*, or *She-
meren*, as it is in the Hebrew, from Shemer, the for-
mer owner of the land." Thus the kings of Israel
often changed the seat of their government, which
was Shechem first, then Tirzah, now Samaria. But
the kings of Judah were constant to Jerusalem, the
city of God.

Verse 25. *Omri wrought evil in the sight of the
LORD*—He rendered himself infamous for his wick-
edness. *And did worse than all that were before
him*—Not only walking in the way of Jeroboam, in
worshipping the calves, but, as is likely, introducing
other idolatries, which his son Ahab established
among them. Or, perhaps, he compelled the people
to worship the calves, and by severe laws restrained
them from going up to Jerusalem, which laws some
think are intended by the statutes of Omri, Micah
vi. 16. Though he was brought to the throne with
much difficulty, and providence had remarkably fa-
voured him in his advancement, yet, he was more
profane, or more superstitious, and a greater perse-
cutor, than any prince that had preceded him, either
of the house of Jeroboam or that of Baasha. He
went further than any of them had done in *estab-
lishing iniquity by a law*, and forcing his subjects
to comply with him in it.

Verse 28. *So Omri slept with his fathers*—He
died in his bed, as Jeroboam and Baasha had done;
but like them, left it to his posterity to fill up the
measure, and then pay off the scores of his iniquity.

Verses 29-31. *In the thirty and eighth year of
Asa, &c.*—Asa saw six kings of Israel buried, while
Judah flourished under him, the length of whose

A. M. 3086.
B. C. 918. king of Judah began Ahab the son of Omri to reign over Israel: and Ahab the son of Omri reigned over Israel in Samaria twenty and two years.

30 And Ahab the son of Omri did evil in the sight of the LORD above all that were before him.

31 And it came to pass, as if it had been a light thing for him to walk in the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, that he took to wife Jezebel the daughter of Ethbaal king of the Sidonians, and went and served Baal, and worshipped him.

^a Heb. was it a light thing, &c.—^γ Deut. vii. 3.—^δ Judges xviii. 7.—^ε Chap. xxi. 25; 2 Kings x. 18; xvii. 16.

reign was doubtless a great advantage to them. *Began Ahab the son of Omri to reign*—Of whom we have more particulars recorded than of any of the other kings of Israel, and almost all of an infamous nature. For he did evil above all that were before him—He exceeded all his predecessors in wickedness, and reigned over Israel twenty-two years—Long enough to do a deal of mischief. He had seen the ruin of other wicked kings and their families; yet, instead of taking warning, his heart was hardened and enraged against God. *As if it had been a light thing for him to walk in the sins of Jeroboam*—To break the second commandment, by worshipping God through the medium of images of Jeroboam's invention; as if that sin had not been heinous enough to express his contempt of God; as if he thought it below his genius and dignity to content himself with so vulgar a fault; he would set aside the first commandment too, by avowedly introducing other gods, the gods of his heathenish and idolatrous wife Jezebel. But the Hebrew, *יְהִי הַנֶּקֶל*, *rajehi hanakel*, is more properly rendered, *was it a light thing, &c.*, that is, was this but a small sin, that therefore he needed to add more abominations? the question, as is usual among the Hebrews, implying a strong denial, and intimating that this was no small sin, but a great crime, and might have satisfied his wicked mind, without any additions. *He took to wife Jezebel*—A woman infamous for her idolatries, cruelties, sorceries, and abominations of all kinds. *The daughter of Ethbaal*—Called *Ithobalus*, or *Ito-balus* in heathen writers. So she was of a heathenish and idolatrous race, such as the kings and people of Israel were expressly forbidden to marry. *And went and served Baal*—The idol which the Sidonians worshipped, which some think to have been Hercules. But the word in Hebrew signifies *lord*, and in the plural *lords*, and was a name common to all false gods. And this idolatry was much worse than that of the calves; because in the calves they intended to worship the true God, through such images and representations, but in these, false gods or devils.

32 And he reared up an altar for Baal in the house of Baal, which he had built in Samaria.

33 And Ahab made a grove; and Ahab did more to provoke the LORD God of Israel to anger than all the kings of Israel that were before him.

34 ¶ In his days did Hiel the Beth-elite build Jericho: he laid the foundation thereof in Abiram his firstborn, and set up the gates thereof in his youngest son Segub, according to the word of the LORD, which he spake by Joshua the son of Nun.

^b 2 Kings x. 21, 26, 27.—^c 2 Kings xiii. 6; xvii. 10; xxi. 3; Jer. xvii. 2.—^d Verse 30; Chap. xxi. 25.—^e Josh. vi. 26.

Verses 32, 33. *And he reared up an altar for Baal*—On which to offer sacrifices to him, whereby they acknowledged their dependance upon him, and sought his favour. *In the house of Baal which he had built in Samaria*—The royal city, for the convenience of his worship. Because the temple of God was in Jerusalem, the royal city in the other kingdom, he would have Baal's temple in Samaria, that, being near him, he might the more frequently attend it, protect, and put honour upon it. *And Ahab made a grove*—Another piece of idolatry which God had expressly prohibited, Deut. vii. 5. He either made a natural one by planting shady trees there; or, if he thought these would be too long in growing, an artificial one in imitation thereof: somewhat that answered the intention of a grove, which was to conceal, and so to countenance the abominable impurities that were practised in the filthy worship of Baal. He that doth evil hates the light. O the stupidity of idolaters, who are at a great expense to do honour to mere imaginary beings, who have no existence, save in their own fancies, and to make those their friends who are no gods, and from whom they have nothing either to fear or hope!

Verse 34. *In his days, &c.*—This is mentioned here, 1st, As an instance of the certainty of the accomplishment of the divine predictions; that here referred to being fulfilled upward of five hundred years after it was delivered: a most striking proof of the divine prescience, as well as of the authority of those sacred writings which contain so remarkable a prophecy; 2d, It is recorded as an evidence of the horrible corruption of Ahab's times, and of the high contempt of God which then reigned; this Hiel beginning to build in defiance of the curse well known in Israel, probably jesting with it as a bugbear, or fancying its force worn out by length of time; and going on to build in defiance of the execution of the curse in part. For though his eldest son died when he began, yet he would proceed in spite of God and his wrath revealed from heaven against his ungodliness; 3d, It was intended to be a warning to the Israelites not to think themselves in-

nocent or safe, because the judgment threatened against them by Ahijah was not yet executed. *The Beth-elite*—Who lived in Beth-el, the seat and sink of idolatry, wherewith he was thoroughly leavened. *He laid the foundation thereof in Abiram his first-born*—Whom God took away in the beginning of his building, and others of his children successively in the progress of the work, and the youngest when

he finished it. So that he found by his own sad experience the truth of God's word, the sentence which Joshua pronounced against the builder of this city being literally and exactly executed. (See Joshua, chapter vi. verse 26.) A remarkable instance this of the certainty of the accomplishment of God's threatenings, and that he never forgets what he has spoken!

CHAPTER XVII.

Elijah foretels the drought, 1. Is fed by ravens, 2-7. By a widow, whose meal and oil are multiplied, 8-16. He raises her dead son, 17-24.

A. M. 3094.
B. C. 910.

AND ¹Elijah the Tishbite, *who was of the inhabitants of Gilead,* said unto Ahab, ^aAs the LORD God of Israel

liveth, ^bbefore whom I stand, ^cthere shall not be dew nor rain ^dthese years, but according to my word.

A. M. 3094.
B. C. 910.

¹ Heb. *Elijahu*. Luke i. 17; iv. 25; he is called *Elias*.

^a 2 Kings iii. 14.—^b Deut. x. 8.—^c Jam. v. 17.—^d Luke iv. 25

NOTES ON CHAPTER XVII.

Verse 1. *And Elijah the Tishbite, &c.*—So bad was the character, both of the Israelites and their princes, as represented in the foregoing chapter, that one would have expected God should have cast off a people that had so cast him off; but as an evidence to the contrary, never was Israel so blessed with a good prophet as when it was so plagued with a bad king. Never was a king so bold to sin as Ahab, never was a prophet so bold to reprove and threaten as Elijah, whose story begins in this chapter, and is full of wonders. Scarce any part of the Old Testament history shines brighter than this, concerning the *spirit and power of Elias*; he only, of all the prophets, had the honour of Enoch, the first prophet, to be *translated that he should not see death*; and the honour of Moses, the great prophet, to attend our Saviour in his transfiguration. Other prophets prophesied and wrote, he prophesied and acted, but wrote nothing; and his actings cast more lustre on his name than their writings on theirs.

Now this most eminent of the prophets under the Old Testament dispensation, is here brought in like Melchisedec, the most eminent of the priests, without any mention of his father or mother, or the beginning of his days, like a man dropped down from the clouds. All that we learn concerning his origin or country is that he was a *Tishbite*, and of the *inhabitants of Gilead*. Probably he had dwelt at Tishbe or Thesbeh, a town or region on the other side Jordan, either of the tribe of Gad, or that half tribe of Manasseh which inhabited Gilead, but whether he was a native of either of those tribes is uncertain. He was doubtless raised up by God's special providence, to be a witness for him in this most degenerate time and state of things, that by his zeal, and courage, and miracles, he might give some check to their various and abominable idolatries, and some encouragement and reviving to that

small number of the Lord's prophets and people who yet remained in Israel. And the obscurity of his parentage and birth was no prejudice to his eminent usefulness. "We need not inquire," says Henry, "*whence men are, but what they are: if it be a good thing, no matter though it come out of Nazareth.*" Elijah seems to have been naturally of a rough spirit, and certainly he was called to rough services. But, as his name signifies, *My God Jehovah is he*; he that sends me, and will own me, and bear me out; so his faith and confidence in God supported and carried him through all his arduous labours, and the violent persecutions to which he was exposed.

He said unto Ahab—Having doubtless admonished him of his sin and danger before, he now, upon his obstinacy in his wicked courses, proceeds to declare and execute the judgment of God upon him; *As the Lord God of Israel liveth, &c.*—I swear by the God of Israel, who is the only true and living God; whereas the gods whom thou hast joined with him, or preferred before him, are dead and senseless idols; *before whom I stand*—Whose minister I am, not only in general, but especially in this threatening, which I now deliver in his name and authority; *There shall not be dew nor rain*—This was a prediction, but was seconded with his prayer that God would verify it, James v. 17. And this prayer was truly charitable; that by this sharp affliction, God's honour, and the truth of his word, (which was now so horribly and universally contemned,) might be vindicated; and the Israelites (whom impunity had hardened in their idolatry) might be awakened to see their own wickedness, and the necessity of returning to the true religion. *These years*—That is, these following years, which were three and a half; Luke iv. 25; James v. 17. *My word*—Until I shall declare that this judgment shall cease, and shall pray to God for the removal of it.

A. M. 3094. 2 And the word of the LORD came
B. C. 910. unto him, saying,

3 Get thee hence, and turn thee eastward, and hide thyself by the brook Cherith, that is before Jordan.

4 And it shall be, that thou shalt drink of the brook; and I have commanded the ravens to feed thee there.

5 So he went and did according unto the word of the LORD: for he went and dwelt by the brook Cherith, that is before Jordan.

6 And the ravens brought him bread and flesh in the morning, and bread and flesh

in the evening; and he drank of the brook. A. M. 3094.
B. C. 910.

7 And it came to pass ² after a while, that the brook dried up, because there had been no rain in the land.

8 ¶ And the word of the LORD came unto him, saying,

9 Arise, get thee to ^o Zarephath, which belongeth to Zidon, and dwell there: behold, I have commanded a widow woman there to sustain thee.

10 So he arose and went to Zarephath. And when he came to the gate of the city, behold,

² Heb. at the end of days.

^o Obad. 20; Luke iv. 26, called Sarepta.

Verses 3, 4. *Hide thyself by the brook Cherith*—A brook, no doubt, well known to Elijah: both it and the valley through which it runs, are near the river Jordan; but whether on the east or west side, is not so well agreed. By sending him to this remote and retired place, where he was to lie concealed, so that neither friends nor foes might know where he was, God rescued him from the fury of Ahab and Jezebel, who, he knew, would seek to destroy him. That Ahab did not seize him immediately upon hearing the forementioned prediction and warning, must be ascribed to God's overruling providence. *I have commanded the ravens to feed thee*—Or, *I shall command*; that is, effectually move them by instincts, which shall be as forcible with them, as a law or command is to men. God is said to command both brute creatures and senseless things, when he causeth them to do what he intends to effect by them. The ravens being birds of prey, and very voracious, were more likely to rob the prophet than to bring him food; but God's command suspended their natural instinct, and made them act contrary to it. They are said to be unnatural to, and to neglect their young ones; yet, when God pleaseth, they shall feed his prophet. God could have sent angels to minister to him; but he chose winged messengers of another kind, to show that he can serve his own purposes as effectually by the meanest as by the mightiest creatures; and to give Elijah such a proof of his power and care in providing for him, as should effectually teach him to trust in God in those many and great difficulties to which he was to be exposed: and the more unfit instruments the ravens seemed to be, the more was his almighty power magnified, who controlled their natural inclinations while he employed them; and the greater encouragement was given to his prophet to rely on that power, thus engaged for him in his greatest straits and dangers. This, however, may be said for the choice of ravens for this work; that, as they are solitary birds, and delight to live about brooks of water, so are they accustomed to seek out for provisions, and to carry them to the places of their abode; on which account they were not improper creatures for God to employ

upon his service. To suppose, as some have done, that the ravens, being unclean birds, (Lev. xi. 15,) would defile and render unclean the food they brought, is to mistake the meaning of the law in that case. The flesh of unclean animals was not to be eaten by the Israelites; but their touch, while living, communicated no ceremonial uncleanness either to food or any thing else: for asses and camels were also unclean, and yet the Jews constantly used them for carrying provisions, as well as for other purposes.

Verse 6. *The ravens brought him bread and flesh in the morning, &c.*—“We need not inquire where they procured the bread and flesh, or how the food was prepared; he who commanded them to feed his servant had ten thousand ways of enabling them to fulfil his word: thus Elijah was sufficiently provided for, when numbers were starving; and the consolations of the Lord would render him contented with his solitude and sustenance.”—Scott.

Verse 7. *After a while*—Hebrew, *at the end of the days*; that is, of a year, as that phrase is often used. *The brook dried up*—For want of rain, and God so ordering it for the punishment of those Israelites who lived near it, and had hitherto been refreshed by it; and for the exercise of Elijah's faith, and to teach him still to depend on God alone, and not on any natural means for support and preservation.

Verse 9. *Arise, get thee to Zarephath*—A city between Tyre and Sidon, called Sarepta by St. Luke, chap. iv. 26, and others. *Which belongeth to Zidon*—To the jurisdiction of that city, which was inhabited by Gentiles. And God's providing for his prophet, first, by an unclean bird, and then by a Gentile, whom the Jews esteemed unclean, was a pre-^o sage of the calling of the Gentiles, and rejection of the Jews. So Elijah was the first prophet of the Gentiles. *Commanded a widow woman*—That is, appointed or provided; for that she had as yet received no revelation or command of God about it, appears from verse 12.

Verses 10-12. *Behold, the widow woman was gathering sticks*—He knew, by some secret divine intimation, that this was the woman that was to

A. M. 3094. the widow woman *was* there gathering of sticks: and he called to her, and said, Fetch me, I pray thee, a little water in a vessel, that I may drink.

11 And as she was going to fetch *it*, he called to her, and said, Bring me, I pray thee, a morsel of bread in thy hand.

12 And she said, As the LORD thy God liveth, I have not a cake, but a handful of meal in a barrel, and a little oil in a cruise: and behold, I *am* gathering two sticks, that I may go in and dress it for me and my son, that we may eat it, and die.

13 And Elijah said unto her, Fear not: go *and* do as thou hast said: but make me thereof

³ Heb. *giveth*.—⁴ Or, a full year.

sustain him. *Fetch me, I pray thee, a little water*—Water, in consequence of the long drought, was doubtless scarce there as well as in the land of Israel; yet, being a pious woman, and therefore ready to succour a stranger in distress, she readily goes to fetch it. *He called and said, Bring me, I pray thee, a morsel of bread in thy hand*—This he probably said chiefly to try her, and to make way for what follows. *She said, As the Lord thy God liveth*—By this she discovers, that though she was a Gentile, yet she owned the God of Israel as the true God. *I am gathering two sticks*—A few sticks, that number being often used indefinitely for any small number. *That we may eat it and die*—For having no more provision, we must needs perish with hunger. Although the famine was chiefly in the land of Israel, yet the effects of it were felt in Tyre and Sidon, which were supported by the corn of that land. But what a poor supporter was this widow likely to be! who had no fuel, but what she gathered in the streets, and nothing to live upon herself, but a handful of meal and a little oil! To her Elijah is sent, that he might live upon Providence, as much as he had done when the ravens fed him.

Verses 13, 14. *Make me thereof a little cake first*—This he requires as a trial of her faith, charity, and obedience, which he knew God would graciously and plentifully reward; and so this would be a great example to encourage others to the practice of the same graces. *Thus saith the Lord God of Israel*—In whom I perceive thou trustest. *The barrel of meal*—The meal of the barrel. So, the *cruise of oil* is put for the *oil of the cruise*.

Verse 15. *She did according to the saying of Elijah*—Giving glory to the God of Israel, by believing his prophet. *O woman, great was thy faith!* One has not found the like, *no not in Israel*. All things considered, it exceeded that of the widow, who, when she had but two mites, cast them into the treasury. She took the prophet's word that she should not lose by it, but it should be repaid

a little cake first, and bring *it* unto me, and after make for thee and for thy son.

14 For thus saith the LORD God of Israel, The barrel of meal shall not waste, neither shall the cruise of oil fail, until the day that the LORD ³sendeth rain upon the earth.

15 And she went and did according to the saying of Elijah: and she, and he, and her house, did eat ⁴many days.

16 *And* the barrel of meal wasted not, neither did the cruise of oil fail, according to the word of the LORD, which he spake ⁵by Elijah.

17 ¶ And it came to pass after these things, that the son of the woman, the mistress of the

⁵ Heb. *by the hand of*.

with interest. "Those that can venture upon the promise of God," says Henry, "will make no difficulty of exposing and emptying themselves in his service, and giving him his dues out of a little, and giving him his part *first*. They that deal with God, must deal on trust; *seek first the kingdom of God*, and then other things shall be added. Surely," adds he, "the increase of this widow's faith to such a degree as to enable her thus to deny herself, and to depend upon the divine promise, was as great a miracle in the kingdom of grace, as the increase of her oil was in the kingdom of providence. Happy they that can thus, against hope, believe and obey in hope." *She and her house did eat many days*—A long time, even above two years before the following event about her son happened, and the rest of the time of the famine. See how the reward answered the service! She generously made one cake for the prophet, and was repaid with many for herself and son! What is laid out in charity, is set out to the best interest, upon the best security. One poor meal's meat this poor widow gave the prophet, and in recompense of it she and her son did eat many days, and probably some of her kindred too, here included in the term *her house*, an expression which would hardly have been used of her one son.

Verse 16. *The barrel of meal wasted not, &c.*—But as much as they took out for their daily use, was immediately supplied by the almighty power of God. "Never did corn or olive so increase in growing," says Bishop Hall, "as these did in using." They multiplied, observe, not in the hoarding, but in the spending. *For there is that scattereth, and yet increaseth*. When God blesseth a little, it will go a great way, even beyond expectation; as on the contrary, though there be abundance, if he blow upon it, it comes to little, Hag. i. 9, and ii. 19.

Verse 17. *There was no breath left in him*—No soul or life, as the Hebrew word here used properly signifies. For, says Buxtorf, "The Hebrews by נשמה, *neshama*, understand the rational and immortal soul, whence they are wont to swear by it: and

A. M. 3094. house, fell sick; and his sickness was
B. C. 910. so sore, that there was no breath left
in him.

18 And she said unto Elijah, 'What have I to do with thee, O thou man of God? art thou come unto me to call my sin to remembrance, and to slay my son?

19 And he said unto her, Give me thy son.

† Luke v. 8.

he quotes Aben Ezra as an authority for rendering the word, *anima, sed humana tantum; the soul, but only the human*. The expression, however, here only means that he died, as is manifest from the following verses. This was a terrible and unexpected stroke to this widow, and, no doubt, was sent for the further trial of her faith and patience. She had received a great prophet into her house, was employed to sustain him, and had reason to think that surely the Lord would do her good; yet now she loses her son. We must not think it strange if we meet with very sharp afflictions, even when we are in the way of duty, and of eminent service to God: nay, and when we have the clearest manifestations of God's favour and good-will toward us, even then we should prepare for the rebukes of his providence; our mountain never stands so strong but it may be moved, and therefore, in this world, we ought always to rejoice with trembling.

Verse 18. *She said, What have I to do with thee, O thou man of God?*—Wherein have I injured or offended thee, or been wanting in my duty? Or, why didst thou come to sojourn in my house, if this be the fruit of it? They are the words of a troubled mind. How unconcernedly had she spoken of her own and her son's death, when she expected to die for want, (verse 12.) *That we may eat it and die*; yet now her son dies, and not so miserably as by famine, and she is extremely disturbed at it. We may speak slightly of an affliction at a distance, but *when it toucheth us, we are troubled*, Job iv. 5. *Art thou come to call my sin to remembrance?*—That thou mightest severely observe my sins, and by thy prayers bring down God's just judgment upon me for them, as thou hast, for the like cause, brought down this famine upon the nation? She may mean, either, 1st, Her own remembrance; that she should by this dreadful judgment be brought to the knowledge and remembrance of her sins which had procured it: or, rather, 2d, God's remembrance; for God is often said in Scripture to remember sins when he punishes them, and to forget them when he spares the sinner, 2 Sam. xvi. 10. Has God taken occasion from thy abiding in my house, and my not making the improvement I ought to have made by thee, to punish this and my former sins by suddenly cutting off my son? And have I, instead of the comfort and blessing I expected, met with a severe chastisement and curse?

Verses 19, 20. *Give me thy son*—Into my arms. *He took him out of her bosom*—By which it appears

2

And he took him out of her bosom, and carried him up into a loft, where he abode, and laid him upon his own bed.

20 And he cried unto the LORD, and said, O LORD my God, hast thou also brought evil upon the widow with whom I sojourn, by slaying her son?

21 † And he † stretched himself upon the child

‡ 2 Kings iv. 34.—† Heb. measured.

he was but a little child. *And carried him up into a loft*—A private place, where he might more freely and fully pour out his soul to God, and use such gestures and methods as his heart inclined him to use, without any offence or observation. *And laid him upon his own bed*—So that it was the room where he lodged, though near the top of the house. *And he cried unto the Lord*—And, in his prayer, humbly reasons with God concerning the death of the child, using most powerful arguments. Thou art the Lord, that canst revive the child; and my God, and therefore wilt not deny me. She is a widow, add not affliction to the afflicted; deprive her not of the support and staff of her age: she hath given me kind entertainment: let her not fare the worse for her kindness to a prophet, whereby wicked men will take occasion to reproach both her and religion.

Verse 21. *He stretched himself upon the child three times*—Not as if he thought this could contribute any warmth or life to the child; but partly to express, and withal to increase, his grief for the child's death, and his desire of its reviving; that thereby his prayers might be more fervent, and consequently more prevalent with God: and partly to give a sign of what God would do by his power, and what he doth by his grace in the raising of souls dead in sin to a spiritual life: the *Holy Ghost comes upon them*, and the *power of the Highest overshadows them*, and puts life into them. *Let this child's soul come into him again*—By this way of speaking, Elijah expressed his certainty that the child's soul had left his body, and that he was properly dead. And he asks, not that he might be recovered from a fainting fit, swoon, or trance; but reanimated by the departed soul, and raised from the dead. This certainly was a great and most extraordinary request, and such as there is every reason to think had never been asked of God before by any human creature. Certainly he had no precedent to plead for requesting such a thing, much less did he know of an instance of any mortal's resurrection having taken place in answer to any one's prayers or otherwise. Nevertheless, he was encouraged and induced to make this request, partly by his zeal for God's honour, which he judged was concerned in it, and would be eclipsed, if the child of this widow remained in death; partly by the experience which he had of his prevailing power with God in prayer; and partly by a divine influence, moving him to desire the child's restoration to life.

91

A. M. 3094. three times, and cried unto the LORD,
B. C. 910. and said, O LORD my God, I pray
thee, let this child's soul come ⁷ into him again.

22 And the LORD heard the voice of Elijah ;
and the soul of the child came into him again,
and he ^h revived.

23 And Elijah took the child, and brought

⁷ Heb. into his inward parts.—^h Heb. xi. 35.

Verse 22. *The soul of the child came into him again*—The reader will easily observe, that this phraseology of the sacred historian, like that of the prophet in the former verse, (and they both spoke by inspiration of God,) plainly signifies the distinction between the rational soul and earthly body to be as real as that between the house and its inhabitant, and supposes the existence of the former in a state of separation from the body, and consequently its immortality: and, probably, as Grotius thinks, God might design by this miracle to give an evidence hereof for the encouragement of his suffering people. *And he revived*—As by an extraordinary and supernatural stroke of affliction, God had taken away the child's life for the trial of the faith, both of the prophet and the woman; so, to strengthen the faith of both, as well as for the vindication of the true religion, and the manifestation of his own glory in opposition to idols, in that most dark and degenerate age, he restored the child to life, and thereby answered the prayer which he himself had inspired.

him down out of the chamber into ^{A. M. 3094.}
the house, and delivered him unto his ^{B. C. 910.}
mother; and Elijah said, See, thy son liveth.

24 And the woman said to Elijah, Now by
this ⁱ I know that thou *art* a man of God, *and*
that the word of the LORD in thy mouth *is*
truth.

ⁱ John iii. 2; xvi. 30.

Verses 23, 24. *Elijah said, See, thy son liveth*—And see the power of prayer, and the power of him that hears and answers prayer, that kills and makes alive. *The woman said, Now by this I know that thou art a man of God*—Though she believed it before, and termed him a man of God, (verse 18,) which she might well do, having been a daily witness of the miraculous increase of the meal and oil; yet, when she saw he did not cure her sick child, but suffered him to grow worse, and die, she began to doubt of it: but upon seeing her son revive, her faith revived with him, and was mightily confirmed. For, through the joy of having him restored to her again, this latter miracle appeared to her much greater than the former. *The word of the Lord in thy mouth is truth*—The God whom thou professest to believe in, is the only true God; and the doctrine and religion which thou teachest, is the only true religion; and therefore henceforth I wholly renounce the worship of idols.

CHAPTER XVIII.

Elijah sends notice to Ahab of his coming, 1–16. His interview with Ahab, 17–19. His interview with all Israel upon mount Carmel, 21–39. He slays the prophets of Baal, 40. Obtains rain, and runs before Ahab to Jezreel, 41–46.

A. M. 3098. **A**ND it came to pass *after* ^a many
B. C. 906. days that the word of the LORD

^a Luke iv. 25;

NOTES ON CHAPTER XVIII.

Verse 1. *The word of the Lord came to Elijah in the third year*—Our Lord and St. James say, the drought continued three years and six months, (Luke iv. 25; James v. 17;) nor do they contradict what is here asserted: for, we must remember, that as Egypt had usually no rain, but was watered by the river Nile, so the land of Canaan had generally none, except twice a year, which they called the *early* and *latter* rain. The former of these, termed יורה, *joree*, quod terram quasi erudiat et informat ad producendam semen, *because it, as it were, instructed and taught*, that is, prepared, the earth to bring forth the seed, was the autumnal rain, and fell in the month answering to our October. The latter was termed מלקוש, *malkosh*, quasi collectionis pluvia,

came to Elijah in the third year, ^{A. M. 3098.}
saying, Go, show thyself unto Ahab; ^{B. C. 906.}

James v. 17.

the rain of reaping and ingathering, because, falling about the vernal equinox, in the month answering to our March, it prepared the corn for harvest, by causing the ears to fill and ripen. Now, at the beginning of the drought, Ahab might very probably impute the want of rain to natural causes; but when, after six months, neither the former nor the latter rain fell in its season, he began to be enraged at Elijah, as the cause of this national judgment; which forced him, at God's command, to save his life by flight. And from that time the three years here mentioned are to be computed; though from the first notice which Elijah gave to Ahab of this approaching calamity, to the expiration of it, were certainly three years and a half. During the first of the three years here referred to by the historian,

A. M. 3098. and ^b I will send rain upon the earth.
B. C. 906.

2 And Elijah went to show himself unto Ahab. And *there was a sore famine in Samaria.*

3 ¶ And Ahab called ¹ Obadiah, which *was* ² the governor of *his* house. (Now Obadiah feared the LORD greatly:

4 For it was *so*, when ³ Jezebel cut off the prophets of the LORD, that Obadiah took a hundred prophets, and hid them by fifty in a cave, and fed them with bread and water.)

5 And Ahab said unto Obadiah, Go into the land unto all fountains of water, and unto all

brooks: peradventure we may find ^{A. M. 3098.} grass to save the horses and mules ^{B. C. 906.} alive, ⁴ that we lose not all the beasts.

6 So they divided the land between them to pass throughout it: Ahab went one way by himself, and Obadiah went another way by himself.

7 ¶ And as Obadiah was in the way, behold, Elijah met him: and he knew him, and fell on his face, and said, *Art thou that my lord Elijah?*

8 And he answered him, *I am*: go, tell thy lord, Behold, *Elijah is here.*

^b Deut. xxviii. 12.—¹ Heb. *Obadiahu*.—² Heb. *over his house*.

³ Heb. *Jezebel*.—⁴ Heb. *that we cut not off ourselves from the beasts*.

Elijah was by the brook Cherith, and the two latter at Zarephath; near the end of which God took pity on the country, having fulfilled the threatening denounced by his prophet, and thereby set his seal to the truth of his word. *Saying, Go show thyself to Ahab*—It does not appear that either the miraculous increase of the provision, or the raising of the dead child, had caused Elijah to be taken notice of at Zarephath, otherwise Ahab would easily have discovered him: but now the days appointed for his concealment being finished, he is commanded to come out of his obscurity, and to show himself to the king; in consequence of which, his appearance soon became as public as before his retirement was close. *I will send rain on the earth*—According to thy word, and in answer to thy prayer. He was to acquaint Ahab with the cause of the judgment, and to advise him to remove that cause; and on that condition to promise him rain. Thus God took care to maintain the honour of his prophet, and in judgment remembered mercy to Israel, for the sake of the holy seed yet left among them, who suffered in this common calamity.

Verse 2. *Elijah went*—In this he showed strong faith, resolute obedience, and invincible courage, in that he durst, at God's command, run into the mouth of this raging lion. *There was a sore famine in Samaria*—Which made it the more dangerous for him to appear in Ahab's presence; lest, being so sorely afflicted, he should in his rage cause him to be killed before he could deliver his message to him.

Verse 3. *Obadiah, who was governor of his house*—Intrusted with the management of the affairs of his family, and highly valued by him on account of his singular prudence and fidelity. *Now Obadiah feared the Lord greatly*—Was a truly pious man, and worshipped Jehovah alone, with sincere and fervent affection to his service. This circumstance, one might have supposed, would have made Ahab discard, if not persecute him; but it is likely he found him so very useful a servant, that for his own advantage, he connived at his not worshipping Baal and the calves. But, it will be said, "How could he and some other Israelites be said to fear

the Lord, when they did not go up to Jerusalem to worship, as God had commanded?" Although they seem not to be wholly excusable in this neglect, yet because they worshipped God in spirit and in truth, and performed all moral duties to God and their brethren, and abstained from idolatry, being kept from Jerusalem by violence, God bore with their infirmity herein.

Verse 4. *When Jezebel cut off the prophets of the Lord*—The name of prophets was not only given to such as were endowed with an extraordinary spirit of prophecy, but to such ministers of religion as devoted themselves to the service of God, in preaching, praying, and praising him. There were schools of these prophets, it is likely, still remaining in Israel; but Jezebel endeavoured both to destroy the schools, and those that were brought up in them, in order that none might be left to instruct the people in the true religion. *Obadiah—hid them by fifty in a cave*—At the hazard of his own life, and against the king's command; wisely considering that no command of an earthly prince could overrule the command of the King of kings. *And fed them with bread and water*—Sent them meat and drink privately every day. See how wonderfully God raises up friends for his ministers and people, where one would least expect them!

Verses 5, 6. *Go unto all fountains of water, and unto all brooks*—About which grass was most probably to be found in that great drought; *that we lose not all the beasts*—Many, it appears, were already dead for want of grass, which he hoped they might find in such moist places, sufficient to preserve, at least, a part of the rest. *Ahab went one way by himself*—Not daring to trust any other, Obadiah excepted; lest, being bribed by such as had grass for their own use, they should not give him a true account.

Verses 7, 8. *He knew him, and fell on his face*—Showing his great respect and love to him, by this profound reverence. *Art thou that my lord Elijah?*—As Obadiah had showed the tenderness of a father to the sons of the prophets, so he showed

A. M. 3098. 9 And he said, What have I sinned,
B. C. 906. that thou wouldest deliver thy servant
into the hand of Ahab, to slay me ?

10 As the LORD thy God liveth, there is no nation or kingdom whither my lord hath not sent to seek thee; and when they said, *He is not there*; he took an oath of the kingdom and nation, that they found thee not.

11 And now thou sayest, Go, tell thy lord, Behold, *Elijah is here*.

12 And it shall come to pass, *as soon as I am gone from thee*, that ° the Spirit of the LORD shall carry thee whither I know not; and so when I come and tell Ahab, and he cannot find thee, he shall slay me: but I thy servant fear the LORD from my youth.

13 Was it not told my lord what I did when

° 2 Kings ii. 16; Ezek. iii. 12, 14; Matt. iv. 1; Acts viii. 39.

the reverence of a son to this father of the prophets; and by this he made it appear, that he did indeed *fear the Lord* greatly, in that he did such honour to one that was God's extraordinary ambassador, and had a great interest in heaven. *Go tell thy lord, Behold, Elijah is here*—Thus, though Ahab was a very wicked man, he owns him for Obadiah's lord and king; thereby instructing us, that the wickedness of kings doth not exempt their subjects from obedience to their lawful commands.

Verses 9, 10. *What have I sinned, &c.*—Wherein have I so offended God, and thee his prophet, that thou shouldest inflict this punishment upon me, and thus expose me to certain ruin? For that he concluded would be the effect of such a message delivered by him to Ahab, as he shows by what follows. *There is no nation or kingdom, &c.*—Namely, near to his own, where he could in reason think Elijah had hid himself. We must often understand general expressions with such limitations. *He took an oath of the kingdom and nation, &c.*—Such was the inveteracy and eagerness with which Ahab sought Elijah, that he was not content with merely sending messengers throughout his own and the neighbouring kingdoms to seek him, but even required an oath of the chief persons in each kingdom, (having obtained the consent of the ruling powers therein for that purpose,) that they did not know any thing of him; and probably further, that they would immediately deliver him up, if they should find that he had come among them. But God's providence was greater than Ahab's malice, and effectually secured the prophet, notwithstanding all he could do.

Verse 12. *The Spirit of the Lord shall carry thee whither I know not*—Shall snatch thee away from hence, so that thou shalt not be found; instances of such sudden transportations of the prophets, by an invisible power, to places far distant from those where they were, having undoubtedly

Jezebel slew the prophets of the LORD, A. M. 3098.
how I hid a hundred men of the B. C. 906.
LORD's prophets by fifty in a cave, and fed them with bread and water ?

14 And now thou sayest, Go, tell thy lord, Behold, *Elijah is here*; and he shall slay me.

15 And Elijah said, As the LORD of hosts liveth, before whom I stand, I will surely show myself unto him to-day.

16 So Obadiah went to meet Ahab, and told him: and Ahab went to meet Elijah.

17 And it came to pass when Ahab saw Elijah, that Ahab said unto him, *Art thou he that ° troubleth Israel?*

18 ¶ And he answered, I have not troubled Israel; but thou, and thy father's house, *in that ye have forsaken the commandments*

° Ch. xxi. 20.—° Josh. vii. 25; Acts xvi. 20.—^f 2 Chron. xv. 2.

occurred before this time, as we know they did after. See the margin. *He shall slay me*—Either as an impostor that has deluded him with vain hopes, or rather, because I did not seize upon thee forthwith, and bring thee to him. *But I thy servant fear the Lord from my youth*—He speaks not these or the following words in a way of boasting; but only for his own necessary vindication and preservation, that he might move the prophet to spare him, and not put him upon that hazardous action; which yet, it appears, he was resolved to perform, if Elijah peremptorily required it.

Verses 15, 16. *As the Lord of hosts liveth*—Who commands all creatures in heaven and earth. He mentions this title as his shield, under the protection of which he durst venture to come, and did come, into Ahab's presence; *before whom I stand*—Whom I serve as one of his ministers; *I will surely show myself to him to-day*—For a greater king than he, the Lord of all things, will preserve me. *So Obadiah went to meet Ahab*—The solemn oath of Elijah made him readily obey; as convincing him fully that the prophet seriously intended to see Ahab, which he before suspected he did not. No doubt it was a great surprise to Ahab to hear that Elijah, whom he had so long sought and not found, was now found without seeking.

Verses 17, 18. *Art thou he that troubleth Israel?*—Have I at last met with thee, O thou disturber of my kingdom, the author of this famine, and of all our calamities? *He answered, I have not troubled Israel*—These calamities are not to be imputed to me, but to thine and thy father's wickedness. They trouble a nation who break the laws of God, not they who keep and defend them. Elijah answered him boldly, because he spake in God's name, and for his honour and service. *Ye—All of you; have forsaken the commandments of the Lord*—The whole nation almost had cast off the yoke of the

A. M. 3098. of the LORD, and thou hast followed
B. C. 906. Baalim.

19 Now therefore send, *and* gather to me all Israel unto mount ^s Carmel, and the prophets of Baal four hundred and fifty, ^h and the prophets of the groves four hundred, which eat at Jezebel's table.

20 So Ahab sent unto all the children of

^s Joshua xix. 26.—^h Chapter xvi. 33.—^l Chapter xxii. 6.
^h 2 Kings xvii. 41; Matt. vi. 24.

divine law, as in other points, so especially in deserting his service, and worshipping idols. *And thou*—Thou, their king in particular; *hast followed Baalim*.

Verse 19. *Now therefore*—That this great controversy between thee and me may be decided; that it may be determined who is the true God, and therefore the proper object of the people's worship; that the true cause of these heavy judgments may be discovered and removed, and so the plague may cease; *send messengers and gather all Israel*—By their heads or representatives, that they may be witnesses of all our transactions; *unto mount Carmel*—Not Carmel in Judea, but another place of that name in the tribe of Issachar, by the midland sea, which he chose, because, being in the centre of Ahab's kingdom, all the tribes might conveniently resort to it; and being at a distance from Samaria, Jezebel, he had reason to think, would not be present there to hinder his design. And as it was a very high mountain, (Amos ix. 3,) and upon the sea, he might from thence discover the rain at its first approach. *The prophets of Baal four hundred and fifty*—Who were dispersed in all parts of the kingdom. *The prophets of the groves four hundred*—Who attended upon those idols that were worshipped in the groves which were near the royal city, and much frequented by the king and the queen. Mr. Selden understands by them the prophets of Astarte, the great goddess of the Zidonians, and renders his opinion very probable, by comparing many passages of Scripture together. *Which eat at Jezebel's table*—Whom she sustained, most probably not always, but in this time of famine only, when, upon account of the extreme poverty that prevailed, they could not be supported by the offerings of the people, and the gains they made of them. But this sufficiently shows the infatuation and zeal of Jezebel for these idolatrous priests, that in a time of such famine she should take upon her to provide for eight hundred and fifty of them.

Verse 20. *So Ahab sent, &c.*—He complied with Elijah's motion, because the urgency of the present distress made him willing to try all means to remove it; from a curiosity of seeing some extraordinary events; and, principally, because God inclined his heart.

Verse 21. *How long halt ye between two opinions?*—Hebrew, חֲסִידִים, *segnipim*, thoughts or considerations. Why do ye walk so lamely and unevenly, being so unsteady in your opinions and practices,

Israel, and ⁱ gathered the prophets together unto mount Carmel. A. M. 3098. B. C. 906.

21 ¶ And Elijah came unto all the people, and said, ^h How long halt ye between two ^s opinions? if the LORD *be* God, follow him: but if ^l Baal, *then* follow him. And the people answered him not a word.

22 Then said Elijah unto the people, ^m I,

^s Or, *thoughts*.—^l Josh. xxiv. 15; Ezek. xx. 39.—^m Chapter xix. 10, 14.

as doubtful which to choose, Jehovah or Baal; sometimes serving one, and sometimes the other, and sometimes joining both together? Not only some Israelites worshipped God, and others Baal; but the same Israelites sometimes worshipped one, and sometimes the other. They worshipped God, perhaps, that they might please the prophets; and Baal to please Jezebel, and obtain favour at court. Now Elijah shows them the absurdity of this; he doth not insist on their relation to Jehovah, Is he not yours, and the God of your fathers; but Baal the god of the Zidonians, and *will a nation change their God?* Jer. ii. 11. No; he waves the prescription, and enters upon the merits of the cause: there can be but *one God*, but one *infinite*, and but one *supreme*: there needs but one God, one *omnipotent*, one *all-sufficient*: what occasion of addition to that which is perfect? Now, if upon trial, it appear that Baal is that one, infinite, omnipotent being; that one supreme Lord, and all-sufficient Benefactor; you ought to renounce Jehovah, and cleave to Baal only: but if Jehovah be that one God, Baal is a cheat, and you must have no more to do with him. Apply this to the service of God, and the service of sin; the dominion of Christ, and the dominion of our lusts: these are the two thoughts or considerations, which it is dangerous halting between. Those do so that are unresolved under their convictions; unstable and unsteady in their purposes; promise fair, but do not perform; begin well, but do not hold on; that are inconsistent with themselves, indifferent and lukewarm in that which is good. *Their heart is divided*, (Hosea x. 2,) whereas God will have all or none. Now we are fairly put to our choice, *whom we will serve*, Josh. xxiv. 15. If we can find one that has more right to us, or will be a better master to us than God, we may take him at our peril. God demands no more from us, than he can make out a title to. *The people answered him not a word*—Being convinced of the reasonableness of his proposal. They could say nothing to justify themselves, and they would say nothing to condemn themselves; but, as persons confounded, were entirely silent.

Verse 22. *I only remain a prophet of the Lord*—Namely, here present, publicly to own and plead the cause of God. As for the other prophets of the Lord, mentioned verse 13, we can hardly imagine that they, in general, were men actually inspired and invested with the prophetic character; but such

A. M. 3098. *even* I only, remain a prophet of the LORD; ^a but Baal's prophets *are* four hundred and fifty men.

23 Let them therefore give us two bullocks; and let them choose one bullock for themselves, and cut it in pieces, and lay it on wood, and put no fire *under*: and I will dress the other bullock, and lay it on wood, and put no fire *under*:

24 And call ye on the name of your gods, and I will call on the name of the LORD: and the God that ^o answereth by fire, let him be God. And all the people answered and said, ^e It is well spoken.

^a Verse 19.—^o Verse 38; 1 Chron. xxi. 26.—^e Hebrew, *The word is good.*—¹ Or, *answer.*—^p Psa. cxv. 5; Jer. x. 5;

only as were disciples of the prophets, and candidates for the office of prophecy. But if they were even prophets, in the proper sense of the word, many of them doubtless had been slain by Ahab or Jezebel, and others banished, or hid in caves. *Baal's prophets are four hundred and fifty men*—He opposes himself only to these, because, it seems, these only were present; the prophets of the groves not being permitted by Jezebel, (through her pride and obstinacy, or care and kindness to them,) to go as far from the royal city as Carmel.

Verse 23. *Let them therefore give us two bullocks*—He proposes to decide the controversy, not by God's word, because that was either despised and rejected, or grossly neglected, and therefore unknown and of no authority with the king or people; but by a miracle, to the evidence of which all that had common sense must needs submit.

Verse 24. *The God that answereth by fire*—That sendeth down fire to consume the sacrifice presented to him: this the people knew the true God used to do. It was a great condescension in God, that he would permit Baal to be a competitor with him; but thus God would have every mouth to be stopped, and all flesh become silent before him: and Elijah doubtless had a special commission from God, or he durst not have put the matter to this issue. But the case was extraordinary, and the judgment upon it would be of use, not only then, but in all ages. Elijah does not say, *The God that answers by water*, though that was the thing the country needed, but *that answers by fire, let him be God*—Because the atonement was to be made, before the judgment could be removed: the God, therefore, that has power to pardon sin, and to signify that by consuming the sin-offering, must needs be the God that can relieve us against the calamity. "If, as it is generally believed, Baal was the idol of the sun, or that power whom his worshippers supposed to preside over the element of fire, the reason of Elijah's proceeding is still more obvious, as it afforded a full proof that Jehovah, the God of nature, was alone the sovereign Lord and Ruler of all its operations, and of those of fire among the rest."—Dodd.

25 ¶ And Elijah said unto the prophets of Baal, Choose you one bullock for yourselves, and dress it first; for ye *are* many; and call on the name of your gods, but put no fire *under*.

26 And they took the bullock which was given them, and they dressed it, and called on the name of Baal from morning even until noon, saying, O Baal, ⁷ hear us. But *there was* ^p no voice, nor any that ^q answered. And they ⁹ leaped upon the altar which was made.

27 And it came to pass at noon, that Elijah mocked them, and said, Cry ¹⁰ aloud: for he

1 Cor. viii. 4; xii. 2.—^o Or, *heard.*—⁹ Or, *leaped up and down at the altar.*—¹⁰ Heb. *with a great voice.*

All the people answered, It is well spoken—Even the Baalites themselves, partly because they could not, without great reproach to themselves and Baal, refuse so fair and equal a motion; and partly because they were confident of Baal's power and divinity, having probably had some experiments of supernatural and extraordinary things done in his worship, by God's just and wise permission, for the hardening of that wicked people in their idolatry; as God hath in several ages suffered lying wonders to be wrought by the devil and his angels, for a similar reason.

Verse 25. *Choose ye one bullock for yourselves, and dress it first*—I give you the precedence, because I am single, and *you are many*. It was wise in Elijah to put them upon sacrificing first; because, if he had offered first and God had answered by fire, Baal's priests would have desisted from making the trial on their part; and because the disappointment of the priests of Baal, of which he was well assured, would prepare the way for the people's attention to his words, and cause them to entertain his success with more affection; and this coming last would leave the greater impression upon their hearts. And this they accepted, because they might think that if Baal answered them first, which they presumed he would; the people would be so confirmed and heightened in their opinion of Baal, that they might murder Elijah before he came to his experiment.

Verse 26. *They took the bullock which was given them*—Which, being chosen by them, was now put into their hands by those who had the beasts in their custody till they were taken away for sacrifice; and *dressed it*—Cut it in pieces, and laid the parts upon the wood. *From morning*—From the time of the morning sacrifice; which advantage Elijah suffered them to take. *They leaped upon*—Or, *beside the altar*; or, *before it*. They used some superstitious and disorderly gestures; either pretending to be actuated by the spirit of their god, and to be in a kind of religious ecstasy, or in a way of devotion to their god.

Verse 27. *And it came to pass at noon*—When they had long tried all means in vain. *Elijah*

A. M. 3999. *is* a god: either ¹¹ he is talking, or he
B. C. 906. ¹² is pursuing, or he is in a journey,
or peradventure he sleepeth, and must be
awaked.

28 And they cried aloud, and ⁹ cut themselves
after their manner with knives and lancets, till
¹³ the blood gushed out upon them.

29 And it came to pass, when mid-day was

¹¹ Or, *he meditateth*.—¹² Heb. *hath a pursuit*.—¹³ Lev. xix. 28;
Deut. xiv. 1.—¹⁴ Heb. *poured out blood upon them*.

mocked them—He derided them and their god, that he might awaken them out of their stupidity, and expose them to all the bystanders as deceivers of the people, in leading them to worship such senseless and contemptible things. *Cry aloud, for he is a god*—As you suppose: but what a god, who cannot be made to hear without all this clamour! *Either he is talking*—Or meditating, as the Hebrew is, thinking of something else, and not minding his own important concerns, when not only your credit, but all his honour lies at stake, and his interest in Israel. *Or he is pursuing*—His enemies, or hunting and pursuing the prey. He is employed about some other business, and is not at leisure to mind you. For being a god of a small and narrow understanding, he cannot mind two things at once; and you are unreasonable to expect it from him. *Or he is in a journey, &c.*—The worship of idols being a most ridiculous thing, it is perfectly just to represent it so, and expose it to scorn. And “nothing can be imagined more cutting and sarcastic than these words of the prophet, in which he ridicules, in the finest manner possible, their wretched, false, and derogatory ideas of the Deity. The two last notions of *being asleep and not at home*, how absurd soever they may be, when applied to the Deity, were certainly such as several idolaters conceived of their gods, as appears from various passages in Homer; in one of which, (*Iliad* i. verse 423,) he tells us, that Thetus could not meet with Jupiter, because he was gone abroad, and would not return in less than twelve days; and at the conclusion of that book he gives us an account of the manner in which the gods went to sleep. How debasing ideas these compared with that awful intelligence which revelation gives us of the true God, who *neither slumbereth nor sleepeth*; but who, everywhere present, is, at all times, conscious even of the secrets of the heart; at all times ready to hear, and able to grant the petitions of his people!”—Dodd.

Verse 28. *They cried aloud*—They were so far from being convinced and put to shame by the just reproach which Elijah cast upon them, that it made them the more earnest and violent in their proceedings, and induced them to act more ridiculously. *A deceived heart having turned them aside, they could not deliver their souls* by inquiring, *Is there not a lie in our right hand? And cut themselves after their manner, &c.*—Observe their zeal! They mingled their own blood with their sacrifices; as know-

past, ⁷ and they prophesied until the ⁸ A. M. 3099.
time of the ¹⁴ offering of the *evening* ¹⁵ B. C. 906.
sacrifice, that *there was* ⁹ neither voice, nor any
to answer, nor any ¹⁶ that regarded.

30 ¶ And Elijah said unto all the people,
Come near unto me. And all the people came
near unto him. ¹ And he repaired the altar of
the LORD *that was broken down*.

¹ 1 Cor. xi. 4.—¹⁴ Heb. *ascending*.—¹⁵ Verse 26.—¹⁶ Heb.
attention.—¹⁷ Chap. xix. 10.

ing by experience, that nothing was more acceptable to their Baal (who was indeed the devil) than human blood; and hoping thereby to move their god to help them. And this indeed was the practice of divers heathen in the worship of their false gods. Plutarch, in his book *De Superstitione*, tells us that the priests of Bellona, when they sacrificed to that goddess, were wont to besmear the victim with their own blood. The Persian magi, according to Herodotus, used to appease tempests and allay the winds by making incisions in their flesh. They who carried about the Syrian goddess, as Apuleius relates, among other mad pranks, were every now and then cutting and slashing themselves with knives, till the blood gushed out; and even to this very day, we are informed, in Turkey, Persia, and in several parts of the Indies, there are a kind of fanatics who think they do a very meritorious service, and highly acceptable to the deity, by cutting and mangling their own flesh.”—Calmet, and Picart's *Religious Ceremonies*.

Verse 29. *They prophesied, &c.*—That is, prayed to, or sung hymns in honour of their god, falling into strange contortions, as if they were excited and actuated by some divine power. *Until the time of the evening sacrifice*—Here termed *the sacrifice* by way of eminence, (for in the Hebrew there is nothing for *evening*;) because it was more solemn and public, and more frequented than the morning sacrifice; of which divers reasons may be given. See Exod. xii. 6; Psa. cxli. 2; Acts iii. 1. *Nor any that regarded*—Hebrew, עִין קָשֶׁב, *ein kasheb*, *there was no attention*; either of their god, who was so far from answering that he did not mind any of their words or actions; or of the people, who were now tired out with so long attention and expectation; and therefore, more readily deserted them, and drew near to Elijah and his altar at his call.

Verse 30. *Elijah said, Come near unto me*—Come away from these impudent deceivers to me, and expect from me the satisfaction of your desire. *He repaired the altar of the Lord*—An altar which probably had remained from the time of the judges; at least, it had been built by some of their ancestors, for the offering of sacrifices to the God of Israel, which was frequently done in high places, of which, it is probable, Carmel was once one of the most eminent in the whole kingdom. This altar Elijah now repaired, because it had been *broken down*, doubtless, by some of the Baalites out of their en-

A. M. 3098. B. C. 906. 31 And Elijah took twelve stones, according to the number of the tribes of the sons of Jacob, unto whom the word of the LORD came, saying, "Israel shall be thy name:

32 And with the stones he built an altar ^x in the name of the LORD: and he made a trench about the altar, as great as would contain two measures of seed.

33 And he ^y put the wood in order, and cut the bullock in pieces, and laid *him* on the wood, and said, Fill four barrels with water, and ^z pour *it* on the burnt-sacrifice, and on the wood.

34 And he said, Do *it* the second time. And they did *it* the second time. And he said, Do

^a Gen. xxxii. 28; xxxv. 10; 2 Kings xvii. 34.—^x Col. iii. 17. ^y Lev. i. 6, 8.—^z Judges vi. 20.—¹⁶ Heb. *went*.

mity to the true God, whose temple they could not reach, and therefore showed their malignity in destroying his altars. "Both Tacitus and Suetonius speak of the *God of Carmel*, whom Vespasian went to consult when he was in Judea; but they tell us, that there was neither temple nor statue upon the mountain, except one altar only, plain, but venerable for its antiquity. The altar of Carmel seems to have had its original from this altar of the true God, which the ancient Hebrews first erected, and Elijah afterward repaired; and which even the heathen held in such veneration, that when they came to be masters of the country, they would not so much as place an image by it."—Dodd.

Verse 31. *Elijah took twelve stones*—This he did, with a view to renew the covenant between God and all the tribes, as Moses did, Exod. xxiv. 4; to show, that he prayed and acted in the name and for the service of the God of all the *patriarchs*, and of all the tribes of Israel, and for their good: and to teach the people, that though the tribes were divided as to their civil government, they ought all to be united in the worship of the same God, and in the same religion. *Israel shall be thy name*—Jacob was graciously answered by God when he prayed to him, and was honoured with the glorious title of Israel, which noted his prevalency with God and men. And I, calling upon the same God, doubt not of a gracious answer; and if ever you mean to have your prayers granted, you must seek to the God of Jacob. And if you would recover the honour which was once conferred on Jacob, and continued a long time to his posterity, you must return to that God from whom you are revolted.

Verses 32, 33. *With the stones he built an altar*—With the assistance of the people, who now readily yielded their helping hands. *In the name of the Lord*—By the authority of God and for his worship. *He made a trench as great as would contain two measures of seed*—As capacious, say some, as a sack

it the third time. And they did *it* the third time. A. M. 3098. B. C. 906.

35 And the water ¹⁶ ran round about the altar; and he filled ^a the trench also with water.

36 And it came to pass at *the time of* the offering of the *evening* sacrifice, that Elijah the prophet came near and said, LORD ^b God of Abraham, Isaac, and of Israel, ^c let it be known this day that thou *art* God in Israel, and *that I am* thy servant, and *that* ^d I have done all these things at thy word.

37 Hear me, O LORD, hear me, that this people may know that thou *art* the LORD God, and *that* thou hast turned their heart back again.

^a Verses 32, 38.—^b Exod. iii. 6.—^c Chap. viii. 43; 2 Kings xix. 19.—^d Num. xvi. 28; Psa. lxxiii. 18.

that would contain that quantity, namely, two third parts of an ephah. Others understand the words as meaning a trench of sufficient breadth and circuit to sow therein that quantity of seed, or about twenty pounds' weight of barley: which must have been very large indeed. *Fill four barrels with water*—This they could quickly fetch, either from the river Kishon; or, if that was dried up, from the sea; both were at the foot of the mountain. This he did to make the miracle more glorious, and more unquestionable; to show that there was no fallacy in it, no fire concealed in or about the altar; but that the lightning which was to consume the sacrifice came from heaven, and came at Elijah's invocation; and Josephus tells us, that Elijah invited the people to draw near, that they might search and spy everywhere, if they could find any fire secretly conveyed under the altar. *Antiq. lib. 8. cap. 7.*

Verses 36, 37. *At the time of the offering of the evening sacrifice*—This time he chose, that he might unite his prayers with the prayers of the godly Jews at Jerusalem, who at that time assembled together to pray. *Lord God of Abraham, &c.*—Hereby he shows his faith in God's ancient covenant, and also reminds the people of their relation both to God and to the patriarchs. *I have done these things*—Brought this famine, gathered the people hither, and done what I have done, or am doing here, not in compliance with my own passions, but in obedience to thy command: for his shutting up heaven by his prayers, and afterward killing the priests of Baal, would of necessity expose him to great envy and reproach, which made this public vindication of his conduct necessary, as it was also effectual, being witnessed from heaven. *That thou hast turned their heart back again*—Let them feel so powerful a change in their hearts, that they may know it is thy work, and may show that they are brought back again to thee, the only living and true God, from whom they have revolted.

A. M. 3098.
B. C. 906. 38 Then * the fire of the LORD fell, and consumed the burnt-sacrifice, and the wood, and the stones, and the dust, and licked up the water that *was* in the trench.

39 And when all the people saw *it*, they fell on their faces: and they said, 'The LORD, he is the God; the LORD, he is the God.

40 And Elijah said unto them, ¹⁷ Take * the prophets of Baal; let not one of them escape. And they took them: and Elijah brought

* Lev. ix. 24; Judges vi. 21; 1 Chron. xxi. 26; 2 Chron. vii. 1.
† Verse 24.—¹⁷ Or, *Apprehend*.

Verse 38. *The fire of the Lord fell*—And not only, as at other times, (see the margin,) consumed the sacrifice and the wood, in token of God's acceptance of the offering, but *licked up all the water that was in the trench*, exhaling and drawing it up as a vapour, to descend (with other water, to be raised from the adjoining sea) in the intended rain, which was to be the fruit of this sacrifice and prayer, more than the product of natural causes. And this was not all. To complete the miracle, the fire consumed the stones of the altar, and the very dust, to show that it was no ordinary fire, and perhaps to intimate that though God accepted this occasional sacrifice from this altar, yet for the future they ought to demolish all the altars on their high places, and for their constant sacrifices make use of that at Jerusalem only. Moses's altar and Solomon's were consecrated by fire from heaven; but this was destroyed, because it was to be used no more. We may well imagine, what a terror this fire struck on guilty Ahab, and all the worshippers of Baal, and how they fled from it as far and as fast as they could, saying, in their hearts, *Lest it consume us also*, Num. xvi. 34.

Verse 39. *When all the people saw it, they fell on their faces*—In acknowledgment and adoration of the true God; and all, as one man, cried out, *Jehovah, he is the God*—He alone; and Baal is a senseless idol. And they repeated the words to signify their abundant satisfaction, and assurance of the truth of their assertion. And some, we may hope, had their hearts so turned back as to be determined that he should be their God, and that they would serve him only, Josh. xxiv. 24. But it is certain the generality of them were convinced only, not converted; they yielded to the truth of God, that *he is the God*, but consented not to his covenant that he should be *their God*. Blessed are they, who have not seen what they saw, and yet have believed, and been influenced more than they that saw it.

Verse 40. *Elijah said, Take the prophets of Baal*—He takes the opportunity of ordering the execution of these idolaters, while the people's hearts were warm with the fresh sense of this great miracle. *And they took them*—For the people, in that fit of zeal wherein they now were, readily obeyed Elijah's

them down to the brook Kishon, and ¹⁸ slew them there. A. M. 3098.
B. C. 906.

41 ¶ And Elijah said unto Ahab, Get thee up, eat and drink; for *there is* ¹⁸ a sound of abundance of rain.

42 So Ahab went up to eat and to drink. And Elijah went up to the top of Carmel; ¹ and he cast himself down upon the earth, and put his face between his knees,

43 And said to his servant, Go up now, look toward the sea. And he went up, and looked,

* 2 Kings x. 25.—^h Deut. xiii. 5; xviii. 20.—¹⁸ Or, *a sound of a noise of rain*.—¹ James v. 17.

command, and executed the sentence he pronounced. And Ahab could make no opposition, being himself also, it is likely, astonished at the stupendous miracle. *And Elijah brought them down to the brook Kishon*—That their blood might be poured into that river, and thence conveyed into the sea, and might not defile the holy land. *And slew them there*—Or, ordered them to be slain by the people. As these idolatrous priests were manifestly under a sentence of death, passed upon such by the sovereign Lord of life and death, so Elijah had authority to execute it, being a prophet, and an extraordinary minister of God's vengeance. The *four hundred prophets of the groves*, it seems, did not attend, and so escaped, which perhaps Ahab rejoiced in: but it proved, they were reserved to be the instruments of his destruction, by encouraging him to go up to Ramoth-Gilead.

Verse 41. *Get thee up*—From the river, (where he had been present at the execution of Baal's priests,) to thy tent; which probably was pitched on the side of Carmel. *Eat, &c.*—Take comfort, and refresh thyself: for neither the king nor any of the people could have leisure to eat, being wholly intent upon the decision of the great controversy. *For there is a sound of abundance of rain*—The rain is as certainly and speedily coming, as if you did actually see it, or hear the noise which it makes.

Verse 42. *Elijah went up to the top of Carmel*—Where he might pour out his prayers unto God; and whence he might look toward the sea. He had a large prospect of the sea from hence: the sailors at this day call it Cape Carmel. *Between his knees*—That is, bowed his head so low, that it touched his knees; thus abasing himself in the sense of his own meanness, now God had thus honoured him.

Verse 43. *Go up now, &c.*—While I continue praying. *Look toward the sea*—Whence clouds and vapours usually arise. Elijah desired to have timely notice of the first appearance of rain, not out of vanity, but that Ahab and the people might know that it was obtained from Jehovah by his prayers, and thereby be confirmed in the true religion. *He looked and said, There is nothing*—We must not be dejected for some disappointments; but, though the answer of our fervent supplications do not come

A. M. 3098. and said, *There is nothing.* And
B. C. 906. he said, Go again seven times.

44 And it came to pass at the seventh time, that he said, Behold, there ariseth a little cloud out of the sea, like a man's hand. And he said, Go up, say unto Ahab, ¹⁹ Prepare *thy chariot*, and get thee down, that the rain stop thee not.

¹⁹ Heb. Tie, or, Bind.—² 2 Kings iv. 29; ix. 1.

presently, yet we must continue instant in prayer, waiting on God, and not faint or grow weary, for at the end *the vision shall speak and not lie.*

Verse 44. *There ariseth a little cloud like a man's hand*—Which presently overspread the heavens, and watered the earth. Great blessings often rise from small beginnings, and showers of plenty from a cloud of a span long: let us therefore never *despise the day of small things*, but hope and wait for greater things from it.

Verse 46. *The hand of the Lord was on Elijah*—God gave him more than natural strength, whereby he was enabled to outrun Ahab's chariot for so many miles together. *And he girded up his loins*—That his garments, which were long and loose, like those in use in that country, might not hinder him. *And ran before Ahab*—To show how ready he was to honour and serve the king; that by this humble and

45 And it came to pass in the mean while, that the heaven was black with clouds and wind, and there was a great rain. And Ahab rode, and went to Jezreel.

46 And the hand of the LORD was on Elijah; and he ^k girded up his loins, and ran before Ahab ²⁰ to the entrance of Jezreel.

²⁰ Heb. till thou come to Jezreel.

self-denying carriage, it might appear, what he had done was not from envy or passion, but only from a just zeal for God's glory; that by his presence with the king and his courtiers, he might animate and oblige them to proceed in the reformation of religion; and, to demonstrate, that he was neither ashamed of, nor afraid for what he had done, but durst venture himself in the midst of his enemies. But surely, if Ahab had paid the respect to Elijah that he deserved, he would have taken him into his chariot, as the eunuch did Philip, that he might honour him before the elders of Israel, and confer with him further about the reformation of the kingdom: but his pride and ambition, and other corrupt dispositions, got the better of his conviction; and he was glad to get quit of him, as Felix of Paul, when he dismissed him, and adjourned his conference with him to a more convenient season.

CHAPTER XIX.

Elijah, threatened by Jezebel, flees to Beer-sheba, 1-3. In the wilderness, being weary of his life, he is fed and comforted by an angel, 4-8. At Horeb the Lord appears to him, and orders him to anoint Hazael, Jehu, and Elisha, 9-18. He meets with and calls Elisha, who leaves his friends and follows him, 19-21.

A. M. 3098. **AND** Ahab told Jezebel all that
B. C. 906. Elijah had done, and withal how he had ^a slain all the prophets with the sword.

2 Then Jezebel sent a messenger unto Elijah,

^a Chap. xviii. 40.

NOTES ON CHAPTER XIX.

Verse 1. *Ahab told Jezebel all that Elijah had done*—Not to convince her that Jehovah was the true God, and Baal a mere imaginary being, or a senseless idol, but to exasperate her against both Jehovah and his prophet. His conscience, it seems, would not let him persecute Elijah himself, having in him some remains of the spirit of an Israelite, which tied his hands; but he wished to excite her to do it. Hence it is not said he told her what God had done, but *what Elijah had done*, as if he, by some spell or charm, had brought fire from heaven, and the hand of the Lord had not been in it. *How he had slain all the prophets*—This he especially represented to her, as that which he knew would make her quite outrageous against him. The pro-

saying, ^b So let the gods do to me, A. M. 3098. and more also, if I make not thy life B. C. 906. as the life of one of them by to-morrow about this time.

^b Ruth i. 17; Chap. xx. 10; 2 Kings vi. 31.

phets of Baal he calls *the prophets*, as if they only were worthy of the name: and he aggravates the slaying of them as Elijah's crime, without taking any notice that their lives were justly forfeited to the law of God. Those who, when they cannot for shame or fear do mischief themselves, yet stir up others to do it, will have it laid to their charge as if they had themselves done it.

Verse 2. *Then Jezebel sent a messenger unto Elijah*—She gives him notice of her designs beforehand; partly from her high and haughty spirit, as scorning to kill him secretly; partly out of impatience till she had given vent to her rage; and partly from God's gracious and overruling providence, that hereby Elijah might have an opportunity of escaping. This shows the great folly of outrageous

A. M. 3098.
B. C. 906. 3 And when he saw *that*, he arose, and went for his life, and came to Beer-sheba, which *belongeth* to Judah, and left his servant there.

4 ¶ But he himself went a day's journey into

^c Num. xi. 15; Jonah iv. 3, 8.

anger; which transported her unthinkingly, but effectually, to counteract and obstruct her own designs. *So let the gods do to me, and more also, &c.*—This imperious and haughty woman, it appears, managed the king and kingdom according to her own will, and did whatever she pleased; and so far was she from being changed by the evident miracle which had been wrought, that she persists in her former idolatry, and adds to it a monstrous confidence, that in spite of God she would destroy his prophet.

Verse 3. *And when he saw that, he arose and went for his life*—That is, to save his life: whereby may be intimated, that he did not flee from Jezebel by the hand or direction of the Lord, by which he had come thither; but because of his own fear and apprehension of danger. One would have expected, after such a public and sensible manifestation of the glory of God, and such a clear decision of the controversy depending between him and Baal, to the honour of Elijah, the confusion of Baal's prophets, and the universal satisfaction of the people; after they had seen both fire and water come from heaven at the prayer of Elijah, and both in mercy to them; the one, as it signified the acceptance of their offering; the other as it *refreshed their inheritance which was weary*; that now they should all, as one man, have returned to the worship of the God of Israel, and taken Elijah for their guide and oracle; that he should from thenceforward have been prime minister of state, and his directions laws both to the king and kingdom: but it is quite otherwise; he is neglected whom God honoured; no respect is paid to him; no care taken of him; but on the contrary, the land of Israel, to which he had been and might have been so great a blessing, is soon made too hot for him. As we do not read of any command from God to Elijah to flee on this occasion, some have been of opinion that it was a great fault in him to do so; and that he ought, by all means, to have ventured all consequences, trusting in the divine protection, and to have pushed the advantage he had gained by his miracle, by endeavouring to lead the people entirely to destroy the worship of Baal, and to restore that of Jehovah. "Shall we praise him for this?" (namely, fleeing for his life,) says Henry; "We praise him not. Where was the courage wherewith he had confronted Ahab and all the prophets of Baal? nay, which kept him by his sacrifice, when the fire of God fell upon it? He that stood undaunted in the midst of the terrors both of heaven and earth, trembles at the impotent menaces of a proud, passionate woman. *Lord, what is man?* He could not but know that he might be very serviceable to Israel at this juncture; and had all the

the wilderness, and came and sat down under a juniper tree: and he <sup>A. M. 3098.
B. C. 906.</sup> requested ¹ for himself that he might die: and said, It is enough; now, O LORD, take away my life; for I *am* not better than my fathers.

¹ Heb. for his life.

reason in the world to depend upon God's protection while he was doing God's work; yet he flees. In his former danger God had bid him hide himself, (chap. xvii. 3,) therefore he supposed he might do it now." The truth is, as St. James observes, *He was a man subject to like passions as we are*; and probably it was with a view to this part of his behaviour, that the apostle made that reflection. Elijah knew Jezebel, that she was fierce, cruel, vindictive, and implacable; that in slaying the priests of Baal he had incurred her displeasure; and that to revenge herself she had all the power of the kingdom under her command. These notions made such an impression upon his spirits, as deprived him of that manly resolution, otherwise so remarkable: nor was there wanting a wise design of Providence, in suffering this timidity to fall upon his servant; it was to show him his natural imbecility, and the necessity he had at all times of the divine assistance, which alone could fortify him with a spirit of intrepidity. It was to suppress all the little sentiments of pride and arrogance which might possibly arise in his breast upon the contemplation of the gifts and graces bestowed on him, and the many great miracles which were wrought by his hands; that if he did glory he might glory in the Lord, and not dare to take any part of his honour to himself. See 2 Cor. xii. 7."—Calmet and Dodd. *And came to Beer-sheeba and left his servant there*—Because he would not expose him to those perils and hardships which he expected; and because he desired solitude, that he might more freely converse with God.

Verse 4. *He went a day's journey into the wilderness*—The vast wilderness of Arabia, wherein the Israelites wandered forty years. He durst not stay in Judah, though good Jehoshaphat reigned there, because he was allied to Ahab, and was a man of an easy temper, whom Ahab might circumvent, and either by force or art seize upon Elijah. *He requested for himself*—Hebrew, *for his life, or his soul*, that it might be taken away from his body. Or, *with his soul*, as it is Isa. xxvi. 9, that is, he desired it heartily or fervently; which he did, not only for his own sake, that he might be freed from his great fears and troubles; but especially from his zeal for God's glory, which he saw was and would be dreadfully eclipsed by the relapse of the Israelites into idolatry, and by his death, if it should be procured by the hands of Jezebel, or of the worshippers of Baal; and therefore he wished to die in peace, and by the hand of God. *And said, It is enough, now, O Lord*—I have lived long enough for thy cause, and am not likely to do thee any more service; neither my words nor works are likely to

A. M. 3098. B. C. 906. 5 And as he lay and slept under a juniper tree, behold, then an angel touched him, and said unto him, Arise and eat.

6 And he looked, and behold, *there was* a cake baken on the coals, and a cruise of water at his ² head: and he did eat and drink, and laid him down again.

7 And the angel of the LORD came again the second time, and touched him, and said, Arise and eat, because the journey is too great for thee.

^a Heb. bolster.—^d Exodus xxiv. 28; Deut. ix. 9, 18; Matt. iv. 2.—^e Exod. iii. 1.

do any good upon these unstable and incorrigible people. *I am not better than my fathers*—That I should continue, when other prophets who have gone before me have lost their lives.

Verses 5, 6. *He lay and slept under a juniper tree*—But he is wakened out of his sleep, and finds himself not only well provided for with bread and water, but, which is more, attended by an angel, who guarded him when he slept, and called him to his victuals once and again when they were ready for him. “He needed not complain of the unkindnesses of men, when it was thus made up by the ministration of angels: thus provided for he had reason to think he fared better than the prophets of the groves that ate at Jezebel’s table. Wherever God’s children are, as they are still upon their Father’s ground, so they are still under their Father’s eye and care. They may lose themselves in a wilderness, but God has not left them; there they may look at him that lives and sees them, as Hagar, Gen. xvi. 13.”—Henry.

Verse 7. *Arise and eat, because the journey is too great for thee*—Above thy strength; now especially, when thou art faint, weary, and fasting. God knows what he designs us for, though we do not; what services, what trials; and will take care for us, when we, for want of foresight, cannot for ourselves, that we be furnished for them with grace sufficient. He that appoints what the voyage shall be, will victual the ship accordingly.

Verse 8. *He went in the strength of that meat forty days and forty nights*—Observe here, how many different ways God took to keep Elijah alive: he was fed by ravens, by a miraculous increase of meal and oil, by an angel, and now, to show that *man lives not by bread alone*, he is kept alive forty days without meat, while in the mean time he was not resting and sleeping, which might have made him the less to crave sustenance, but continually traversing the mazes of the desert, a day for each year of Israel’s wanderings; yet he neither needs food, nor desires it. The place, no doubt, reminds him of the manna, and encourages him to hope that God would sustain him here, and in due time bring him hence, as he did Israel. *Unto Horeb, the mount*

8 And he arose, and did eat and drink, and went in the strength of that meat ^d forty days and forty nights unto ^e Horeb the mount of God.

9 ¶ And he came thither unto a cave, and lodged there; and behold, the word of the LORD came to him, and he said unto him, What doest thou here, Elijah?

10 And he said, ‘I have been very ^e jealous for the LORD God of hosts: for the children of Israel have forsaken thy covenant, thrown down thine altars, and ^b slain thy prophets with the

^f Romans xi. 3.—^g Numbers xxv. 11, 13; Psalm lxxix. 9. ^b Chap. xviii. 4.

of God—Which, in the direct road, was not above four or five days’ journey from Beer-sheba: but he wandered, it seems, hither and thither in the wilderness, till the Spirit of the Lord led him, probably beyond his intention, to this noted mountain, that he might have communion with God in the same place where Moses had; the law, that was given by Moses, being revived by him.

Verse 9. *He came thither*—Unto the mount where God had formerly manifested his glory in so extraordinary a manner; *unto a cave, and lodged there*—Perhaps the same cave, or cleft of a rock, in which Moses was hid, when *the Lord passed by before him and proclaimed his name*. Hither, in his wanderings, the Lord led him, probably to assist his faith and devotion with the sight of that famous place where the law was given, and so many great things were done, and that he might meet God there, where Moses had so often met with him. *Behold, the word of the Lord came to him*—We cannot go any where so as to be out of the reach of God’s eye, his arm, and his word: *Whither can I flee from thy Spirit?* God will take care of his outcasts; and those that for his sake are driven out from among men, he will find and own, and gather with everlasting loving-kindness. *What doest thou here, Elijah?*—A tacit reproof: as much as to say, I have no business for thee here. This is not thy proper place, nor a place wherein to do me service. It is not the station in which I set thee, which was in Israel, that thou mightest turn unto me that backsliding people, to which end I endowed thee with extraordinary powers, and vouchsafed thee my almighty aid and protection, and would not have failed to continue them unto thee, if thou hadst remained there.

Verse 10. *And he said, I have been very jealous for the Lord of hosts*—I have not been wholly wanting to my vocation; but have executed my office with zeal for thy honour and service, and with the hazard of my life; and am fled hither, not being able to endure to see the dishonour done to thy name by their obstinate idolatry and wickedness. *They have thrown down thine altars*—Not only deserted them, and suffered them to go to decay, but,

A. M. 3069. sword ; and ¹ I, even I only, am left ;
B. C. 906. and they seek my life, to take it away.

11 And he said, Go forth, and stand ^k upon the mount before the LORD. And behold, the LORD passed by, and ^l a great and strong wind rent the mountains, and brake in pieces the rocks before the LORD ; but the LORD was not in the wind : and after the wind an earth-

quake ; but the LORD was not in the earthquake : A. M. 3069.
B. C. 906.

12 And after the earthquake a fire ; but the LORD was not in the fire : and after the fire a still small voice.

13 And it was so, when Elijah heard it, that ^m he wrapped his face in his mantle, and went out, and stood in the entering in of the cave.

ⁱ Chap. xviii. 22 ; Rom. xi. 3.—^k Exod. xxiv. 12.

^l Ezra i. 4 ; xxxvii. 7.—^m Exod. iii. 6 ; Isa. vi. 2.

in their zeal for the worship of Baal, have wilfully demolished them. The private altars, which the prophets of the Lord had, and which good people attended who could not go up to Jerusalem, and would not worship the calves nor Baal ; these separate altars, though breaking in upon the unity of the church, yet being erected and intended by those that sincerely aimed at the glory of God, and served him faithfully, God was pleased to own for his altars, as well as that at Jerusalem, and the pulling of them down is charged upon Israel as a crying sin. *I only am left*—Of all thy prophets, who boldly and publicly plead thy cause : for the rest of thy prophets, who are not slain, hide themselves, and dare not appear to do thee service. *And they seek my life*—I despair of doing them any good ; for, instead of receiving my testimony, they hunt for my life.

Verse 11. *Go forth, and stand upon the mount before the Lord*—Elijah came hither to meet with God, and God graciously condescended to give him the meeting. And the manner of his manifesting himself seems evidently to refer to the discoveries God formerly made of himself at this place to Moses. Then there was a tempest, an earthquake, and fire, (Heb. xii. 18,) but when God would show Moses his glory, he proclaimed his name before him, *The Lord God, merciful and gracious, &c.* So here : Elijah heard a strong wind, and saw the terrible effects of it ; for it rent the mountains, and tore the rocks : he felt the shock of an earthquake, and saw an eruption of fire. These effects, no doubt, were all produced by the ministration of angels, the harbingers of the divine Majesty, and were to usher in the intended manifestation of Jehovah's glory. By these Elijah was prepared to receive this discovery of God with the greatest humility, reverence, and godly fear : and by these God signified his almighty and irresistible power, to break the hardest hearts of the Israelites, and to bear down all opposition that was or should be made against his prophet in the discharge of his office. *The Lord was not in the wind, &c.*—The Lord did not vouchsafe his special and gracious presence to Elijah in that wind, earthquake, or fire, which possibly was to teach him not to wonder, if God did not accompany his terrible administration at mount Carmel with the presence of his grace, to turn the hearts of the Israelites to himself, as he desired ; but which, for wise reasons, God saw fit to deny. Hereby also it was intimated, that "miraculous judgments, and ter-

rifying displays of the Lord's power and indignation, though proper for the destruction or intimidation of his enemies, or to excite attention, were only preparatives for that real good intended for Israel ;" which must be effected by the convincing and persuasive instructions of his word, accompanied by the influences of his Spirit.

Verse 12. *After the fire a still small voice*—To intimate, that God would do his work in and for Israel in his own time, *not by might or power, but by his own Spirit,* (Zech. iv. 6,) which moves with a powerful, but yet with a sweet and gentle gale. "Elijah had perhaps expected to carry all before him, with a high hand, and with continued miracles and judgments : or he had supposed that the desired reformation was to be effected by the sanction of civil authority, or the support of the people at large ; whereas, having gained their attention by the famine and its gracious removal, in answer to his prayers, by calling for and obtaining fire from heaven to consume the sacrifice, and by the execution of Baal's priests, he ought to have proceeded to instruct them with meekness and gentleness, publicly and from house to house, and to have excited others to assist him ; and then the Lord would have blessed that small still voice for the most important purposes, notwithstanding the persecuting rage of Ahab and Jezebel, and the general apostacy of the people. Thus miracles in the first ages of Christianity called men's attention to the preaching of the gospel ; which, as a small still voice, was the power of God to salvation to thousands and millions."—Scott. For faith comes by hearing the word of God, and miracles do but make way for it.

Verse 13. *When Elijah heard it, he wrapped his face in his mantle*—Through dread of God's presence, being sensible that he was neither worthy of nor able to endure the sight of God with open face. *And went out and stood, &c.*—Which God had commanded him to do ; and as he was going toward the mouth of the cave, he was affrighted and stopped in his course by the dreadful wind, and earthquake, and fire ; when these were past, he proceeds, and goes on to the mouth of the cave. Moses was put into the cave when God's glory passed before him, but Elijah was called out of it : but neither Moses nor Elijah saw any manner of similitude. *And, behold, a voice*—*What dost thou here, Elijah ?*—What God before spake by an angel, he now speaks to him himself immediately.

A. M. 3098. ^a And behold, *there came* a voice
B. C. 906. unto him, and said, What doest thou
here, Elijah ?

14 ° And he said, I have been very jealous for the LORD God of hosts: because the children of Israel have forsaken thy covenant, thrown down thine altars, and slain thy prophets with the sword; and I, *even I* only, am left; and they seek my life to take it away.

15 And the LORD said unto him, Go, return on thy way to the wilderness of Damascus: ^b and when thou comest, anoint Hazael to be king over Syria :

16 And ^c Jehu the son of Nimshi shalt thou anoint to be king over Israel: and ^d Elisha the

son of Shaphat of Abel-meholah A. M. 3098.
shalt thou anoint to be prophet in B. C. 906.
thy room.

17 And ^e it shall come to pass, *that* him that escapeth the sword of Hazael shall Jehu slay: and him that escapeth from the sword of Jehu ^f shall Elisha slay.

18 ^g Yet ^h I have left *me* seven thousand in Israel, all the knees which have not bowed unto Baal, ⁱ and every mouth which hath not kissed him.

19 ¶ So he departed thence, and found Elisha the son of Shaphat, who *was* ploughing with twelve yoke of oxen before him, and he with the twelfth: and Elijah passed by him, and cast his mantle upon him.

^a Verse 9.—^b Verse 10.—^c 2 Kings viii. 12.—^d 2 Kings ix. 1-3.—^e Luke iv. 27, called *Eliacus*.

^f 2 Kings viii. 12; ix. 14, &c.; x. 6; xiii. 3.—^g Hosea vi. 5.
^h Rom. xi. 4.—ⁱ Or, *I will leave*.—^j Hos. xiii. 2.

Verse 14. *And he said, I have been very jealous, &c.*—“Though Elijah showed tokens of humble adoration on this occasion, the repetition of his answer to the Lord’s renewed inquiry, (‘What doest thou here?’) shows, that he did not fully understand the emblematic display; and that he was not properly convinced of his unbelief, in fleeing out of the land; nor reconciled to going back to his station and employment. He afterward better understood the Lord’s meaning, as it appears from his subsequent conduct.”—Scott.

Verses 15, 16. *Go, return on thy way*—The way by which thou camest; for the way from Horeb to Damascus was, in part, the same with that by which he had come. *Anoint Hazael to be king over Syria*—It seems, the word *anoint* must here be taken figuratively for *appoint*, or *declare*, which was done by Elisha, 2 Kings viii. 12; for the word is often used of them who were never anointed with oil: Elijah, however, might anoint him, though it be not related; or, as some think, when he understood what scourges he and Jehu would be to Israel, and what destruction they would bring upon them, he perhaps earnestly entreated God, and obtained his request, that the execution of the command should be deferred to another time. *And Jehu the son of Nimshi*—That is, his grandson; for he was the son of Jehoshaphat, 2 Kings ix. 2. *And Elisha shalt thou anoint*—Whom he constituted prophet by casting his mantle over him. This was intended as a prediction, that by these persons God would punish the degenerate Israelites, plead his own cause among them, and avenge the quarrel of his covenant.

Verse 17. *Him that escapeth the sword of Hazael shall Jehu slay*—This is not to be understood, as if the sword of Hazael should do execution before the sword of Jehu, and the sword of Jehu before that of Elisha: it only signifies, that God had appointed these three persons to punish the apostate Israelites for their idolatries, and that one or other of them

should infallibly execute his judgments upon them: Hazael, however, began to slay them before Jehu was king, 2 Kings viii. 28, 29; though his cruelty was much increased afterward. Jehu destroyed those whom Hazael did not, as King Joram himself, and Ahaziah, and all the near relations of Ahab. Elisha is said to *slay* them, either because he brought down, by his prayers, destruction upon the forty-two children of Beth-el, that idolatrous city, 2 Kings ii. 24; or because by God’s appointment he inflicted the famine, 2 Kings viii. 31; or rather, as the prophets are said to *pull down and destroy*, what they foretel and declare shall be pulled down, because he threatened and predicted destructive judgments to come upon them. He slew them with the sword that came out of his mouth, the word of God: like the Branch from the stem of Jesse, he *smote them with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips he slew the wicked*, Isaiah xi. 4.

Verse 18. *Yet have I left me, &c.*—Or, I have reserved to myself; I have by my grace kept from the common contagion: therefore thou art mistaken in thinking that thou art left alone. *Seven thousand*—Either definitely, so many; or rather, indefinitely, for many thousands; the number *seven* being often used for a great number. It is, indeed, altogether improbable that all the Israelites, except seven thousand, worshipped Baal, unless Baal stand here for all their idols, and for the calves among the rest. *And every mouth that hath not kissed him*—That is, those who have not worshipped Baal, nor professed reverence or subjection to him, which idolaters did to their idols, by bowing the knee, and by kissing them, or by kissing their hand before them and in respect to them, of which mention is made in Scripture, Job xxxi. 26, 27; Hosea xiii. 2. Compare Psa. ii. 12, and in Pliny, Apuleius, and some other profane authors.

Verse 19. *And found Elisha*—In his journey toward Damascus. *Who was ploughing with twelve yoke of oxen*—Who had twelve ploughs going,

A. M. 3098. 20 And he left the oxen, and ran
B. C. 906. after Elijah, and said, ' Let me, I
pray thee, kiss my father and my mother,
and then I will follow thee. And he said unto
him, ' Go back again: for what have I done
to thee ?

† Matt. viii. 21, 22; Luke ix. 61, 62.

whereof eleven were managed by his servants, and the last by himself; according to the simplicity of those ancient times, in which men of good estate submitted to the meanest employments. *Cast his mantle upon him*—By that ceremony conferring upon him the office of a prophet, which God was pleased to accompany with the gifts and graces of his Spirit, wherewith he endowed and qualified him for it.

Verse 20. *He left the oxen and ran after Elijah*—Being powerfully moved to follow him, and wholly give himself up to his function. *And said*—Or, *but he said*, or, *yet he said*, *Let me kiss my father, &c.*—That is, bid them farewell by the usual ceremony. *And he said Go back again*—Take thy leave of them, as thou desirest, and then return to me again. *For what have I done unto thee?*—Either, first, to hinder thee from performing that office: that employment to which I have called thee doth not require an alienation of thy heart from thy parents, nor the total neglect of them. Or, secondly, to make such a change in thee, that thou shouldst be willing to forsake thy parents, and lands, and all, that thou mayest follow me. Whence comes this marvellous change? It is not from me, who did

21 And he returned back from him, A. M. 3098.
and took a yoke of oxen, and slew B. C. 906.
them, and ² boiled their flesh with the instru-
ments of the oxen, and gave unto the people,
and they did eat. Then he arose, and went
after Elijah, and ministered unto him.

⁴ Heb. *Go return.*—† 2 Sam. xxiv. 22.

only throw my mantle over thee, but from a higher power, even from God's Spirit, which hath changed thy heart, and consecrated thee to thy prophetic office; which, therefore, it concerns thee vigorously to execute, and wholly to devote thyself to it.

Verse 21. *From him*—From Elijah to his parents; whom when he had seen and kissed, he returned to Elijah. *The instruments*—That is, with the wood belonging to the plough, &c., to which more was added, as occasion required: but that he burned, to show his total relinquishing of his former employment. *And gave unto the people*—That is, he made thereof a feast for his servants who had been ploughing with him, and for him, and his other friends and neighbours who came to take their leave of him. Hereby he showed how willingly and joyfully he forsook all his friends, that he might serve God in that high and honourable employment. It is of great advantage to young ministers to spend some time under the direction of those that are aged and experienced; and not to think much, if occasion be, to minister unto them. Those who would be fit to teach, must have time to learn: those should first serve, who may hereafter rule.

CHAPTER XX.

Ben-hadad's invasion of Israel, and insolent demand, 1-12. Ahab, encouraged by a prophet, overthrows him twice, 13-30. Makes a covenant with him, 31-34. Is reproved and threatened by a prophet, 35-43.

A. M. 3103. AND Ben-hadad the king of Syria
B. C. 901. gathered all his host together:
and there were thirty and two kings with him,
and horses, and chariots: and he went up, and
besieged Samaria, and warred against it.

2 And he sent messengers to Ahab king of

Israel into the city, and said unto A. M. 3103.
him, Thus saith Ben-hadad, B. C. 901.

3 Thy silver and thy gold is mine; thy wives
also and thy children, even the goodliest, are
mine.

4 And the king of Israel answered and said,

NOTES ON CHAPTER XX.

Verse 1. *Gathered all his host*—To war against Israel: wherein his design was to enlarge the conquest which his father had made; but God's design was to punish Israel for their apostacy and idolatry. *There were thirty and two kings with him*—Petty kings, such as were in Canaan in Joshua's time, who indeed were no more than governors of cities or small territories: these were either subject or tribu-

tary to Ben-hadad, or hired by him. *He went up and besieged Samaria*—He did not actually besiege it; for his army was routed before he could do it. But the sense is, He went up in order to besiege it.

Verses 3, 4. *Thy silver and thy gold is mine*—I challenge them as my own, and expect to have them forthwith delivered, if thou expect peace with me. *The king said, My lord, O king, I am thine*—I do so far comply with thy demand, that I will own thee

A. M. 3103. My lord, O king, according to thy B. C. 901. saying, I *am* thine, and all that I have.

5 And the messengers came again, and said, Thus speaketh Ben-hadad, saying, Although I have sent unto thee, saying, Thou shalt deliver me thy silver, and thy gold, and thy wives, and thy children;

6 Yet I will send my servants unto thee tomorrow about this time, and they shall search thy house, and the houses of thy servants; and it shall be, *that* whatsoever is ¹ pleasant in thine eyes, they shall put *it* in their hand, and take *it* away.

7 Then the king of Israel called all the elders of the land, and said, Mark, I pray you, and see how this *man* seeketh mischief: for he sent unto me for my wives, and for my children, and for my silver, and for my gold, and ² I denied him not.

8 And all the elders and all the people said unto him, Harken not *unto him*, nor consent.

9 Wherefore he said unto the messengers of Ben-hadad, Tell my lord the king, All that

thou didst send for to thy servant at A. M. 3103. the first, I will do: but this thing I B. C. 901. may not do. And the messengers departed, and brought him word again.

10 And Ben-hadad sent unto him and said, ^a The gods do so unto me, and more also, if the dust of Samaria shall suffice for handfuls for all the people that ³ follow me.

11 And the king of Israel answered and said, Tell *him*, Let not him that girdeth on *his harness* boast himself as he that putteth it off.

12 And it came to pass, when *Ben-hadad* heard this ⁴ message as he *was* ^b drinking, he and the kings in the ⁵ pavilions, that he said unto his servants, ⁶ Set *yourselves in array*. And they set *themselves in array* against the city.

13 ¶ And behold, there ⁷ came a prophet unto Ahab king of Israel, saying, Thus saith the LORD, Hast thou seen all this great multitude? behold, ^c I will deliver it into thy hand this day; and thou shalt know that I *am* the LORD.

¹ Hebrew, *desirable*.—² Hebrew, *I kept not back from him*.
^a Chapter xix. 2.—³ Hebrew, *are at my feet*, Exodus xi. 8; Judges iv. 10.

⁴ Heb. word.—^b Verse 16.—⁵ Or, *tents*.—⁶ Or, *place the engines*. And they placed engines.—⁷ Hebrew, *approached*.
^c Verse 28.

for my lord, and myself for thy vassal, and will hold my wives, and children, and estate, as by thy favour, and with an acknowledgment.

Ver. 5, 6. *Thus speaketh Ben-hadad, saying, &c.*—Although I before demanded not only the dominion of thy treasures, and wives, and children, as thou mayest seem to understand me; but also the actual possession of them, wherewith I would then have been contented: yet now I will not accept of those terms, but, together with thy royal treasures, I expect all the treasures of thy servants or subjects; nor will I wait till thou deliver them to me; but I will send my servants into the city, and they shall search out and take away all thou art fond of, and this to prevent fraud and delay; and then I will grant thee a peace.

Verse 7. *The king called all the elders*—Whose counsel and concurrence he now desires in his distress. *See how this man seeketh mischief*—Though he pretended peace upon these terms propounded, it is apparent, by those additional demands, that he intends nothing less than our utter ruin. *I denied not*—I granted his demands in the sense before mentioned. In this Ahab showed some sparks of virtue remaining in him; in that while Ben-hadad desired only what he had in his own disposal, that is, all his private goods, he complied with his demands; but when all the people and the public good was concerned, he would do nothing without their consent.

Verses 9–11. *This thing I may not do*—If I would do it, I cannot; because my people will not suffer it. *If the dust of Samaria shall suffice for handfuls, &c.*—If I do not assault thy city with so potent and numerous an army, as shall turn it all into a heap of dust, and shall be sufficient to carry it all away, though every soldier take but one handful of it. See the like boast, 2 Sam. xvii. 13. *The king of Israel said, Let not him that girdeth, &c.*—Do not triumph before the victory, for the events of war are uncertain.

Verse 13. *And, behold, there came a prophet unto Ahab*—One of those, probably, that had been hid, but was now commanded of God to appear and carry a message to Ahab; which the prophet did not fear to do, as he brought him such good news as those which follow. *Thus saith the Lord, Hast thou seen this great multitude, &c.?*—God, though forsaken and neglected by Ahab, prevents him with his gracious promise of help; that Ahab and the idolatrous Israelites might hereby be fully convinced, or left without excuse; that Ben-hadad's intolerable pride, and contempt of God, and of his people, might be punished; and that the remnant of his prophets and people, who were involved in the same calamity with the rest of the Israelites, might be preserved and delivered. *I am the Lord*—And not Baal, because I will deliver thee, which he cannot do.

A. M. 3103.
B. C. 901.

14 And Ahab said, By whom? And he said, Thus saith the LORD, Even by the ^o young men of the princes of the provinces. Then he said, Who shall ^o order the battle? And he answered, Thou.

15 Then he numbered the young men of the princes of the provinces, and they were two hundred and thirty-two: and after them he numbered all the people, *even* all the children of Israel, *being* seven thousand.

16 And they went out at noon. But Ben-hadad *was* ^d drinking himself drunk in the pavilions, he and the kings, the thirty and two kings that helped him.

17 And the young men of the princes of the provinces went out first; and Ben-hadad sent out, and they told him, saying, There are men come out of Samaria.

18 And he said, Whether they be come out for peace, take them alive; or whether they

^o Or, servants.—^d Heb. bind, or, tie.

Verse 14. *By the young men of the princes, &c.*—The Hebrew word נָעָר, *nagaree*, here rendered young men, is ambiguous, and may mean either the sons or the servants of the princes of the provinces. It was not by old, experienced soldiers, but by those young men, who had lived delicately, and perhaps had never seen a fight, that this battle was to be won; in order that it might appear that the victory was wholly due to God's gracious providence, and not to the valour or worthiness of the instruments. *Then he said, Who shall order the battle?*—Or, as some understand the words, Who shall begin the fight, they or we? Shall we make a sally, or wait till they assault us? *He answered, Thou*—The prophet bids the king begin and lead them on, partly to encourage the young men to fight courageously, as being in the presence of their prince; and partly to try whether Ahab would thus far trust God, or not.

Verse 15. *He numbered all the men of Israel*—All in Samaria and the neighbourhood that were fit to go out to war; all except those whom their age, or infirmity, or other sufficient causes excused; but certainly not all the men of war in Israel, who must have been far more than seven thousand.

Verses 16, 18. *And they went out at noon*—When they knew the Syrians were at dinner, if not also drinking to excess, as their king was. *And he said, Whether they be come for peace, take them alive, &c.*—It was against the law of nations to apprehend those that came to treat of peace: but he, in his insolent pride, told his people not to trouble themselves to examine what they came for, but to take them alive, which he thought they might easily do, these Israelites being so few in number, and not able, he supposed, to stand the first brunt.

2

be come out for war, take them A. M. 3103.
B. C. 901. alive.

19 So these young men of the princes of the provinces came out of the city, and the army which followed them.

20 And they slew every one his man: and the Syrians fled; and Israel pursued them: and Ben-hadad the king of Syria escaped on a horse with the horsemen.

21 And the king of Israel went out, and smote the horses and chariots, and slew the Syrians with a great slaughter.

22 ¶ And the prophet came to the king of Israel, and said unto him, Go, strengthen thyself, and mark, and see what thou doest: ^o for at the return of the year the king of Syria will come up against thee.

23 And the servants of the king of Syria said unto him, Their gods *are* gods of the hills; therefore they were stronger than we; but let

^d Verse 11; Chap. xvi. 9.—^o 2 Sam. xi. 1.

Verses 20, 21. *They slew every one his man*—Who came to apprehend him. *And the Syrians fled*—Amazed at the undaunted and unexpected courage of the Israelites, and struck with a divine terror. *And Ben-hadad escaped on a horse*—That proud boaster durst not face them; but mounted immediately, drunk as he was, and made the best of his way to escape. *And the king of Israel went out*—Proceeded further in his pursuit of them. *And smote the horses and chariots*—The men that fought in them. *And slew the Syrians with great slaughter*—Improving this advantage to the utmost. Thus ended Ben-hadad's proud boastings; and thus does God often make one wicked man a scourge to another!

Verse 22. *Go, strengthen thyself, and mark, and see, &c.*—Consider what is necessary for thee to do by way of preparation, and take care that nothing be wanting to oppose the designs of the Syrians against thee, who will certainly return and renew the fight next year. The enemies of the children of God are restless in their malice, and though they may take some breathing-time for themselves, they are still *breathing out slaughter against the church*: it therefore concerns us always to expect our spiritual enemies, and to *mark and see what we do*.

Verse 23. *Their gods are gods of the hills, &c.*—The heathen, in general, had no notion of the God of the universe, but only worshipped local and tutelary deities; who, they thought, ruled over particular countries, and distributed the several parts of those countries among them, some being gods of the woods, others of the rivers, and others of the mountains: and the Syrians fancied the gods of the Israelites, whom they thought to be no better than their own gods, to be of the latter kind, *gods of the hills*,

107

A. M. 3103. us fight against them in the plain, and
B. C. 900. surely we shall be stronger than they.

24 And do this thing, Take the kings away, every man out of his place, and put captains in their rooms :

25 And number thee an army, like the army¹⁰ that thou hast lost, horse for horse, and chariot for chariot : and we will fight against them in the plain, and surely we shall be stronger than they. And he hearkened unto their voice, and did so.

B. C. 900. 26 And it came to pass at the return of the year, that Ben-hadad numbered the Syrians, and went up to ^f Aphek, ¹¹ to fight against Israel.

27 And the children of Israel were numbered, and ¹² were all present, and went against them :

¹⁰ Heb. that was fallen.—^f Josh. xiii. 4.—¹¹ Heb. to the

because the land of Canaan was a mountainous land, and the great temple of their God, at Jerusalem, stood upon a hill, as did the city of Samaria, where they had received their last blow ; or because the Israelites did generally choose high places for the places of their worship. It is observable, that the Syrians do not impute their ill success to their negligence, and drunkenness, and bad conduct, nor to the valour of the Israelites, but to a divine power, which was indeed visible in it. *Let us fight against them in the plain*—In this counsel there was not only superstition, but policy ; because the Syrians excelled the Israelites in horses and chariots, which were most serviceable on plain ground.

Verse 24. *Do this—take the kings away, &c.*—He had made the thirty-two kings, who were his tributaries, chief commanders in his former army ; which his counsellors represent to him as a great error, and therefore advise him to displace them, and put his own captains in their stead, who would fight better. The kings, they thought, had had a softer education ; and, being less inured to hardships, and less experienced in military matters, were less fit for service : besides, being many of them mercenaries, and therefore less concerned in his good success, they judged they would be more cautious in venturing themselves, and risking their lives in his cause, and not so obedient to discipline, as captains from his own subjects would be. These latter, they supposed, would faithfully obey the commands of their general, to whom the kings would not readily yield, and would use their utmost skill and valour for their own interest and advancement.

Verses 26, 27. *Ben-hadad numbered the Syrians, and went up to Aphek*—A city in the tribe of Asher ; which, it is probable, was one of those that Ben-hadad's father had taken from the king of Israel, (verse 34,) not far from which was the plain of Galilee, where he intended to fight. *And the children of Israel went against them*—Being encouraged by

and the children of Israel pitched before them like two little flocks of kids ; but the Syrians filled the country.

28 ¶ And there came a man of God, and spake unto the king of Israel, and said, Thus saith the LORD, Because the Syrians have said, The LORD is God of the hills, but he is not God of the valleys, therefore ^e will I deliver all this great multitude into thy hand, and ye shall know that I am the LORD.

29 And they pitched one over against the other seven days. And so it was, that in the seventh day the battle was joined : and the children of Israel slew of the Syrians a hundred thousand footmen in one day.

30 But the rest fled to Aphek, into the city ; and there a wall fell upon twenty and seven

war with Israel.—¹² Or, were victualled.—^e Verse 13.

the remembrance of their former success, and an expectation of assistance from God. *And pitched before them*—Probably upon some hilly ground, where they might secure themselves, and watch for advantage against their enemies ; which might be the reason why the Syrians durst not assault them before the seventh day, verse 29. *Like two little flocks of kids*—Few and weak ; being also, for convenience of fighting, and that they might seem more than they were, divided into two bodies.

Verse 28. *Because the Syrians have said, &c.*—What they had said, this man of God knew, either from common report, strengthened by their present choice of plain ground for the battle ; or rather, by revelation from God, to whose inspection their secret counsels lay open, 2 Kings vi. 12. His omnipotence being disputed, he sent his prophet to predict the vengeance coming on his enemies ; and their defeat in the plains was a singular and undeniable confirmation, both of his omnipotence and veracity. *Ye shall know that I am the Lord*—Namely, the universal Lord of all places, persons, and things.

Verse 29. *They pitched one over against the other seven days*—It may seem strange that they should look one another in the face so long, without coming to any action ; for the Syrians had so much advantage in their numbers, that one would have thought they would have immediately encompassed the Israelites, and have destroyed them all : but perhaps the Israelites continued all these days on the rising ground, and the Syrians did not dare to attack them till they came down into the plain. *Israel slew of the Syrians a hundred thousand footmen in one day*—In all probability they surprised them by a sudden, unexpected attack ; and God dismayed them, and struck such a terror into them, that they could make no resistance.

Verse 30. *A wall fell upon twenty and seven thousand*—The wall of the city under which they lay, ready to defend it ; or the walls (the singular num-

A. M. 3104. thousand of the men *that were left*.
B. C. 900. And Ben-hadad fled, and came into the city, ¹³ into ¹⁴ an inner chamber.

31 ¶ And his servants said unto him, Behold now, we have heard that the kings of the house of Israel *are merciful kings*: let us, I pray thee, ^b put sackcloth on our loins, and ropes upon our heads, and go out to the king of Israel: peradventure he will save thy life.

32 So they girded sackcloth on their loins, and *put ropes on their heads*, and came to the king of Israel, and said, Thy servant Ben-hadad saith, I pray thee, let me live. And he said, *Is he yet alive? he is my brother.*

¹³ Or, from chamber to chamber.—¹⁴ Heb. into a chamber within

ber being put for the plural, than which nothing is more frequent) of some great castle or fort, in or near the city in which they were now fortifying themselves; or of some part of the city where they lay. This might possibly happen through natural causes; but most probably was effected by the mighty power of God, sending some earthquake, or violent storm, which threw down the walls upon them: and if ever a miracle was to be wrought, now seems to have been the proper season for it; when the blasphemous Syrians denied the sovereign power of God, and thereby in some sort obliged him to give a proof of it; and to show, that he was the God of the plains, as well as of the mountains; and that he could as effectually destroy them in their strongest holds, as in the open fields; and make the very walls, to whose strength they trusted for their defence, to be the instruments of their ruin. But it may be further observed, that it is not said, that all these were killed by the fall of this wall; but only that *the wall fell upon them*, killing some, and wounding others.

Verse 31. *We have heard that the kings of Israel are merciful kings*—More merciful than others, because that religion, which they professed, taught them humanity, and obliged them to show mercy. *Let us put sackcloth upon our loins, and ropes, &c.*—As a testimony of our sorrow for undertaking this war; and that we have justly forfeited our lives for it, and shall submit to any punishment he may be pleased to inflict. This, it seems, was the habit in those times, in which supplicants presented themselves, when they petitioned for mercy. *Peradventure he will save thy life*—This encouragement have all poor sinners, to repent and humble themselves before God. The God of Israel is a merciful God; let us rend our hearts and return to him.

Verse 32. *Thy servant Ben-hadad saith, I pray thee, let me live*—He now as humbly petitions Ahab, as Ahab a little while ago had petitioned him, and begs of him his life. What a change from the height of prosperity to the depth of distress! Such is the uncertainty of human affairs! Such the

33 Now the men did diligently observe whether *any thing would come* from him, and did hastily catch it: and they said, Thy brother Ben-hadad. Then he said, Go ye, bring him. Then Ben-hadad came forth to him; and he caused him to come up into the chariot.

34 And *Ben-hadad* said unto him, ¹ The cities which my father took from thy father I will restore; and thou shalt make streets for thee in Damascus, as my father made in Samaria. Then *said Ahab*, I will send thee away with this covenant. So he made a covenant with him, and sent him away.

a chamber, Ch. xxii. 25.—^b Gen. xxxvii. 34.—¹ Chap. xv. 20.

strange turns which are continually taking place! The spoke of the wheel which is uppermost now, may soon be the lowest of all. *And he said, is he yet alive? He is my brother*—I do not only pardon him, but honour and love him as a brother. This was rather folly than mercifulness, or good nature; to treat a man thus, who had so lately used him with such extreme haughtiness, and brought so much confusion, terror, and damage, into his kingdom.

Verse 33. *The men did diligently observe, &c.*—They were wise persons whom Ben-hadad employed in this embassy; who watched attentively to hear whether any kind word would drop from Ahab's mouth, on which they might lay hold, and make their advantage of it, before he could retract it. And they caught hastily at the word *brother*, and said, *Thy brother Ben-hadad lives*, and implores this favour, that he may live. They repeated the word again, to try whether the king would own it, or whether it had only dropt casually from him; or whether he spoke this from his heart, or only in dissimulation and design; for it seemed too good news to be true.

Verse 34. *The cities which my father took from thy father*—Either from Baasha, (chap. xv. 20,) whom he calls Ahab's father, because he was his predecessor in the government; or rather, from Omri, in whose time he probably made a successful invasion into the land of Israel, and took some more of the cities, and Aphek among the rest, though it be not elsewhere recorded in Scripture. *And thou shalt make streets in Damascus*—Bishop Patrick tells us, that some suppose the word to signify *market-places*, where things were sold, the toll of which should belong to Ahab: others think he meant courts of judicature, where he should exercise a jurisdiction over the Syrians; others, what we now call a *piazza*, or rather, what by Rauwolf is called a *caravansera*, and by others a *kane*, that is, a great house, built like a cloister, round a great court-yard, and full of warehouses and apartments, in which foreign merchants are wont to live, or travellers to repair to, as to an inn, and of which Ahab

A. M. 3104. 35 ¶ And a certain man of ^k the
B. C. 900. sons of the prophets said unto his
neighbour ^l in the word of the LORD, Smite
me, I pray thee. And the man refused to
smite him.

36 Then said he unto him, Because thou
hast not obeyed the voice of the LORD, be-
hold, as soon as thou art departed from me, a
lion shall slay thee. And as soon as he was
departed from him, ^m a lion found him, and
slew him.

37 Then he found another man, and said,
Smite me, I pray thee. And the man smote
him, ⁿ so that in smiting he wounded *him*.

38 So the prophet departed, and waited for the

^k 2 Kings ii. 3, 5, 7, 15.—^l Chap. xiii. 17, 18.—^m Chap. xiii.
24.—ⁿ Heb. *smiting and wounding*.

was to receive the rents. It is probable, it was a
quarter for his subjects to live in, and which he
should possess, and over which he should enjoy the
same jurisdiction, as he did with respect to the rest
of his kingdom. Such a power granted in Samaria,
and such a making over a part of it, to the father
of Ben-hadad, and annexing it to the kingdom of
Syria, with a right of building such idol temples as
he thought fit, was a sufficient disgrace to the father
of Ahab; as the proposing to give Ahab now a like
honour in Damascus, was an expression of a very
abject adulation in Ben-hadad.

Verse 35. *A certain man said to his neighbour*
—Hebrew, אל רעו, *eel regnehu*, to his companion,
as St. Hierom translates it, that is, to a prophet bred
in the same school with himself, who well under-
stood the importance of obeying the command. *In
the word of the Lord*—In the name and by the com-
mand of God, whereof, doubtless, he had informed
him. *Smite me, I pray thee*—So as to wound me,
verse 37. He speaks what God commanded him,
though it was to his own hurt; by which obedience
to God, he secretly reproacheth Ahab's disobedience
in a far easier matter. And this the prophet de-
sires, by God's appointment, that, looking like a
wounded soldier, he might have the more free ac-
cess to the king. *And the man refused to smite
him*—Not out of contempt to God's command, but
probably, in tenderness to his brother.

Verse 36. *Because thou hast not obeyed the voice
of the Lord, a lion shall slay thee*—If the punish-
ment seem too severe for so small a fault, let it be
considered, 1st, That disobedience to God's express
command, especially when delivered by a person
known by the party disobeying to be a prophet, was
a great sin, and no less than capital, Deut. xviii. 19.
2d, This fault was much worse in a prophet, who
very well knew the authority of God's commands,
and this way of publishing them. 3d, This man
might be guilty of many other heinous sins unknown
to us, but known to God; for which God might just-

king by the way, and disguised him- A. M. 3104.
self with ashes upon his face. B. C. 900.

39 And ^a as the king passed by, he cried
unto the king: and he said, Thy servant
went out into the midst of the battle; and
behold, a man turned aside, and brought a
man unto me, and said, Keep this man: if
by any means he be missing, then ^o shall thy
life be for his life, or else thou shalt ^p pay a
talent of silver.

40 And as thy servant was busy here and
there, ^q he was gone. And the king of Israel
said unto him, So *shall* thy judgment be; thy-
self hast decided *it*.

41 And he hasted, and took the ashes away

^a 2 Samuel xii. 1, &c.—^o 2 Kings x. 24.—^p Heb. *weigh*.
^q Heb. *he was not*.

ly cut him off: which God chose to do upon this
occasion, that by the severity of this punishment of
a prophet's disobedience, proceeding from pity to
his brother, he might teach Ahab the greatness of
his sin, in sparing him through foolish pity, whom,
by the laws of religion, and justice, and prudence,
he should have cut off.

Verse 38. *And disguised himself with ashes upon
his face*—As a man in a very sorrowful condition.
Houbigant reads it, *He had his eyes covered with a
bandage*, supposing that the genuine reading of the
text is, not אפר, *apher*, but אפד, *aphed*, which sig-
nifies a bandage; whence comes the Hebrew word
ephod; something bound round. Several of the
versions render it, *with a veil*: and thus the He-
brew doctors understand it. It is probable, it was a
cloth or bandage of some kind, wherewith he bound
up his wound, which probably was in his face: for
it was made in a conspicuous place, that it might be
visible to Ahab and others.

Verse 39. *And he said, Thy servant, &c.*—This
relation is a parable; a usual way of instruction in
the eastern parts, and most fit for this occasion,
wherein an obscure prophet was to speak to a great
king, impatient of a downright reproof, and exceed-
ing partial in his own cause. *A man turned aside
and said, Keep, &c.*—His commander said this
unto him, as the manner of expression shows. *The
king of Israel said, So shall thy judgment be*—
Thou hast pronounced thy own sentence. Accord-
ing to your agreement; so shalt thou suffer. Thou
shalt lose thy life, or pay the talent of silver. Ahab
had forgot how he had dismissed a greater person
willingly, or else he could scarcely have been so
hard-hearted as to condemn one that had offended
unwillingly. But the prophet soon brought it to
his remembrance.

Verse 41. *And he hasted, and took the ashes away
from his face*—Threw off his disguise immediately,
by pulling off the cloth or bandage wherewith his
face, or a part of it, had been concealed. *And the*

A. M. 3104.
B. C. 900. from his face ; and the king of Israel discerned him that he *was* of the prophets.

42 And he said unto him, Thus saith the LORD, [†] Because thou hast let go out of *thy*

† Chap. xxii. 13-37.

king of Israel discerned him—Either by his face, which was known to the king, or to some of the courtiers there present: or, by the manner of his address to him, which, being changed, was now such as the prophets generally used.

Verse 42. *Thus saith the Lord, Because, &c.*—“What was the great sin of Ahab in this action, for which God so severely punished him?” The great dishonour hereby done to God, in suffering so horrid a blasphemer to go unpunished, which was contrary to an express law, Lev. xxiv. 16. And God had delivered him into Ahab’s hand, for his blasphemy, as he promised to do, (verse 28,) by which act of his providence, compared with that law, it was most evident that this man was appointed by God to destruction. But Ahab was so far from punishing this blasphemer, that he did not so much as rebuke him, but dismissed him upon easy terms, and

hand a man whom I appointed to utter A. M. 3104.
destruction, therefore thy life shall go B. C. 900.
for his life, and thy people for his people.

43 And the king of Israel [‡] went to his house heavy and displeased, and came to Samaria.

‡ Chap. xxi. 4.

took not the least care for the reparation of God’s honour. And the people were punished for their own sins, which were many and great; though God took this occasion to inflict the punishment. The former part of this decree of God, *Thy life shall go for his life*, was fulfilled three years after, when Ahab was killed in a battle against the Syrians, chap. xxii. 1-40. But the latter, *And thy people for his people*, was deferred till the reign of Hazael, who fulfilled it by the wars he had with the Israelites, and the slaughter he made of them, 2 Kings x. 32, 33.

Verse 43. *The king of Israel went to his house heavy and displeased*—This distressing sentence turned all their joy, for their late victory, into mourning; Ahab being much troubled for what he had done, and for what, it seems, he now believed he must suffer.

CHAPTER XXI.

Ahab covets Naboth’s vineyard, 1-4. Jezebel procures Naboth to be stoned, 5-14. Ahab goes to take possession, 15, 16. Elijah meets him, and denounces the judgment of God, 17-24. Upon his humiliation a reprieve is granted, 25-29.

A. M. 3105.
B. C. 899. **A**ND it came to pass after these things, that Naboth the Jezreelite had a vineyard, which *was* in Jezreel, hard by the palace of Ahab king of Samaria.

2 And Ahab spake unto Naboth, saying, Give me thy [‡] vineyard, that I may have it for a garden of herbs, because it *is* near unto my house: and I will give thee for it a better vineyard than it; or if it ¹ seem good to thee, I will give thee the worth of it in money.

¹ 1 Sam. viii. 14.—[†] Heb. be good in thine eyes.

NOTES ON CHAPTER XXI.

Verses 1-3. *Which was in Jezreel*—Where one of Ahab’s palaces was, as the other was in Samaria. *That I may have it for a garden of herbs*—For a flower-garden, as some understand it. Ahab made a fair proposal for it, but the law was against Naboth’s alienating his vineyard from his family and tribe. *The Lord forbid it me, &c.*—For God had expressly, and for divers weighty reasons, forbidden the alienation of lands from the tribes and families to which they were allotted. And, although these

3 And Naboth said to Ahab, The A. M. 3105
LORD forbid it me, [‡] that I should B. C. 899.
give the inheritance of my fathers unto thee.

4 And Ahab came into his house heavy and displeased, because of the word which Naboth the Jezreelite had spoken to him: for he had said, I will not give thee the inheritance of my fathers. And he laid him down upon his bed, and turned away his face, and would eat no bread.

[‡] Lev. xxv. 23; Num. xxxvi. 7; Ezek. xlvi. 18.

might have been alienated until the jubilee, yet he durst not sell it to the king for that time: because, he supposed, if once it came into the king’s hand, neither he nor his posterity could ever recover it; and so he should both offend God, and wrong his posterity.

Verse 4. *Ahab came into his house, heavy and displeased*—He was so vexed to be denied by a subject the thing he wanted, that his vexation made him sick, took away his stomach, and made company disagreeable to him; so that his grief and trouble

A. M. 3105. 5 ¶ But Jezebel his wife came to
B. C. 899. him, and said unto him, Why is thy
spirit so sad, that thou eatest no bread?

6 And he said unto her, Because I spake unto
Naboth the Jezreelite, and said unto him, Give
me thy vineyard for money; or else, if it please
thee, I will give thee *another* vineyard for it:
and he answered, I will not give thee my vine-
yard.

7 And Jezebel his wife said unto him, Dost
thou now govern the kingdom of Israel? arise,
and eat bread, and let thy heart be merry: I will
give thee the vineyard of Naboth the Jezreelite.

² Heb. in the top of the people.

appeared in his countenance. Here we see, 1st, That irregular desire, or "discontent, is a sin that is its own punishment, and makes men torment themselves: it makes the spirit sad, the body sick, and all the enjoyments sour: it is the heaviness of the heart, and the rottenness of the bones; 2d, It is a sin that is its own parent; it arises not from the condition, but from the mind. As we find Paul content in a prison, so Ahab discontent in a palace: he had all the delights of Canaan, that pleasant land, at command; the wealth of a kingdom, the pleasure of a court, and the honours and powers of a throne; and yet all this avails him nothing without Naboth's vineyard. Inordinate desires expose men to continual vexations; and they that are disposed to fret, be they ever so happy, will always find something or other to fret at."—Henry.

Verse 7. *Jezebel said, Dost thou now govern the kingdom of Israel?*—Art thou fit to be a king who canst put up with such affronts from thy subjects, and hast not courage to dispose of them and theirs as seemeth good unto thee? *I will give thee the vineyard of Naboth*—Trouble thyself no further about it, but leave the matter to me; I will manage it to thy satisfaction, and the vineyard shall be thine, and shall cost thee nothing. Unhappy are those princes, and hurried apace toward their ruin, who have those about them who excite them to acts of tyranny, and teach them how to abuse their power!

Verse 8. *She sent the letters unto the elders and nobles*—Whom she very well knew to be fit for her purpose; *that were in his city*—In Jezreel. Thus she seeks to destroy him with a pretence of justice, and with as little reflection on Ahab as might be.

Verse 9. *She wrote in the letters, saying, Proclaim a fast*—As if there had been some grievous crime committed, or some great calamity had befallen them, which all the people were to bewail, and purge themselves from, lest they should become guilty; and consequently they were to see the crime punished very severely; for such days of fasting were spent in punishing offenders, doing justice, and praying to God for pardon. She intended also, by taking this step, to remove all suspicion of evil de-

8 So she wrote letters in Ahab's A. M. 3105.
name, and sealed *them* with his seal, B. C. 899.

and sent the letters unto the elders and to the nobles that *were* in his city, dwelling with Naboth.

9 And she wrote in the letters, saying, Proclaim a fast, and set Naboth ² on high among the people:

10 And set two men, sons of Belial, before him, to bear witness against him, saying, Thou didst ^o blaspheme God and the king. And *then* carry him out, and ^d stone him, that he may die.

^o Exod. xxii. 28; Lev. xxiv. 15; Acts vi. 11.—^d Lev. xxiv. 14.

sign in Ahab, and to beget a good opinion of him among his people, as if he were grown zealous for God's honour, and careful of his people's welfare, and therefore was desirous to inquire into all those sins which provoked God against them. *And set Naboth on high*—On a scaffold, or high place, where he might be seen and heard by the people; for persons accused and arraigned were wont so to appear before the judges, that all the people might see them, and hear what was alleged against them, and the proofs of it, and their defence.

Verse 10. *And set two men before him to bear witness*—It was the Roman custom also; and was most rational, that the accused should have the accusers face to face, Acts xxv. 16. *Thou didst blaspheme God and the king*—Hebrew, ברכה, *beracta, thou didst bless.* Blessing is here put for cursing and blaspheming, as in Job i. 5, and ii. 9, as is apparent, because his blessing God and the king would have been no crime. It was death by the law of Moses to blaspheme God, Lev. xxiv. 16; and by custom it was death to revile the king, which was forbidden, Exod. xxii. 28. Now, in order to make sure work, the witnesses, as they were instructed, accused Naboth of both those crimes, that the people might be the better satisfied to see him stoned. There is, however, this difference to be observed between these two crimes, that by blaspheming God, a person only forfeited his life, not his estate, which went to his heirs; whereas, when a man was executed for treason, his estate was forfeited to him against whom the offence was committed. For this reason it was that Naboth was charged with this crime also, that his estate might be confiscated, and Ahab might, by that means, get possession of the vineyard. *And then carry him out*—Not merely out of the assembly, but out of the city, verse 13. For while they were in the wilderness, and before the conquest of Canaan, they executed punishments without the camp, Lev. xxiv. 23; Josh. vii. 24; but afterward without the gates of their cities. By this they intended to signify, that they would take the evil out of the midst of them, and not suffer wickedness to remain among them.

A. M. 3106.
B. C. 899.

11 And the men of his city, *even* the elders and the nobles who were the inhabitants in his city, did as Jezebel had sent unto them, *and* as it *was* written in the letters which she had sent unto them.

12 * They proclaimed a fast, and set Naboth on high among the people.

13 And there came in two men, children of Belial, and sat before him: and the men of Belial witnessed against him, *even* against Naboth, in the presence of the people, saying, Naboth did blaspheme God and the king. † Then they carried him forth out of the city, and stoned him with stones, that he died.

14 Then they sent to Jezebel, saying, Naboth is stoned, and is dead.

15 ¶ And it came to pass, when Jezebel heard that Naboth was stoned, and was dead, that Jezebel said to Ahab, Arise, take possession

* Isa. lviii. 4.—† 2 Kings ix. 26.—‡ Psa. ix. 14.

Verse 11. *The men of his city did as Jezebel had sent to them*—Which is not at all strange, considering that they had for a long time cast off the fear of God; prostituted their consciences and religion to please their king; and sold themselves to all manner of wickedness; so that they could not now make a safe and honourable retreat. Besides, they durst not disobey Jezebel's command, by whom they knew the king was wholly governed, and who could easily have taken away their lives, in the same manner, if they had refused to kill Naboth: and it is not unlikely that she sent private messengers to tell them, by word of mouth, what she expected from them, and how she would reward them; as well as public letters to authorize what they did. Princes never want instruments to execute their pleasure; but it is strange that, in this case, there should be none among the judges and great men that abhorred such villany: it argues the great corruption of their manners by idolatry.

Verse 13. *They stoned him*—And, it seems, his sons too, either with him, or after him; for God afterward says, (2 Kings ix. 26,) *I have seen the blood of Naboth, and the blood of his sons*. Let us commend the keeping of our lives and comforts to God, for innocence itself will not always be our security. This account of Ahab's unjust and barbarous conduct toward Naboth, placed, as it is by the sacred historian, immediately after his gentle treatment of Benhadad, shows the great inconsistency and extreme wickedness of his conduct. He spares the proud, boasting, and blaspheming heathen, and even terms him his brother, and honours him by taking him into his chariot; nay, and enters into a covenant with him: but he basely and barbarously murders, or, at least, connives at his wife's murdering, the just and pious Israelite; and that under colour of justice, and

Vol. II.

(8)

of the vineyard of Naboth the Jezreelite, which he refused to give thee for money: for Naboth is not alive, but dead.

16 And it came to pass, when Ahab heard that Naboth was dead, that Ahab rose up to go down to the vineyard of Naboth the Jezreelite, to take possession of it.

17 ¶ † And the word of the LORD came to Elijah the Tishbite, saying,

18 Arise, go down to meet Ahab king of Israel, † which is in Samaria: behold, he is in the vineyard of Naboth, whither he is gone down to possess it.

19 And thou shalt speak unto him, saying, Thus saith the LORD, Hast thou killed, and also taken possession? And thou shalt speak unto him, saying, Thus saith the LORD, † In the place where dogs licked the blood of Naboth shall dogs lick thy blood, even thine.

‡ Chap. xiii. 32; 2 Chron. xxii. 9.—† Chap. xxii. 38.

with the formalities of a legal process! which was a great aggravation of the crime. For, to use that power for the preservation of the guilty and the murdering of the innocent, which ought to have been used for the punishment of the former and the protection of the latter, was such a violent perversion of justice and judgment, as cannot easily be paralleled. But there is a judgment to come when such iniquitous judgments as these will be called over again!

Verse 14. *They sent to Jezebel*—By whom they were not ignorant the affairs of the kingdom were in a great measure managed, and this design contrived: *saying, Naboth is stoned*—Which they knew would be an agreeable piece of news to her who had imbrued her hands in the blood of so many of the Lord's prophets. Here let us observe, that as obsequious as the elders of Jezreel were to Jezebel's orders, which she sent from Samaria for the murder of Naboth, so obsequious were the elders of Samaria afterward to Jehu's orders, which he sent from Jezreel, for the murder of Ahab's seventy sons, only that was not done by course of law. "Those tyrants," says Henry, "that, by their wicked orders, debauch the consciences of their inferior magistrates, may perhaps find at last the wheel return upon them; and that those, who will not stick to do one cruel thing for them, will be as ready, when occasion offers, to do another cruel thing against them."

Verses 18, 19. *Arise, go to meet Ahab, which is in Samaria*—That is, who reigns in Samaria. *Behold, he is in the vineyard of Naboth*—Or, rather, he will be there by the time thou comest thither. *And speak unto him, Hast thou killed and also taken possession?*—Thou hast murdered an innocent and righteous man; and, instead of repenting of thy crime, hast added another piece of injustice and vio-

113

2

A. M. 3105. B. C. 899. 20 And Ahab said to Elijah, ^k Hast thou found me, O mine enemy? And he answered, I have found *thee*: because ^l thou hast sold thyself to work evil in the sight of the LORD.

21 Behold, ^m I will bring evil upon thee, and will take away thy posterity, and will cut off from Ahab ⁿ him that pisseth against the wall, and ^o him that is shut up and left in Israel,

22 And will make ^p thy house like the house of ^q Jeroboam the son of Nebat, and like the house of ^r Baasha the son of Ahijah, for the provocation wherewith thou hast provoked *me* to anger, and made Israel to sin.

23 And ^s of Jezebel also spake the LORD, saying, The dogs shall eat Jezebel by the ^t wall of Jezreel.

^k Chapter xviii. 17.—^l 2 Kings xvii. 17; Romans vii. 14. ^m Chap. xiv. 10; 2 Kings ix. 8.—ⁿ 1 Sam. xxv. 22.—^o Chap. xiv. 10.—^p Chap. xv. 29.—^q Chap. xvi. 3, 11.

lence to it, and art going, confidently and cheerfully, to reap the fruit of thy wickedness. He ascribes Jezebel's act to Ahab, because Jezebel did it by his connivance, consent, and authority, and for the gratification of his inordinate desire. *In the place where dogs licked, &c.*—Instead of *the place*, some would render the original word here used, *the manner*, and so the sense of the passage will be, *As the dogs licked, or, in like manner as they licked Naboth's blood, even so shall they lick thy blood*: mark what I say, *even thine*. According to this reading, the prophet foretold that this judgment should come upon him, but did not assign the place; accordingly, the dogs licked Ahab's blood, not in Jezreel, but in Samaria, chap. xxii. 38. If, however, our translation be preferred, it may be observed, 1st, Ahab's blood was licked by the dogs, if not in the same individual, yet in the same general place, Jezreel being in the territory of Samaria. 2d, This was particularly accomplished in his son Joram, as is affirmed 2 Kings ix. 25, 26, whose blood is not improperly called Ahab's, children being said to be born of their parents' blood. The expression, indeed, *thy blood, even thine*, seems to show that the threatening was at first denounced against Ahab's person, and designed to be fulfilled in him: but afterward, upon his humiliation, the punishment was in part transferred from him to his son, as is expressed verse 29; yet upon Ahab's returning to sin, as is related in the next chapter, he brought back the curse upon himself, and so it is no wonder that it was in some sort fulfilled in him also.

Verse 20. *Ahab said to Elijah*—Upon his delivery of the message last mentioned, which it was needless to repeat. *Hast thou found me, O mine enemy?*—Dost thou pursue me from place to place? Wilt thou never let me rest? Art thou come after me

24 ^u Him that dieth of Ahab in the city the dogs shall eat: and him that dieth in the field shall the fowls of the air eat.

25 But ^v there was none like unto Ahab, which did sell himself to work wickedness in the sight of the LORD, ^w whom Jezebel his wife ^x stirred up.

26 And he did very abominably in following idols, according to all *things* ^y as did the Amorites, whom the LORD cast out before the children of Israel.

27 ¶ And it came to pass, when Ahab heard those words, that he rent his clothes, and ^z put sackcloth upon his flesh, and fasted, and lay in sackcloth, and went softly.

28 And the word of the LORD came to Elijah the Tishbite, saying,

^u 2 Kings ix. 36.—^v Or, ditch.—^w Chapter xiv. 11; xvi. 4. ^x Chapter xvi. 30, &c.—^y Chapter xvi. 31.—^z Or, incited. ^a Gen. xv. 16; 2 Kings xxi. 11.—^b Gen. xxxvii. 34.

hither with thy unwelcome messages? Thou art always disturbing, threatening, and opposing me. *I have found thee*—The hand of God hath found and overtaken thee. *Thou hast sold thyself*—Thou hast wholly resigned up thyself to be the bond-slave of the devil, as a man that sells himself to another is totally in his master's power. *To work evil, &c.*—Impudently and contemptuously. Those who give themselves up to sin, will certainly be found out, sooner or later, to their unspeakable amazement.

Verses 23, 24. *The dogs shall eat Jezebel by the wall*—Or, *by the ditch, or fort; or, in the portion, of Jezreel*, as the Hebrew word *בִּחְלֵי*, *becheel*, often signifies, and as it is explained 2 Kings ix. 36, a passage which attests the exact accomplishment of this prediction. *Him that dieth of Ahab in the city, &c.*—Punishments after death are here most insisted on; and these, though lighting on the body only, yet undoubtedly were designed as figures of the soul's misery in an after state.

Verses 25, 26. *There was none like unto Ahab*—Among all the kings of Israel who had been before him. *Whom Jezebel his wife stirred up*—This is added to show that temptations to sin are no excuse to the sinner. *He did very abominably in following idols, &c.*—There was no abomination which the people of Canaan committed, (here called the Amorites, according to their ancient name, Gen. xv. 16,) which Ahab did not imitate.

Verse 27. *He rent his clothes, and put on sackcloth, &c.*—These were expressions of great sorrow and heaviness, and usual in mourning: for, notwithstanding that Ahab was drawn, by the persuasions of his wife, to idolatry and other great crimes; yet he was sensible that many of Elijah's prophecies had been fulfilled, and therefore he was much disturbed at what he now heard from that prophet. *And went*

A. M. 3105. 29 Seest thou how Ahab hum-
B. C. 899. bleth himself before me? because
he humbleth himself before me, I will not

* 2 Kings

sofly—Slowly and silently, after the manner of mourners, or those who are under a great consternation.

Verse 29. *Seest thou how Ahab humbleth himself before me?*—His humiliation was real, though not lasting, and accordingly pleasing to God. This discovers the great goodness of God, and his readiness

bring the evil in his days; but ^a in A. M. 3105.
his son's days will I bring the evil B. C. 899
upon his house.

ix. 25.

to show mercy: it teaches us to take notice of that which is good, even in the worst of men: it gives a reason why wicked persons often prosper; God rewards the little good which is in them: and it encourages true penitents. If even Ahab goes to his house reprieved, doubtless they shall go to their houses justified.

CHAPTER XXII.

Ahab invites Jehoshaphat to join in recovering Ramoth-gilead, 1-4. His false prophets promise him success, 5, 6. He sends for Micaiah, 7-10. Further promises, 11, 12. Micaiah's uprightness and prediction, 13-23. He is abused and imprisoned, 24-28. An account of the battle, wherein Ahab is slain, 29-40. The good reign of Jehoshaphat, 41-50. The wicked reign of Ahaziah, 51-58.

A. M. 3105. AND they continued three years
B. C. 899. without war between Syria and
Israel.

B. C. 897. 2 And it came to pass in the third
year, that ^a Jehoshaphat the king of
Judah came down to the king of Israel.

3 And the king of Israel said unto his servants, Know ye that ^b Ramoth in Gilead is ours, and we be ¹ still, and take it not out of the hand of the king of Syria?

* 2 Chron. xviii. 2, &c.—^b Deut. iv. 43.—¹ Heb. silent

NOTES ON CHAPTER XXII.

Verse 1. *They continued three years*—That is, three years were spent; *without war between Syria and Israel*—Computed from the last war and league wherewith it was concluded. Both Ahab and Ben-hadad were so weakened and broken by the late wars, that they needed and desired peace to recruit themselves, and repair their former losses.

Verse 2. *The king of Judah came down to the king of Israel*—Having now, as he supposed, made a firm peace with him, by the alliance contracted between Jehoram his son, and Athaliah, Ahab's daughter, 2 Kings viii. 18; 2 Chron. xviii. 1. It is strange that so good a man would be so closely connected with a king revolted from the worship of God! But he appears to have been of too easy a temper, which betrayed him to many inconveniences.

Verse 3. *Know ye not that Ramoth in Gilead is ours?*—Belongeth to us by right, both by God's donation, and by our last agreement with Ben-hadad, chap. xx. 34. It is probable Ben-hadad had not made good his part of the covenant, to restore all the cities which the Syrians had taken from Israel, and that this was one which he refused to deliver up.

4 And he said unto Jehoshaphat, A. M. 3107.
Wilt thou go with me to battle to B. C. 897.
Ramoth-gilead? And Jehoshaphat said to the king of Israel, ^a I am as thou art, my people as thy people, my horses as thy horses.

5 ¶ And Jehoshaphat said unto the king of Israel, Inquire, I pray thee, at the word of the LORD to-day.

6 Then the king of Israel ^d gathered the prophets together, about four hundred men,

from taking it.—^c 2 Kings iii. 7.—^d Chap. xviii. 19.

Verse 4. *He said to Jehoshaphat, Wilt thou go up with me, &c.?*—It is not strange that Ahab should desire the assistance of so pious and prosperous a neighbour as Jehoshaphat, and should wish to draw him in to join him in this expedition for the recovery of Ramoth-gilead. Even bad men have often coveted the friendship of the good; but it is strange that Jehoshaphat should go so entirely into Ahab's interests as to say, *I am as thou art, and my people as thy people*—That is, I will heartily and effectually join with thee; and my forces shall be at thy service, as much as thine own.

Verse 5. *Jehoshaphat said, Inquire, I pray thee, &c.*—By some prophet; that we may know the mind of God in this matter, and what success we may expect. A good man, wherever he goes, will take God along with him, will *acknowledge him in all his ways*, and look to him for success: and, wherever he goes, he ought to take his religion along with him; and not be ashamed to own it, even among those who have no kindness for it.

Verse 6. *The king of Israel gathered the prophets together*—Doubtless his own false prophets, such as he had set up by rewards and promises, and

A. M. 3107. and said unto them, Shall I go against
B. C. 897. Ramoth-gilead to battle, or shall I for-
bear? And they said, Go up; for the LORD
shall deliver *it* into the hand of the king.

7 ¶ And *Jehoshaphat said, *Is there not* here a prophet of the LORD besides, that we might inquire of him?

8 And the king of Israel said unto Jehoshaphat, *There is yet one man*, Micaiah the son of Imlah, by whom we may inquire of the LORD: but I hate him: for he doth not prophesy good concerning me, but evil. And Jehoshaphat said, Let not the king say so.

9 Then the king of Israel called an ² officer, and said, Hasten *hither* Micaiah the son of Imlah.

10 And the king of Israel, and Jehoshaphat the king of Judah, sat each on his throne, having put on their robes, in a ³ void place in

* 2 Kings iii. 11.—² Or, eunuch.

who accordingly knew how to suit his humour, and flatter his vanity, and who yet gave in their answer in the name of Jehovah; either in compliance with Jehoshaphat, or by Ahab's direction, that Jehoshaphat might be deceived by them into a good opinion of the war.

Verses 7, 8. *Is there not here a prophet of the Lord besides?*—Besides these who may seem to be such in your opinion, and by their own profession? He did not entirely reject these as no prophets of the Lord, though he had some doubt of their being divinely inspired with the certain knowledge of future events; and therefore he desired to know if there was any other from whom he might receive further satisfaction. *There is yet one man, &c.*—Namely, in this place, for whom I can speedily send; for there were also other prophets elsewhere in the kingdom, but these were not at hand. *Micaiah the son of Imlah*—Not the person whom we call Micah, one of the twelve minor prophets, for he lived a hundred and fifty years after this time, but another of that name. *He doth not prophesy good concerning me, but evil*—He is always a messenger to me of evil tidings. This probably was true, but not a sufficient reason why he should hate him, because Micaiah only delivered the messages which God sent by him; and whatsoever evil he denounced, Ahab himself was the cause and procurer of it. *Jehoshaphat said, Let not the king say so*—Let us neither hate his person, nor despise his message; but first hear it, and then do as we see cause.

Verses 9, 10. *Hasten hither Micaiah*—It seems he had imprisoned him; for, verse 26, he bids the officer *carry him back*, namely, to the place where he was before. Probably this was he that had reproved him for letting Ben-hadad go, chap. xx. 42:

the entrance of the gate of Samaria; A. M. 3107
and all the prophets prophesied before B. C. 897.
them.

11 And Zedekiah the son of Chenaanah made him horns of iron: and he said, Thus saith the LORD, With these shalt thou push the Syrians until thou have consumed them.

12 And all the prophets prophesied so, saying, Go up to Ramoth-gilead, and prosper: for the LORD shall deliver *it* into the king's hand.

13 And the messenger that was gone to call Micaiah spake unto him, saying, Behold now, the words of the prophets *declare* good unto the king with one mouth: let thy word, I pray thee, be like the word of one of them, and speak *that which is good*.

14 And Micaiah said, *As the LORD liveth*, what the LORD saith unto me, that will I speak.

³ Heb. floor.—⁴ Num. xxii. 38.

and for that, had lain in prison three years. But this did not make him less confident, or less faithful in delivering his message. *Having put on their robes*—Their royal robes and ensigns of majesty. *In a void place*—In the place of judicature, which was in or nigh the gate of the city, and in the front of some void place, where either people stood to hear and see justice administered, or soldiers were placed for the defence of the city in time of war. *And all the prophets prophesied before them*—Continued to encourage them in their design; all agreeing, to a man, in the same fawning compliances with Ahab, and the same treacherous counsels, which pleased and tickled, for the present, but proved fatal in the end.

Verse 11. *Zedekiah made him horns of iron*—Fit emblems of the power and victory of these two kings. The devil is God's ape, and the false prophets imitated the true, who, when they declared God's mind by words, did also sometimes confirm it by sensible signs, Isa. xx. 2; Jer. xxvii. 2. *Thus saith the Lord*—Hebrew, *Jehovah*, in whose name he pretends to speak, to gain the more credit and countenance to his words.

Verses 13, 14. *Speak that which is good*—This was a most absurd request: for if Micaiah was a true prophet, he could say nothing but what was suggested to him by divine inspiration, and if he were not, why should he speak at all? Of what use could his prophesying be unless to deceive? *What the Lord saith unto me, that will I speak*—What answer the Lord shall put into my mind and mouth. He resolves as became one who had an eye to a greater king than either of these. He seems, as yet, to have had no revelation about the matter. But when the question was put to him, God taught him what to answer.

A. M. 3107. B. C. 897. 15 ¶ So he came to the king. And the king said unto him, Micaiah, shall we go against Ramoth-gilead to battle, or shall we forbear? And he answered him, Go, and prosper: for the LORD shall deliver it into the hand of the king.

16 And the king said unto him, How many times shall I adjure thee that thou tell me nothing but *that which is true* in the name of the LORD?

17 And he said, I saw all Israel scattered upon the hills, as sheep that have not a shepherd: and the LORD said, These have no master; let them return every man to his house in peace.

† Matthew ix. 36.—‡ Isaiah vi. 1; Daniel vii. 9.

Verses 15, 16. *He answered him, Go, and prosper*—He gave the very same answer, and in the same words, which the other prophets had done; but spake them in such a manner, that Ahab plainly discerned he derided and mocked him: his meaning being evidently this: Because thou dost not seek to know the truth, but only to please thyself, go to the battle, as all thy prophets advise thee, and try the truth of their prediction by thy own experience. *The king said, How many times shall I adjure thee?*—He had not adjured him before, but now he does; as, probably, observing something in the countenance and gesture of Micaiah, which persuaded him that what he said was rather ironical than the real sentiments of his mind.

Verse 17. *And he said, I saw*—Namely, in the Spirit, or in a vision; *all Israel scattered upon the hills*—Upon the mountains of Gilead, where they lay encamped by Ahab's order, or to which they fled from the enemy. *As sheep that have no shepherd*—As people that have lost their king. *The Lord said, These have no master; let them return, &c.*—Discharged from the war. This was fulfilled, verse 36.

Verse 18. *The king of Israel said, Did not I tell thee, &c.*—Now thou seest my words verified, and how this man shows his hatred by his malignant and treasonable prophecy, and how little regard is to be paid to his words. Which crafty insinuation seems to have had too great an influence on good Jehoshaphat, otherwise he would not have gone to the battle. *That he would prophesy no good concerning me, but evil*—Nay, but what evil was it to tell him what would be the event if he proceeded in his expedition, while it was in his own power whether he would proceed or not? The greatest kindness we can do to one that is walking in a dangerous way is to tell him of his danger.

Verse 19. *And he said, Hear thou therefore the word of the Lord*—Because thou givest credit to thy false prophets, and disbelievest my words, as if they

18 And the king of Israel said unto Jehoshaphat, Did I not tell thee that he would prophesy no good concerning me, but evil?

19 And he said, Hear thou therefore the word of the LORD: ^hI saw the LORD sitting on his throne, ⁱand all the host of heaven standing by him on his right hand and on his left.

20 And the LORD said, Who shall ⁴persuade Ahab, that he may go up and fall at Ramoth-gilead? And one said on this manner, and another said on that manner.

21 And there came forth a spirit, and stood before the LORD, and said, I will persuade him.

¹ Job i. 6; ii. 1; Psalm ciii. 20; Dan. vii. 10; Zech. i. 10; Matt. xviii. 10; Heb. i. 7, 14.—² Or, deceive.

were but the suggestions of my own fancy, and of hatred to thy person, I will give thee a distinct and true account of the whole matter in God's name and presence. *I saw the Lord sitting on his throne*—Not with his bodily eyes certainly, for with them he could not see God, but with the eyes of his mind, or rather in a vision. For we must by no means look upon what follows as the relation of an affair really transacted, but merely as an account of a symbolical vision, like that of Peter, (Acts x.) when he *saw heaven opened, and a certain vessel descending unto him*; whereby Micaiah was informed how it came to pass that so many prophets prophesied falsely, or contrary to what the event of things would prove; which was, that these prophets were influenced, not by the Spirit of God, which is the spirit of truth, but by an evil spirit, a spirit of error and falsehood, of flattery and dissimulation. For we should form most unjust ideas of the truth and holiness of God, if we supposed he would really send a spirit of *lying* into any of his prophets, which they could not distinguish from true inspiration; for this would be to confound false prophecy with true, and to make God the author of moral evil, which he can in no way or manner ever be. It would have been to overturn the whole authority of prophecy; for, if the true prophets had been once actuated by a false spirit, there would have been an end of placing any dependance on them for the future. The whole foundation of their authority would have been overthrown.

Verses 20-22. *The Lord said, Who shall persuade Ahab, &c.*—This is not to be understood grossly, as if God were at a loss to find out an expedient to accomplish his own designs; nor is it to be supposed that there was really any such consultation, before the Divine Majesty, as who should be employed to persuade Ahab to undo himself. But this is a symbolical representation, to signify that the Lord resolved to suffer Ahab to be deceived and perish at Ramoth-gilead rather than in any

A. M. 3107. 22 And the LORD said unto him,
B. C. 897.

Wherewith? And he said, I will go forth, and I will be a lying spirit in the mouth of all his prophets. And he said, ¹Thou shalt persuade *him*, and prevail also: go forth, and do so.

23 ¹Now therefore, behold, the LORD hath put a lying spirit in the mouth of all these thy prophets, and the LORD hath spoken evil concerning thee.

24 ¶ But Zedekiah the son of Chenaanah went near, and smote Micaiah on the cheek, and said, ^mWhich way went the Spirit of

¹ Judges ix. 23; Job xii. 16; Ezekiel xiv. 9; 2 Thess. ii. 11.
¹ Ezek. xiv. 9.

other place; in order that he, who sinfully suffered Ben-hadad to escape, might be punished by Ben-hadad. *And there came forth a spirit*—An evil one; *and stood before the Lord*—This is not to be taken literally. There are, however, evil spirits who are very forward to entice men to their own destruction, and have power so to do, if the Lord do not hinder them. *He said, I will be a lying spirit in the mouth of all his prophets*—I will suggest to them that which will deceive them. *And he said, Thou shalt persuade him, and prevail also*—I will give them up into thy hands, and leave them to their own ignorance and wickedness. *Go forth, and do so*—This is not a command, but only a permission. If we suppose this to be any thing more than a symbolical vision, we must say God permitted this evil spirit to follow his own inclinations, which he knew would have success, and prevail with Ahab to believe he should prosper in this war, wherein God intended he should perish. Ahab's prophets had observed how prosperous he had been in former wars with the king of Syria, and that made them forward to promise him the same success in this also. And Ahab was as forward to believe as they were to promise.

Verse 23. *Now therefore, behold, the Lord hath put, &c.*—It is frequent in the Holy Scriptures to call that the Lord's doing which he only permits to be done; because he has the supreme direction of all things, and governs the event. Wicked devices proceed from wicked men and wicked spirits: but, that they prevail and take effect, is owing to the hand of God directing and ordering when and where they shall light, and what shall be the issue of them. *Hath put a lying spirit into the mouth, &c.*—Hath permitted a lying spirit to influence these men. *Hath spoken evil concerning thee*—Hath decreed that thou shalt perish in this war. It may not be amiss to observe here, that "the evil being, named Satan, was little known to the Jewish people till their captivity; and then this history was taught openly as a security against the doctrine of the *two principles*. The Jewish lawgiver, where he so frequently enumerates and warns the Israelites of

the LORD from me to speak unto thee? A. M. 3107.
B. C. 897.

25 And Micaiah said, Behold, thou shalt see in that day when thou shalt go ⁵into ⁶an inner chamber to hide thyself.

26 And the king of Israel said, Take Micaiah, and carry him back unto Amon the governor of the city, and to Joash the king's son;

27 And say, Thus saith the king, Put this *fellow* in the prison, and feed him with bread of affliction, and with water of affliction, until I come in peace.

^m 2 Chron. xviii. 23.—⁵ Or, from chamber to chamber.—⁶ Heb. a chamber in a chamber.

the snares and temptations which would draw them to transgress the *law of God*, never mentions this capital enemy of heaven. Nay, when the form of that sacred history which Moses composed obliged him to treat of Satan's first grand machination against mankind, he entirely hides this wicked spirit under the animal which he made his instrument; but, as the fulness of time drew near, they were made more and more acquainted with this their capital enemy. When Ahab, for the crimes and follies of the people, was suffered to be infatuated, we have the account in the words of Micaiah above. Satan is not here recorded by name; and so we must conclude the people were yet to know little of his history: however, this undertaking sufficiently declared his nature." *Div. Leg.*, vol. iv. p. 279.

Verses 24, 25. *But Zedekiah went near*—The chief of the false prophets, who was much in the king's favour. *Which way went the Spirit of the Lord, &c.*—In what manner went it? Contemptuous language as well as behaviour: as much as to say, How dare you prophesy directly contrary to what I have done, who have the Spirit of the Lord! *Behold, thou shalt go into an inner chamber*—Into a secret place; *to hide thyself*—For fear of being seized and punished as a false prophet, and as the great author and abetter of this pernicious war, and of Ahab's destruction. Probably he went with Ahab to the battle, after which he was glad to shelter himself where he could.

Verses 26, 27. *Take Micaiah, and carry him back*—Namely, into prison, where, it seems, he was before shut up; for so the Lord's prophets were treated by Ahab. *Feed him with bread of affliction, &c.*—With very coarse and spare diet, whereby he may be only supported to endure his torment. *Until I come in peace*—Until I return in triumph, which I doubt not I shall, in spite of all his malicious suggestions to the contrary; and then I shall call him to an account for all his lies and impudence. Hard usage for one that would have prevented his ruin! We see here how confident Ahab was of success! He questions not but he should return in peace, forgetting what he himself had said to Ben-

A. M. 3107. B. C. 897. 28 And Micaiah said, If thou return at all in peace, ^a the LORD hath not spoken by me. And he said, Hearken, O people, every one of you.

29 ¶ So the king of Israel and Jehoshaphat the king of Judah went up to Ramoth-gilead.

30 And the king of Israel said unto Jehoshaphat, ^b I will disguise myself, and enter into the battle; but put thou on thy robes. And the king of Israel ^c disguised himself and went into the battle.

31 ¶ But the king of Syria commanded his thirty and two captains that had rule over his chariots, saying, Fight neither with small nor great, save only with the king of Israel.

^a Numbers xvi. 29; Deuteron. xviii. 20, 22.—^b Or, when he was to disguise himself, and enter into the battle.—^c 2 Chron. xxv. 22.

hadad, *Let not him that girdeth on his harness boast*: but there was little likelihood of his returning in peace when he left one of God's prophets behind him in prison.

Verse 28. *Micaiah said, If thou return, &c., the Lord hath not spoken by me*—Let me incur the reproach and punishment of a false prophet; and he—Namely, Micaiah; said, *Hearken, O people, every one of you*—Knowing in whom he had believed, and being fully assured of the truth of his prophecy, he calls all the people to be witnesses of it.

Verse 29. *So the king of Israel and Jehoshaphat went up, &c.*—Notwithstanding the declaration Micaiah had made of God's decree, Jehoshaphat was persuaded by Ahab and other prophets to go on this expedition; partly because Micaiah was a person unknown to him, and both he and the other prophets professing to speak from God, it seemed difficult to him to determine the controversy between them, which, he probably thought, only the event could decide: and partly because the war was just and lawful, being undertaken to recover Ahab's rights, which the Syrian king unjustly detained from him.

Verse 30. *The king of Israel said, I will disguise myself*—Put off my imperial habit, and appear as a private man, that the Syrians may not know me, and direct their main force against me. This he judged they would do, as knowing him to be the principal author of this war, and that it was likely to die with him. *But put thou on thy robes*—Thy royal robes, which thou mayest do without danger, because thou art not the object of the rage of the Syrians, nor of this false prophecy. Thus, while he pretended to do honour to Jehoshaphat, and compliment him with the sole command of the army in this action, he hoped to elude the danger, and so defeat the threatening, as if by disguising himself he could escape the divine cognizance, and the judgments that pursued him.

A. M. 3107. B. C. 897. 32 And it came to pass, when the captains of the chariots saw Jehoshaphat, that they said, Surely it is the king of Israel. And they turned aside to fight against him: and Jehoshaphat ^d cried out.

33 And it came to pass, when the captains of the chariots perceived that it was not the king of Israel, that they turned back from pursuing him.

34 ¶ And a *certain* man drew a bow ^e at a venture, and smote the king of Israel, between the ^f joints of the harness: wherefore he said unto the driver of his chariot, Turn thy hand, and carry me out of the host; for I am ^g wounded.

^d 2 Chron. xviii. 31; Prov. xiii. 20.—^e Heb. in his simplicity, 2 Sam. xv. 11.—^f Heb. joints and the breast-plate.—^g Heb. made sick.

Verse 31. *Fight only with the king of Israel*—This he ordered, truly supposing this to be the best way to put an end to the war; and by the providence of God, which disposeth the hearts of kings as he pleaseth, and which inclined them to this course, that they might, though ignorantly, accomplish his counsel. Perhaps Ben-hadad only designed to have taken him prisoner, that he might now give him as honourable a treatment as he had formerly received from him.

Verses 32, 33. *When the captains—saw Jehoshaphat, they said, Surely, &c.*—They saw no other but him in a royal habit, and hence concluded he must be the king of Israel, whom they believed to be present in the battle, and to be the commander of the Israelitish army. *They turned aside to fight against him*—They drew their forces from their several quarters toward him. *And Jehoshaphat cried out*—By his danger God now let him know that he was displeased with him, for joining in confederacy with Ahab. They that associate with evil doers are in danger of sharing in their plagues. *When the captains—perceived it was not the king of Israel*—This they would easily perceive, either by the words which he spake, when he cried out, or by the difference of his form and countenance from those of Ahab, whom, probably, many of them had seen, and knew well. *They turned back from pursuing him*—Thus, by his deliverance, God showed him that, though he was displeased with him, he had not deserted him. To him he cried out, not in cowardice, but devotion, and from him his relief came. For God, who has the hearts of all men in his hand, *moved them to depart from him*, 2 Chron. xviii. 31. In the mean time Ahab, who brought him into this danger, seems to have been in no care to succour him. God is a friend who will not fail us when other friends do.

Verse 34. *A certain man drew a bow at a venture*—Shot at a venture among the army, without

A. M. 3107. 35 And the battle ¹¹ increased that day: and the king was stayed up in his chariot against the Syrians, and died at even: and the blood ran out of the wound into the ¹² midst of the chariot.

36 And there went a proclamation throughout the host about the going down of the sun, saying, Every man to his city, and every man to his own country.

37 ¶ So the king died, and ¹³ was brought to Samaria; and they buried the king in Samaria.

38 And *one* washed the chariot in the pool of Samaria; and the dogs licked up his blood; and they washed his armour; according ¹⁴ unto the word of the LORD which he spake.

39 ¶ Now the rest of the acts of Ahab, and all that he did, and ¹⁵ the ivory house which he made, and all the cities that he built, *are they*

¹¹ Heb. ascended.—¹² Heb. bosom.—¹³ Heb. came.—¹⁴ Chap. xxi. 19.—¹⁵ Amos iii. 15.—* Began to reign alone, Ver. 51.

care, or choice, or any design of reaching Ahab, or any particular person; and smote the king of Israel between the joints of the harness—Where the several parts of his armour were joined together; the only place about him where this arrow of death could find entrance. No armour is proof against the darts of divine vengeance. Case the criminal in steel, and it is all one; *he that made him can make his sword approach him.* And that which to us seems altogether casual, comes by the determined counsel of God.

Verses 35, 36. *The battle increased that day*—There was a sharp fight after this; insomuch that the king, for fear his soldiers should give way, would return into the field, notwithstanding his wounds, and be supported in his chariot, to encourage his army. *And died at even*—Finding, too late, the truth of Micaiah's words; and Zedekiah's horns of iron pushing, not the Syrians, but himself into destruction. *And there went a proclamation throughout the host*—Probably by Jehoshaphat's order, with the consent of the chief captains of Israel. *Saying, Every man to his city, &c.*—It is to no purpose to attempt any thing more: the king is dead, and the battle ended; and therefore every man has liberty to return to his own city and habitation. The Syrians also, it is likely, were content to be gone, having slain their capital enemy. By this proclamation the prediction of Micaiah was exactly fulfilled, according to his vision, verse 17.

Verse 38. *The dogs licked up his blood*—Together with the water wherewith it was mixed. This circumstance is noticed because it was the accomplishment of one part of Elijah's prophecy concerning him. Now Naboth's blood was avenged!

Verse 39. *The ivory house which he made*—Not

not written in the book of the Chronicles of the kings of Israel? A. M. 3107. B. C. 897.

40 So Ahab slept with his fathers; and Ahaziah his son reigned in his stead.

41 ¶ * And * Jehoshaphat the son of Asa began to reign over Judah in the fourth year of Ahab king of Israel. B. C. 914.

42 Jehoshaphat *was* thirty and five years old when he began to reign; and he reigned twenty and five years in Jerusalem. And his mother's name *was* Azubah the daughter of Shilhi.

43 And ¹ he walked in all the ways of Asa his father; he turned not aside from it, doing *that which was* right in the eyes of the LORD: nevertheless ² the high places were not taken away; *for* the people offered and burnt incense yet in the high places.

44 And ³ Jehoshaphat made peace with the king of Israel.

* 2 Chron. xx. 31.—¹ 2 Chron. xvii. 3.—² Chap. xiv. 23; xv. 14; 2 Kings xii. 3.—³ 2 Chron. xix. 2; 2 Cor. vi. 14.

that it was wholly made of solid ivory, but the other materials used in building it were covered, or intermixed, or adorned with ivory. It appears by this short history that Ahab would have had some noble qualities in him, if he had not been incurably addicted to idolatry, and other sins and vices.

Verse 42. *Jehoshaphat was thirty and five years old, &c.*—The intention of the writer of this book was principally to give us the history of the kings of the house of David, with which he begins, and then interweaves with it some account of the kings of Israel: Thus having finished the history of Asa, king of Judah, he recounts the affairs of Israel under Ahab; who being dead, he returns to the history of the kings of Judah, who were the chief objects of his attention.

Verse 43. *He walked in all the ways of Asa*—He took the same care for the government of his kingdom, and especially for the reformation of religion, which Asa did. *Nevertheless, the high places were not taken away*—Not fully, or not in the beginning of his reign. For that he did take them away, at least in part, and probably all those which were erected for the worship of idols, appears from 2 Chron. xvii. 9. *The people offered—incense yet in the high places*—Old corruptions are not eradicated without difficulty, especially when they have formerly had the patronage of those that were good, as the high places had of Samuel, Solomon, and some others. Indeed this error was so deeply rooted, that the best of their kings, till Hezekiah's time, connived at it.

Verses 44–46. *Jehoshaphat made peace, &c.*—With Ahab first, and then with his son. This is noted as a blemish in his government, 2 Chron. xix. 2; and proved of most mischievous consequence to

A. M. 3107. 45 Now the rest of the acts of Je-
B. C. 897. hoshaphat, and his might that he showed, and how he warred, are they not written in the book of the Chronicles of the kings of Judah?

46 ^r And the remnant of the sodomites, which remained in the days of his father Asa, he took out of the land.

B. C. 913. 47 ^z There was then no king in Edom: a deputy was king.

48 ^a Jehoshaphat ¹⁴ made ^b ships of Tharshish to go to Ophir for gold: ^o but they went not: for the ships were broken at ^d Ezion-geber.

49 ^{*} Then said Ahaziah the son of Ahab unto Jehoshaphat, Let my servants go with thy servants in the ships. But Jehoshaphat would not.

^r Chap. xiv. 24; xv. 12.—^s Gen. xxv. 23; 2 Sam. viii. 14; 2 Kings iii. 9; viii. 20.—^t 2 Chron. xx. 35, &c.—¹⁴ Or, had ten ships.—^b Chap. x. 22.

his posterity. *The remnant of the sodomites—he took out of the land*—He made a more narrow search after them than his father had done, who is said to have removed them; but, it appears, some still remained, though without his knowledge.

Verse 47. *A deputy was king*—Sent and set over them by the kings of Judah, whose viceroy he was, as we now speak. This kind of government continued in Edom from the days of David, who began it, until the time of Jehoram, Jehoshaphat's son, who lost this authority.

Verse 48. *Jehoshaphat made ships of Tharshish*—These ships were not to go to Tharshish, but Ophir. But, it appears, they were called ships of Tharshish from their form, being made after the model of the ships which traded to that place. And all such ships, wheresoever they were built, were called ships of Tharshish. *The ships were broken at Ezion-geber*—Probably by a storm.

Verse 49. *Jehoshaphat would not*—He had contracted an amity with this king, and engaged himself so far, as to permit him to join with him in this navy, 2 Chron. xx. 35. But, being chastised, and better instructed by his ill success, and the breaking of the ships, and being reproved for his sin in

50 ¶ And ^o Jehoshaphat slept with A. M. 3108.
his fathers, and was buried with his B. C. 898.
fathers in the city of David his father: and Jehoram his son reigned in his stead.

51 ¶ ^r Ahaziah the son of Ahab began to reign over Israel in Samaria B. C. 898.
the seventeenth year of Jehoshaphat king of Judah, and reigned two years over Israel.

52 And he did evil in the sight of the LORD, and ^r walked in the way of his father, and in the way of his mother, and in the way of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who made Israel to sin:

53 For ^b he served Baal, and worshipped him, and provoked to anger the LORD God of Israel according to all that his father had done.

^t 2 Chron. xx. 37.—^d Chap. ix. 26.—^{*} Now he begins to reign alone.—^e 2 Chron. xxi. 1.—^f Verse 40.—^g Chap. xv. 26.—^h Judges ii. 11; Chap. x. 31.

joining with him, by a prophet, he would not be persuaded to repeat it, or to continue this league with him.

Verses 51, 52. *And reigned two years over Israel*—Not complete, as appears from 2 Kings iii. 1; but part of two years; for he died before his second year was ended. *He walked in the way of his father*—Followed the wicked example he had set, especially in worshipping Baal. *And in the way of his mother*—Jezebel, who was still living; acting according to her wicked counsel. *And in the way of Jeroboam*—Kept up his idolatry in worshipping the calves. Though he had heard of the ruin of Jeroboam's family, and had seen his own father drawn to his own destruction by the prophets of Baal, who had been often proved to be false prophets, yet he received no instruction, took no warning, but pursued their wicked courses, not in the least amended by all that had befallen them. *And provoked the Lord, according to all that his father had done*—Most unhappy parents, that thus help to damn their own children's souls! We see by all this, how little the example of parents or ancestors is to be valued, where it is opposed to the word and will of God!

THE
SECOND BOOK OF THE KINGS,

COMMONLY CALLED, THE

FOURTH BOOK OF THE KINGS.

ARGUMENT.

THIS book is a continuation of the history of the kingdoms of Judah and Israel, begun in the preceding book, to the entire destruction of the one by the Assyrians, and to the carrying of the other into captivity to Babylon by the Chaldeans. We find here that the kings of Israel, with their subjects in general, a small number only excepted, continued in their idolatry, notwithstanding all the admonitions and chastisements which God employed to reform them; so that he at length permitted Tiglath-pileser to take away the whole tribe of Naphtali, and transport them into Assyria: but this having no effect on the remaining tribes, to make them forsake their idolatries, and turn to the true God, he entirely rejected them, and gave them into the hand of Shalmaneser, who made them all captives, and carried them into Assyria, which put an entire end to the kingdom of Israel, after it had subsisted distinct from the house of Judah about two hundred and sixty-two years. As to the kingdom of Judah, though it kept up the worship of the true God, yet that worship was often mixed with gross superstitions and idolatrous rites, except when kings of extraordinary piety sat on the throne, and exerted themselves to have it exercised according to God's law: and such were their provocations, such their relapses, that God saw fit at last to deliver them into the hand of Nebuchadnezzar, who destroyed the country, took Jerusalem, burned the temple, and carried them away captives to Babylon; which happened about three hundred and eighty-eight years after the revolt of the ten tribes, Judah having subsisted as a separate kingdom that length of time. But the divine providence made this difference between their captivity and that of the ten tribes; that the captivity of the latter was to bring on their entire dissolution as a people, but that of Judah was only to reform them; and accordingly, after having remained in captivity a course of years, during most of which, through the workings of providence, they were permitted to exercise their own worship in the midst of an idolatrous nation, they were brought home entirely cured of their idolatry, into which they never fell afterward, but continued to keep up the worship of the true God till the Son of God came into the world. Through the whole of the history of both nations we may observe, that the administration of God's government was according to the behaviour of the people; and that all methods proper to reform them and bring them to happiness were made use of. The whole period of time included in the history contained in this book is about three hundred years.

CHAPTER I.

The rebellion of Moab, 1. The message of Ahaziah to Baal-zebub, 2. God's message to him, 3-8. The destruction of the men sent to seize Elijah, 9-12. He spares the third messenger, and goes to the king, 13-16. Ahaziah's death, 17, 18.

A. M. 3108. B. C. 896. **THEN** Moab ^a rebelled against Israel ^b after the death of Ahab.

2 ¶ And Ahaziah fell down through a lattice in his upper chamber that was in Samaria, and was sick: and he sent messengers, and said unto them, Go, inquire of Baal-zebub, the god of ^c Ekron, whether I shall recover of this disease.

3 But the angel of the LORD said to Elijah the Tishbite, Arise, go up to meet the messengers of the king of Samaria, and say unto them, *Is it not because there is not a God in Israel, that ye go to inquire of Baal-zebub the god of Ekron?*

4 Now therefore thus saith the LORD, ¹Thou shalt not come down from that bed on which thou art gone up, but shalt surely die. And Elijah departed.

A. M. 3108. B. C. 896. 5 ¶ And when the messengers turned back unto him, he said unto them, Why are ye now turned back?

6 And they said unto him, There came a man up to meet us, and said unto us, Go, turn again unto the king that sent you, and say unto him, Thus saith the LORD, *Is it not because there is not a God in Israel, that thou sendest to inquire of Baal-zebub the god of Ekron?* therefore thou shalt not come down from that bed on which thou art gone up, but shalt surely die.

7 And he said unto them, ²What manner of man was he which came up to meet you, and told you these words?

8 And they answered him, *He was* ^da hairy man, and girt with a girdle of leather about his loins. And he said, *It is* Elijah the Tishbite.

^a 2 Sam. viii. 2.—^b Ch. iii. 5.—^c 1 Sam. v. 10.—¹ Heb. the bed whither thou art gone up, thou shalt not come down from it.

² Heb. What was the manner of the man.—^d Zechariah xiii. 4; Matt. iii. 4.

NOTES ON CHAPTER I.

Verse 1. *Then Moab rebelled against Israel*—Paid them no more tribute, but utterly disclaimed their authority over them. Moab had been subdued by David, as Edom was; and, upon the division of his kingdom, the former was adjoined to that of Israel, and the latter to that of Judah, each to that kingdom upon which it bordered. But when the kingdoms of Israel and Judah were weak, and forsaken by God, they took that opportunity to revolt from them: Moab here, and Edom a little after.

Verse 2. *Ahaziah fell through a lattice in his upper chamber*—Houbigant renders it, *Through the lattice into his upper chamber*. He thinks that as Ahaziah was walking upon the top of the house, the wooden lattice gave way, and he fell through. *Go and inquire of Baal-zebub, the god of Ekron*—The word *Baal-zebub*, properly means *the god of flies*. This idol was so called, because it was supposed to deliver the Ekronites from flies, with which they were much pestered, being situated on a moist and hot soil, near the sea. Jupiter and Hercules were called by a like name among the Greeks; and it is evident, both from sacred and profane histories, that the idol-gods, or, rather, Satan by them, did sometimes give answers, through God's permission, though these answers were generally observed, even by the heathen themselves, to be dark and doubtful.

Verse 3. *Is it not because, &c.*—There are two negatives in the Hebrew text, which increase the sense, *Is it not because there is no God, none in Israel?* That is, Do you not plainly declare that

you think there is no God, none at all in Israel? That he knows nothing, and can do nothing? which makes you send to Ekron, as if there were a more knowing and mighty, if not the only God there. God had expressly said, that he had given prophets to the Israelites to inform them of future events, that they might not be tempted to go to inquire of strange gods, Deut. xviii. 14, 15.

Verse 5. *He said, Why are ye now turned back?*—Before you have been at Ekron: which he knew by their quick return. To avoid a repetition, we have no account given of the prophet's meeting them, other than what they give of it themselves at their return.

Verse 6. *There came a man up to meet us*—Elijah was a man of such a venerable presence, and spake to them with such authority, in the name of the Lord, that they were overawed thereby, and induced to obey him rather than the king.

Verse 8. *They answered, He was a hairy man*—This may either denote his wearing long hair on his head and beard, according to the manner of the ancient Greek philosophers, or it may signify that he was clad with a hairy garment, that is, with a skin that had not been dressed, such as the prophets were wont to wear, (Isa. xx. 2; Zech. xiii. 4; Matt. iii. 4,) and eminent persons in Greece in ancient times; and such clothing the poorer Arabians use at this day. The prophets, doubtless, used this habit to show their utter contempt of a luxurious, effeminate life. *And girt with a girdle of leather*—As John the Baptist also was, that by his very outward appearance he might represent Elijah, in whose power

A. M. 3108. 9 Then the king sent unto him a
B. C. 896. captain of fifty with his fifty. And he went up to him: and behold, he sat on the top of a hill. And he spake unto him, Thou man of God, the king hath said, Come down.

10 And Elijah answered and said to the captain of fifty, If I be a man of God, then * let fire come down from heaven, and consume thee and thy fifty. And there came down fire from heaven, and consumed him and his fifty.

11 Again also he sent unto him another cap-

* Luke ix. 54.

and spirit he came. *And he said, It is Elijah the Tishbite*—This conclusion he draws from their description of him, having seen him in this dress in his father's court.

Verse 9. *The king sent unto him a captain of fifty, with his fifty*—Undoubtedly with a design to apprehend him, and take away his life: for neither the untimely death of Ahab his father, nor his own late dangerous fall, and his sickness in consequence of it, nor the thoughts of death, had made any good impression on his mind, or possessed him with the fear of God: and he was so far from making any good improvement of the warning now given him, that he was evidently enraged against the prophet for giving it. But how inconsistent was the king's conduct on this occasion. "Did he think Elijah a prophet," says Henry, "a true prophet? Why then did he dare to persecute him? Did he think him a common person? What need then was there of such a force to seize him?" *Behold, he sat on the top of a hill*—Elijah was now so far from absconding, as formerly, in the close recesses of a cave, that he makes a bold appearance on an elevated place. His repeated experience of the divine protection has made him more bold. *Thou man of God, the king hath said, Come down*—He would not be at the pains to go up to the top of the hill, but thought it sufficient to require him in the king's name to come down and surrender himself.

Verse 10. *Elijah said, If I be a man of God, then let fire come down, &c.*—This prayer or denunciation of Elijah did not proceed from malice and hatred to his enemies, nor from a desire to secure himself, which he could easily have done some other way; nor to revenge himself, for it was not his own cause he acted in; but from a pure zeal to vindicate God's name and honour, which were so horribly abused; to prove his mission, and to reveal the wrath of God from heaven against the ungodliness and unrighteousness of men. *And therefore Christ does not condemn this act of Elijah, but only reproves his disciples for their perverse inclination to imitate it from another spirit and principle, and in a more unseasonable time. There came down fire, and consumed him and his fifty*—It is plain, from the address of this captain to Elijah, that he knew him

tain of fifty with his fifty. And he answered and said unto him, O man of God, thus hath the king said, Come down quickly.

12 And Elijah answered and said unto them, If I be a man of God, let fire come down from heaven, and consume thee and thy fifty. And the fire of God came down from heaven, and consumed him and his fifty.

13 ¶ And he sent again a captain of the third fifty with his fifty. And the third captain of fifty went up, and came and ³ fell on his

³ Heb. bowed.

to be a prophet, for he calls him a man of God; and therefore, he must have known that it was unlawful for him to be in any ways aiding, in obedience to an idolatrous king, in ill-treating a man of this sort: for it was no less than insulting and setting at naught the God of Israel, whose prophet he was. The captain, without doubt, knew that Ahaziah was angry with the prophet, and that he sent for him with no other end but to take an unjust revenge of him for having denounced his death. He, therefore, that would rather obey a tyrant than the laws of nature and revelation, which forbid us to be instruments of injustice, well deserved punishment. He who rather chose to secure his life than put it in any danger by refusing to be the executioner of unjust commands, justly deserved to lose it; and what we have said of the captain is likewise to be thought of the men. But, it may be objected, that both the captain and the soldiers were idolaters, and had forsaken the worship of the God of Israel: if this were the case, which perhaps it was, they deserved death for their idolatry, as well as for attempting to put the unjust orders of the king into execution. And we ought to conclude that Elijah's calling for fire from heaven upon them, was not merely from the impulse of his own mind; but that a divine prophetic influence prompted him to it, God knowing that they deserved, and that it was fit to inflict this punishment upon them. For the actions of the true prophets, in such cases as these, must not be looked upon as merely springing from themselves, but as the effect of divine influences and impulses, which they could not do otherwise than obey.

Verse 11. *Thus hath the king said, Come down quickly*—This man was more insolent than the former, charging the prophet to obey without delay, and not make him stay, nor think to dally with him: in which words, he doubtless spoke the sense of the whole company. Whereas the fate of those that went before them, might, and ought to have instructed them that the thing they were attempting to do was displeasing to God.

Verse 13. *And fell on his knees before Elijah, and besought him*—Expressing both reverence for his person, and a dread of God's judgments, being struck with the fate of the two other captains and

A. M. 3108.
B. C. 896. knees before Elijah, and besought him, and said unto him, O man of God, I pray thee, let my life, and the life of these fifty thy servants, be precious in thy sight.

14 Behold, there came fire down from heaven, and burnt up the two captains of the former fifties with their fifties: therefore let my life now be precious in thy sight.

15 And the angel of the LORD said unto Elijah, Go down with him: be not afraid of him. And he arose, and went down with him unto the king.

16 And he said unto him, Thus saith the LORD, Forasmuch as thou hast sent messen-

¹ Sam. xxvi. 21; Psa. lxxii. 14.

their fifties. There is nothing to be got by contending with God: if we would prevail with him, it must be by supplication. And those are wise that learn submission from the fatal consequences of obstinacy in others.

Verses 15, 16. *He arose and went down with him*—Not fearing the rage of the king, nor that of Jezebel, or all their forces: wherein he gives an eminent example of his faith in God's protection, and obedience to his commands. *And he said*—To his very face: nor durst the king lay hands on him, being daunted with his presence, and great courage and confidence; and affrighted with the late dreadful evidence of his power with God. *Thus saith the Lord, Forasmuch, &c.*—Probably more discourse passed between them than is here recorded. But this was the conclusion of all, that the sentence which God had pronounced against him was irreversible; and therefore, that he must not expect to live much longer, but make use of the time remaining to repent of his sins and make his peace with God.

Verse 17. *Jehoram reigned in his stead*—Namely, his brother, because he had no son. *In the second*

gers to inquire of Baal-zebub the god of Ekron, (is it not because *there is no God in Israel* to inquire of his word?) therefore thou shalt not come down off that bed on which thou art gone up, but shalt surely die.

17 ¶ So he died according to the word of the LORD which Elijah had spoken. And ⁴ Jehoram reigned in his stead in the second year of Jehoram the son of Jehoshaphat king of Judah; because he had no son.

18 Now the rest of the acts of Ahaziah which he did, are they not written in the book of the Chronicles of the kings of Israel?

⁴The second year that Jehoram was *prorex*, and the eighteenth of Jehoshaphat, Chap. iii. 1.

year of Jehoram the son of Jehoshaphat—To avoid confusion, the reader should take notice, that in the course of this history, there is mention made of two Jehorams; one the second son of Ahab, who succeeded Ahaziah, and was king of Israel; the other, the heir of Jehoshaphat, who reigned in Judah. By comparing chap. iii. 1, and chap. viii. 16, it will appear that there is a considerable difference in the reading of the dates, which made Houbigant suppose that some errors have crept into the text. To reconcile, however, the above-mentioned passages, some have supposed that Jehoshaphat, in his seventeenth year, when he went to Ahab, and with him to Ramoth-gilead, appointed his son Jehoram his viceroy, and (in case of his death) his successor. In the second year from that time, when Jehoram was thus made vice-king in his father's stead and absence, this Jehoram, Ahab's son, began to reign: and in the fifth year of the reign of this Jehoram, son of Ahab, which was about the twenty-fourth year of Jehoshaphat's reign, Jehoram, son of Jehoshaphat, was made king of Judah, together with his father. This supposition, if allowed, will, in a great degree, clear up the difficulty.

CHAPTER II.

Elijah and Elisha go to Beth-el, and from thence to Jordan together, 1-7. The waters are divided, when smote with Elijah's mantle, and they walk through, 8. Elijah takes his leave of Elisha, and is taken up into heaven by a whirlwind, 9-12. Elisha, working a miracle in dividing the waters of Jordan, is acknowledged by the prophets as Elijah's successor, 14, 15. They send to seek Elijah, 16-18. Elisha heals the unwholesome waters, 19-22. Bears destroy the children who mocked him, 23.

A. M. 3108.
B. C. 896. AND it came to pass, when the LORD would take up Elijah

into heaven by a whirlwind, that Elijah went with ^b Elisha from Gilgal.

^a Gen. v. 24.

^b 1 Kings xix. 21.

NOTES ON CHAPTER II.

Verse 1. *When the Lord would take up Elijah*—It is supposed, though not expressly revealed, that

Elijah flourished about twenty years, before he was translated, body and soul, to heaven, only undergoing such a change as was necessary to qualify him for

A. M. 3108. B. C. 896. 2 And Elijah said unto Elisha, ° Tarry here, I pray thee; for the LORD hath sent me to Beth-el. And Elisha said unto him, As the LORD liveth, and ° as thy soul liveth, I will not leave thee. So they went down to Beth-el.

3 And ° the sons of the prophets that were at Beth-el came forth to Elisha, and said unto him, Knowest thou that the LORD will take away thy master from thy head to-day? And he said, Yea, I know it; hold ye your peace.

4 And Elijah said unto him, Elisha, tarry here, I pray thee; for the LORD hath sent me

to Jericho. And he said, As the LORD A. M. 3108. liveth, and as thy soul liveth, I will B. C. 896. not leave thee. So they came to Jericho.

5 And the sons of the prophets that were at Jericho came to Elisha, and said unto him, Knowest thou that the LORD will take away thy master from thy head to-day? And he answered, Yea, I know it; hold ye your peace.

6 And Elijah said unto him, Tarry, I pray thee, here; for the LORD hath sent me to Jordan. And he said, As the LORD liveth, and as thy soul liveth, I will not leave thee. And they two went on.

° Ruth i. 15, 16.—° 1 Sam. i. 26; Verses 4, 6; Chap. iv. 30.

° 1 Kings xx. 35; Verses 5, 7, 15; Chap. iv. 1, 38; ix. 1.

being an inhabitant in that world of spirits. By translating him, God gave, in that dark and degenerate age, as, in a similar age he had given by the translation of Enoch, a very sensible proof of another life, together with a type of the ascension of Christ, and the opening the kingdom of heaven to all believers.

Verse 2. *Tarry here*—This he desires, either, 1st, That being left alone, he might better prepare himself for his great change. Or, 2d, Out of indulgence to Elisha, that he might not be overwhelmed with grief at so sad a sight. Or, 3d, That he might try his love, and what his desire to accompany him; it being highly convenient for God's honour, that there should be witnesses of so glorious a translation. *The Lord hath sent me to Beth-el*—Which was truth, though not the whole truth: for he was to go a far longer journey. But he was first to go to Beth-el, and also to Jericho, to the schools of the prophets there, that he might comfort and strengthen their hearts in God's work, and give them his dying counsels.

Verse 3. *The sons of the prophets that were at Beth-el*—In these very corrupt times God did not wholly forsake the Israelites, but continued the schools of the prophets among them, in which men were trained up and employed in the exercises of religion, and to which good people resorted to solemnize the feasts of the Lord with prayer and hearing portions of the law read, although they had not conveniences for sacrifices, as they had in Judah, where they had priests and Levites, and the temple service. Even in Beth-el, the chief place of idolatry and impiety, where one of the golden calves was worshipped, these schools were not wanting. This was a great testimony of God's love to that apostate people: among whom he thus left prophets to recover them from their idols. And, what is still more remarkable, prophets of greater eminence for their miracles were continued in Israel than in Judah, because they needed them more, both to turn the idolaters among them from their false worship, and their other vices, and to encourage the truly pious

that still remained, and preserve them from being led away by the error of the wicked. *Knowest thou not, &c.?*—God had revealed to some of them, that Elijah was to be taken away that day, of which they advised Elisha, that he might more diligently attend him. *From thy head*—Hebrew, *from above thy head*; which phrase may respect the manner of sitting in their schools, for the scholars used to sit below at their masters' feet, and the masters above, over their heads, when they taught them. Houbigant renders it, *The Lord will elevate thy master above thy head to-day*, alluding to his being carried up into heaven. *And he said, Yea, I know it, hold ye your peace*—Do not aggravate my grief, nor divert me by any unseasonable discourses. He speaks as one who was himself, and would have them to be calm and sedate, and with awful silence waiting the event. Some think he gave them this charge, lest the extraordinary matter being divulged, there should be a great concourse of people collected about Elijah; for as the Israelites had not renounced their idolatries, notwithstanding that so many and so great miracles had been done among them, they were altogether unworthy of being witnesses of the prophet's miraculous assumption, even as the Jews in our Lord's time were of being permitted to be present when he ascended.

Verse 4. *Tarry here, I pray thee*—Elijah seems to have said this only with a view to try Elisha, whether he would accompany him to the last, and be the witness of his translation. And Elisha certainly, by not leaving him, testified, both great fidelity to his master, and great faith in what God had revealed respecting the taking him up to heaven.

Verse 5. *The sons of the prophets that were at Jericho*—Here also was a school, where the same revelation had been made to the sons of the prophets, concerning Elijah's removal, which had been communicated to those at Beth-el. And their thoughts, like the thoughts of the others, were wholly occupied about the extraordinary matter, and big with expectation.

A. M. 3108. 7 And fifty men of the sons of the
B. C. 896. prophets went, and stood ¹ to view
afar off: and they two stood by Jordan.

8 And Elijah took his mantle, and wrapped
it together, and smote the waters, and ¹ they
were divided hither and thither, so that they
two went over on dry ground.

9 ¶ And it came to pass, when they were
gone over, that Elijah said unto Elisha, Ask
what I shall do for thee, before I be taken
away from thee. And Elisha said, I pray thee,
let a double portion of thy spirit be upon me.

10 And he said, ² Thou hast asked a hard
thing: *nevertheless*, if thou see me *when*

¹ Heb. *in sight, or, over against.*—¹ Exodus xiv. 21; Josh. iii.
16; Verse 14.

Verse 7. *Fifty men stood to view*—To observe
this great event, Elijah's translation to heaven, which
they expected every moment: and whereof they
desired to be spectators, not to satisfy their own cu-
riosity, but that they might be witnesses of it to
others. *Afar off*—As they were not permitted to
accompany him to the place where he was to be
taken up, as Elisha was, they looked after him as far
as they could see, probably from some eminence
that overlooked Jordan. *They two stood by Jordan*
—The rest, it is likely, being forbidden to go thither
with them.

Verse 8. *And smote the waters*—These waters of
old yielded to the ark, now to the prophet's mantle;
which to those that wanted the ark, was an equiva-
lent token of God's presence. When God will take
his children to himself, death is the Jordan which
they must pass through. And they find a way
through it, a safe and comfortable way. The death
of Christ has divided those waters, that the ransomed
of the Lord may pass over.

Verse 9. *Ask what I shall do for thee, before I
be taken away from thee*—Elijah, undoubtedly, had
an inward assurance that God would grant him his
last request that he should make; but we may ob-
serve here, that he expressly confines it to its being
made before he was taken away, and gives no man-
ner of hope to his disciple, that his asking any thing
of him after he was removed would be of any avail,
or that he could then render him any service. *I
pray, let a double portion of thy spirit be upon
me*—Double to what the rest of the sons of the
prophets receive at thy request. He alludes to the
double portion of the firstborn, Deut. xxi. 17. But
though Elisha desired no more, yet God gave him
more than he desired or expected; and he seems to
have had a greater portion of the gifts of God's
Spirit than even Elijah had.

Verse 10. *He said, Thou hast asked a hard thing*
—A rare and singular blessing, which I cannot pro-
mise thee; which God only can give, and which he
gives only when and to whom he pleases. *Never-*

I am taken from thee, it shall be A. M. 3108.
so unto thee; but if not, it shall not B. C. 896.
be so.

11 And it came to pass, as they still went on,
and talked, that behold, *there appeared* ³ a
chariot of fire, and horses of fire, and parted
them both asunder; and Elijah went up by a
whirlwind into heaven.

12 ¶ And Elisha saw *it*, and he cried, ¹ My
father, my father, the chariot of Israel, and the
horsemen thereof! And he saw him no more:
and he took hold of his own clothes, and rent
them in two pieces.

13 He took up also the mantle of Elijah that

² Heb. *Thou hast done hard in asking.*—³ Chap. vi. 17; Psalm
civ. 4.—¹ Chap. xiii. 14.

theless, if thou see me, &c.—Mark, this is a sign
whether thou shalt obtain what thou desirest or not.
This sign he proposed, not without the direction of
God's Spirit, that hereby he might engage him more
earnestly to wait, and more fervently to pray for
this mercy.

Verse 11. *As they still went on and talked*—Of
the happy state, probably, to which Elijah was going;
behold, a chariot of fire, and horses of fire—A bright
resplendent cloud, perhaps thrown into the form of
a chariot and horses, by the angels who came in it;
or rather, as some think, the angels themselves ap-
pearing in this form. The souls of all the faithful
are carried by an invisible guard of angels into the
bosom of Abraham. But Elijah being to carry his
body with him, this heavenly guard appeared visi-
bly: not in a human shape, though so they might
have borne him in their arms; but in the form of a
chariot and horses, that he might ride in state, might
ride in triumph, like a prince, like a conqueror. See
the readiness of the angels to do the will of God,
even in the meanest services, for the heirs of salva-
tion! Thus he who had burned with holy zeal for
God and his honour, was now conveyed in fire into
his immediate presence.

Verse 12. *Elisha saw it, and cried, My father,
&c.*—So he calls him for his fatherly affection to
him, and for his fatherly authority which he had
over him; in which respect the scholars of the pro-
phets are called their sons. He saw his own condi-
tion like that of a fatherless child, and laments it ac-
cordingly. *The chariot, &c.*—Who, by thy ex-
ample, and counsels, and prayers, and power with
God, didst more for the defence and preservation
of Israel than all their chariots and horses. The
expression alludes to the form of chariots and horses
which he had seen.

Verse 13. *He took up also the mantle of Elijah
which fell from him*—God appointing it to fall, for
Elisha's comfort, and the strengthening of his faith,
and as a pledge that, together with this mantle
Elijah's spirit should rest upon him, according to

A. M. 3108. fell from him, and went back, and
B. C. 896. stood by the ³ bank of Jordan ;

14 And he took the mantle of Elijah that fell from him, and smote the waters, and said, Where is the LORD God of Elijah? And when he also had smitten the waters, ^k they parted hither and thither : and Elisha went over.

15 And when the sons of the prophets which were ^l to view at Jericho saw him, they said, The spirit of Elijah doth rest on Elisha. And they came to meet him, and bowed themselves to the ground before him.

16 ¶ And they said unto him, Behold now, there be with thy servants fifty ⁴ strong men : let them go, we pray thee, and seek thy mas-

³ Heb. lip.—^k Ver. 8.—^l Ver. 7.—⁴ Heb. sons of strength.
^m 1 Kings xviii. 12 ; Ezek. viii. 3 ; Acts viii. 39.

his promise. And Elijah himself was now gone to a place where he needed not the mantle, either to adorn him, or shelter him from the weather, or to wrap his face in.

Verse 14. *And said, Where is the Lord God of Elijah?*—Who at Elijah's request divided these waters, and is able to do it again. But according to this translation, two words are left out, namely, אֱלֹהֵי ה', *aph-hu*. The clause literally rendered is, *Where is the Lord God of Elijah, even He?* which a learned foreigner interprets thus; that Elisha having asked this question, *Where is? &c.*, answers himself in the two last words, *aph-hu, yea, he is yet in being.* Abarbanel expounds them, *Though Elijah be not here, yet his God is.* The servant is wanting, but not the Lord. The blessed God is still present, and will supply his place. *And when he also had smitten the waters, they parted hither and thither*—As when Elijah smote them with the same mantle, which they both used, as Moses did his rod, not imagining that there was any inherent virtue in it, or at all trusting therein; but using it as a mere sign of the presence and power of God, in which alone they confided to work this wonder. Thus Elijah's last miracle was Elisha's first, and the disciple began where his master left off, taking up and carrying on the same blessed work of witnessing for God against idols and idolaters.

Verse 15. *And bowed themselves to the ground before him*—In token of their reverence for and subjection to him, as Elijah's successor, the father of the prophets, and their master and teacher. They had been trained up in the schools; Elisha was taken from the plough: yet, when they perceive that God is with him, and that this is the man whom he delights to honour, they readily submit to him as their head and father, as the people did to Joshua when Moses was dead. "Those that appear to have God's Spirit and presence with them, ought to have our esteem and best affections, notwith-

ter : ^m lest peradventure the Spirit of A. M. 3108.
the LORD hath taken him up, and B. C. 896.
cast him upon ⁶ some mountain, or into some valley. And he said, Ye shall not send.

17 And when they urged him till he was ashamed, he said, Send. They sent therefore fifty men; and they sought three days, but found him not.

18 And when they came again to him, (for he tarried at Jericho,) he said unto them, Did I not say unto you, Go not?

19 ¶ And the men of the city said unto Elisha, Behold, I pray thee, the situation of this city is pleasant, as my lord seeth : but the water is naught, and the ground ⁶ barren.

⁶ Hebrew, one of the mountains.—⁶ Hebrew, causing to miscarry.

standing the meanness of their extraction and education."

Verses 16, 17. *Behold, there be with thy servants fifty strong men*—Able to take such a journey. *Let them go, we pray thee, and seek thy master*—They had received but an imperfect revelation of God's design, with respect to Elijah, when they asked Elisha if he knew that the Lord would take away his master: for they seem to have supposed that the Spirit of God might have taken him up and cast him, either dead or alive, upon some mountain, or in some valley at a distance; see on 1 Kings xviii. 12; and if alive, they wished to find him, that they might minister to his necessities; and if dead, that they might give his body an honourable burial. *And he said, Ye shall not send*—For he knew it would be to no purpose. *They urged him till he was ashamed*—That is, to deny them any longer, lest they should think his denial proceeded from a neglect of his master, or a contempt of them. Or, as the Hebrew, שׂוֹן בָּשׂוּ, *gnad bosh*, may with equal propriety be rendered, *till they were ashamed*, namely, because he so often and so obstinately denied their request. *And they sought him three days*—Searching every place where they thought it likely he might be cast. *But found him not*—Thus still further evidence was given of his translation, and they, having lost their labour, and tired themselves with their fruitless search, would be more ready to submit to Elisha's authority, and acquiesce in his judgment another time.

Verse 19. *The water is naught, and the ground barren*—Either it was so originally, at least as to that part of the city where the college of the prophets was; or it became so from the curse of God inflicted upon it, either when Joshua first took the city, or when Hiel rebuilt it: however, upon the prophet's care it became exceeding fruitful, and therefore is commended for its fertility by later writers. Thus the ministers of the gospel should

A. M. 2108. B. C. 896. 20 And he said, Bring me a new cruise, and put salt therein. And they brought it to him.

21 And he went forth unto the spring of the waters, and cast the salt in there, and said, Thus saith the LORD, I have healed these waters; there shall not be from thence any more death or barren land.

Exodus xv. 25; Chapter

endeavour to make every place they come to some way or other the better for them; labouring to sweeten bitter spirits, and to make barren souls fruitful by a due application of God's word.

Verse 20. *And he said, Bring me a new cruise*—He says *new*, partly that there might be no ground of suspicion that the cure was wrought by the natural virtue of any thing which was or had been in the cruise before, but only by God's power; and partly that there might be no legal pollution in it which might offend God, and hinder his miraculous operation by it. *And put salt therein*—A most improper remedy; for salt naturally makes waters brackish, and lands barren. Hereby therefore he intended to show, that the change desired was to be effected, not by any natural means, but solely by the divine power, which could work either without means or against them. Thus Christ anointed the eyes of a blind man with clay, when he was going to restore him to sight, that he might show that no natural cause was concerned in his cure; clay, according to its natural effect, being more likely to injure his eyes than benefit them.

Verses 21, 22. *He went forth unto the spring, and cast the salt in there*—If the salt had been a proper remedy for the brackishness of these waters and the barrenness of the land, what could so small a quantity have done, and especially as cast into the fountain? For a fountain quickly works out any thing cast into it. But Elisha only used it as a sign of God's power, which was to produce the effect, and to render the operation of that power more conspicuous. Therefore he says, *Thus saith the Lord God, I have healed these waters*—He himself; the new cruise and the salt were no more than mere instruments, or channels through which God was pleased to convey this healing virtue. *There shall not be from thence any more death*—Hurt or danger, to man or beast, by drinking the water. *So the waters were healed unto this day*—There is a fountain at this very day, toward the west of Jericho, which rises about three quarters of a league above the town in the way to Jerusalem, and, yielding a great deal of water, very excellent in its kind, runs along and fructifies the plain: and many authors speak of the extraordinary fruitfulness and pleasantness of the country hereabouts, after this time. See Josephus, *Bell. Jud.*, book 5, cap. 4.

Verse 23. *He went up from thence unto Beth-el*—To the other school of the prophets, to inform them of Elijah's translation, and his succession to

A. M. 3108. B. C. 896. 22 So the waters were healed unto this day, according to the saying of Elisha which he spake.

23 ¶ And he went up from thence unto Beth-el: and as he was going up by the way, there came forth little children out of the city, and mocked him, and said unto him, Go up, thou bald-head; go up, thou bald-head.

iv. 41; vi. 6; John ix. 6.

the same office; and to direct, and comfort, and establish them, as he saw occasion. *And—there came forth little children*—The word נְעָרִים, *negnarim*, here rendered *children*, often evidently signifies, and is translated, *young men*, or *lads*, as Gen. xxii. 5, 12, and xli. 12, and xliii. 8; 2 Chron. xiii. 7, and that even when the epithet קטנים, *ketannim*, *little*, is, as here, added to it: see 1 Kings iii. 7, and Isa. xi. 6. Here Dr. Waterland renders the words, *young lads*. It is more than probable they were, at least, old enough to discern between good and evil. They came out of the city, that is, *Beth-el*, the mother city of idolatry, where the prophets had planted themselves that they might bear witness against it, and dissuade the people from it, though, it seems, they had but small success there. These youths, it appears, did not meet with Elisha by accident, but went out with a design to insult him, knowing him to be a prophet of the true God, an advocate for his worship, and an enemy to the idolatry of the place; and having imbibed the prejudices of their parents against the true religion. They likewise went in a body, which showed that their motive was malice, and their going out not casual: from whence some think it probable that they went out, not only to deride the prophet, but likewise to prevent his entering into the city. They feared he would be as zealous against their idolatries as Elijah had been, and by this insult they intended to free themselves from his remonstrances. *And mocked him*—With great petulance and vehemency making game of him, as the word תִּקְלוּהוּ, *jithkalleu*, here used, signifies; deriding, probably, both his person and ministry, and that from a profane contempt of the true religion, and a passionate love of that idolatry which they knew he opposed. *And said unto him, Go up, thou bald-head, go up, thou bald-head*—Thus mocking his natural infirmity, which was a great sin, and repeating the words to show their earnestness, and that their scoff was no sudden slip of the tongue, but proceeded from a rooted impiety, and hatred of God and his prophets: and very probably it was their usual practice to jeer the prophets as they went along the streets, that they might expose them to contempt, and, if possible, drive them out of the town. Many commentators think, that by this expression, גָּלֵה, *gnalee*, *Go up, ascend*, which they repeat, they intended to make a jest of the ascension of Elijah, which no doubt they had heard of: as if they had said, "Go up, ascend into heaven, whither thou pretendest

A. M. 3108. 24 And he turned back, and
B. C. 896. looked on them, and cursed them
in the name of the LORD. And there came
forth two she-bears out of the wood, and

Elijah is gone. Why didst thou not accompany thy friend and master to heaven?" thus shutting their eyes against an astonishing miracle, which seems to have been wrought, partly at least, to reclaim them, as well as to the two other signal miracles recently wrought, and, no doubt, spread abroad through the country, namely, of both Elijah and Elisha's dividing the waters of Jordan, and passing through on dry ground. Perhaps, however, as the story mentions *his going up*, or ascending, the rising ground, *unto Beth-el*, and *going up by the way*, they might only mean, *Go along*, by the expression, *Go up*, or ascend, and might not allude to Elijah's ascension. Be this as it may, their abuse of a prophet whom God had so evidently accredited, and marked out as the successor of Elijah, whose miracles had been so many and so wonderful, was a most heinous sin, and a manifest insult offered to the true God, and was accordingly punished as such by him, all whose ways are just and holy, and who never exceeds the degree of sin in the measure of punishment, but always in the present world punishes the guilty infinitely less than they deserve.

Verse 24. *He looked on them, and cursed them in the name of the Lord*—"The word *curse* has in Scripture three different acceptations. It signifies, to *inflict* a curse; and in this sense God is said to have *curled* the ground after the fall. It signifies, to *wish* a curse; and in this sense Shimei is said to have *curled* David. Lastly, it signifies, to *pronounce*, or *foretel*, a curse or punishment; and in this sense Elisha is said to have *curled* the children. The historian expressly asserts, that he *curled* them *in the name of the Lord*. To speak *in the name of the Lord*, is to deliver what he commands; to *prophecy in the name of the Lord*, is to foretel what he reveals; and to *curse in the name of the Lord*, is to declare a curse which he is determined to inflict, and has authorized the prophet to denounce: so that in cursing these supposed *children*, Elisha acted as a minister of the Supreme Ruler of the world, and by his order foretold the punishment that was going to be inflicted upon these idolaters. His pronouncing this curse was not the cause of their catastrophe; but the certainty of their catastrophe, and the command of God, were the causes of his pronouncing this curse." See Dr. Dodd, and Morris, vol. i. ser. 7.

There came forth two she-bears out of the wood—Which probably had been robbed of their whelps, and thereby made more fierce and outrageous; and *tare forty and two children of them*—Here the word translated *children* is different from that used above, namely, ילדים, *jeladim*; but this also signifies, not only young children, but also those that are grown up to maturity, as Gen. xxxii. 22, and xxxiv.

tare forty and two children of them. A. M. 3108.
B. C. 896. 25 And he went from thence to
mount Carmel, and from thence he returned
to Samaria.

4, and xxxvii. 30; Ruth i. 5. In this extraordinary punishment, inflicted evidently by the hand of God on these young persons, we have demonstration, that the curse which the prophet denounced against them was not owing, as some have supposed, to the peevishness of his temper, or the ebullition of his anger: for though his rage had been ever so furious, it would not have supplied him with power to command these savage creatures to leave the woods at an instant, and to come to a place they did not frequent, as a public road must be supposed to be, in order to destroy these insolent youths. As his curse would have had no effect had it proceeded from a peevish temper, or from the violence of his passion, we have no just cause, from his cursing them, to suspect that he was actuated by any such principle. No: it was *in the name of the Lord*; not from any revengeful passion, but by the motion of God's Spirit, and by God's command and commission, that he denounced the curse: and God caused the punishment to follow, partly to show his displeasure at such profaneness and malignity of mind against God, and his cause, and worship, as these youths were guilty of, for the terror and caution of all other ungodly persons, who abounded in that place; partly to vindicate the honour and maintain the authority of his prophets; and particularly of Elisha, now especially in the beginning of his sacred ministry; and partly to convince the people of the heinousness of idolatry, and to recover them to that purity of worship which the law was peculiarly intended to preserve.

Upon the whole, it appears that the persons who mocked Elijah were not infants, but arrived to years of maturity; that they did not insult him by chance, but by design; that they went out in great crowds on purpose; that they mocked him because he was the prophet of the true God, from whom they had apostatized; and that he did not wish their untimely end from a principle of revenge, but only predicted it as a prophet. The punishment will appear just, if we consider the time, place, persons, and all the circumstances of the case. These young persons might be guilty of many other heinous crimes, known to God and his prophet, besides that here recorded: they were at least guilty of idolatry, which by God's law deserved death: add to this, that the idolatrous parents were punished in their children; and that if any of these children were more innocent, God might have mercy on their souls, and then the death they suffered was not a misery, but a real blessing to them, taking them away from that education which was very likely to expose them, not only to temporal, but eternal destruction.

CHAPTER III.

The character of Jehoram, 1-3. He and his allies invade Moab, 4-8. Their distress and relief, 9-20. Their success, 21-25. The king of Moab sacrifices his son, and they retire, 26, 27.

A. M. 3108.
B. C. 896. **N**OW ^aJehoram the son of Ahab began to reign over Israel in Samaria the eighteenth year of Jehoshaphat king of Judah, and reigned twelve years.

2 And he wrought evil in the sight of the LORD; but not like his father, and like his mother: for he put away the ¹image of Baal ^bthat his father had made.

3 Nevertheless, he cleaved unto ^cthe sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, which made Israel to sin; he departed not therefrom.

4 ¶ And Mesha king of Moab was a sheep-master, and rendered unto the king of Israel a hundred thousand ^dlambs, and a hundred thousand rams, with the wool.

5 But it came to pass, when ^eAhab was

dead, that the king of Moab rebelled against the king of Israel. A. M. 3108.
B. C. 896.

6 ¶ And King Jehoram went out of Samaria the same time, and numbered all Israel.

7 And he went and sent to Jehoshaphat the king of Judah, saying, The king of Moab hath rebelled against me: wilt thou go with me against Moab to battle? And he said, I will go up: *'I am as thou art, my people as thy people, and my horses as thy horses.*

8 And he said, Which way shall we go up? And he answered, The way through the wilderness of Edom.

9 So the king of Israel went, and the king of Judah, and the king of Edom: and they fetched a compass of seven days' journey:

^a Ch. i. 17.—^b Heb. statue.—^c 1 Kings xvi. 31, 32.—^d 1 Kings

xii. 28, 31, 32.—^e Isa. xvi. 1.—^f Ch. i. 1.—^g 1 Kings xxii. 4.

NOTES ON CHAPTER III.

Verses 2, 3. *He put away the image of Baal*—It was much that his mother, who had brought this worship with her from the Zidonians, should suffer him to remove this image; but she was probably a little daunted at the many disasters which had befallen their family, and was contented with worshipping Baal in private. *Nevertheless, he cleaved unto the sins of Jeroboam*—Though he put away the image and worship of Baal, resolving to worship Jehovah only, yet he continued to worship him under the representation of a calf, which was idolatry, though in a less degree. This kind of worship all the kings of Israel kept up, as a wall of partition between their subjects and those of Judah. They intended hereby to keep their people from going up to worship at Jerusalem, lest, if they did so, they might, by degrees, be brought to submit again to the kings of Judah. Thus Jehoram: he had a little religion, such as it was, but not enough to overrule his policy.

Verse 4. *Mesha, king of Moab, was a sheep-master*—The riches, not only of private men, but also of kings, in ancient times, consisted much in sheep and cattle. And this king of Moab had abundance of them, which imboldened and enabled him to rebel against his sovereign. *And rendered to the king of Israel a hundred thousand lambs, &c.*—This was a prodigious number, and as they were rendered unshorn, they were the more valuable. But we are to consider that these countries abounded with sheep; inasmuch that Solomon offered one hundred and twenty thousand at the dedication of the temple, 2 Chron. vii. 5; and the Reubenites drove from the Hagarenes one hundred and fifty thousand, 1 Chron. v. 7.

Verses 6-8. *King Jehoram went out and numbered all Israel*—As soon as he was settled in his kingdom, his first business was to raise an army to reduce Moab to obedience, and to engage Jehoshaphat to join him as an ally. *And he said, I will go up*—Jehoshaphat unites with him in this war; because the war was just in itself, and convenient for Jehoshaphat, both in the general, that revolters should be chastised, lest the example should pass into his dominions, and the Edomites be encouraged to revolt from him, as they did from his son; and in particular, that the Moabites should be humbled, who had invaded his land before this time, (2 Chron. xx. 1,) and might do so again if they were not brought low; for which a fair opportunity now offered. *He answered, The way through the wilderness of Edom*—Which Jehoshaphat chose, because he wished to have the assistance of the Edomites, who were his tributaries. And it is probable Moab was but weakly fortified on that side.

Verse 9. *The king of Edom*—Properly speaking, there was no king at this time in Edom, as we read in the last chapter of the foregoing book, verse 47; but the viceroy, under Jehoshaphat, is here called king, that word being often used for any prince or chief ruler. *Of seven days' journey*—Because they made a great army, which could move but slowly; and they fetched a greater compass than usual, that they might come upon the backs of the Moabites, where they did not expect them, or for some other advantage which they hoped to reap by it. *There was no water for the host*—A frequent want in those parts; and now, it seems, increased by the extraordinary heat and dryness of the season. *And for the cattle that followed them*—Which drew their carriages.

A. M. 3109. and there was no water for the host,
B. C. 895. and for the cattle² that followed them.

10 And the king of Israel said, Alas, that the LORD hath called these three kings together, to deliver them into the hand of Moab!

11 But ^s Jehoshaphat said, *Is there* not here a prophet of the LORD, that we may inquire of the LORD by him? And one of the king of Israel's servants answered and said, Here is Elisha the son of Shaphat which poured water on the hands of Elijah.

12 And Jehoshaphat said, The word of the LORD is with him. So the king of Israel and Jehoshaphat and the king of Edom ^b went down to him.

13 And Elisha said unto the king of Israel, ⁱ What have I to do with thee? ^k get thee to

^s Heb. at their feet, Exod. xi. 8.—^s 1 Kings xxii. 7.—^s Chap. ii. 25.—ⁱ Ezek. xiv. 3.—^k Judges x. 14; Ruth i. 15.

Verses 10, 11. *The king of Israel said, Alas, &c.*—He did not cry to God for help, but only bewailed the straits into which they were fallen; which his own guilt made him imagine God had brought to pass for their destruction. *Jehoshaphat said, Is there not here a prophet?*—This he should have asked before, when they first undertook the expedition, as he did in a like case, (1 Kings xxii. 5.) and for that neglect he now suffers; but better late than never: his affliction brings him to the remembrance of his former sin, and present duty. *Here is Elisha, who poured water, &c.*—Who was his servant: this being one office of a servant: and this office was the more necessary among the Israelites, because of the frequent washings which their law required. Probably it was by a special direction from God that Elisha followed them, unasked, unobserved. Thus does God prevent us with the blessings of his goodness, and provide for those who provide not for themselves.

Verse 12. *The word of the Lord is with him*—He is a true prophet, and the Lord declares his will by him. Undoubtedly he had been informed how Elijah had chosen him his successor; how he had attended him till he was taken up into heaven, and what wonders he had already done. *So the king of Israel and Jehoshaphat, &c., went down to him*—To his tent, which was either in the camp or not far from it: They did not send for him, but went to him, that by paying him this respect, and thus honouring him, they might engage him to give them his utmost assistance.

Verse 13. *Elisha said to the king of Israel, What have I, &c.?*—I desire not to have any discourse with thee. *Get thee to the prophet of thy father, &c.*—Seek counsel and help of thy false prophets and of their gods, the calves, which thou, after thy father's example, worshippst; and the Baals, which thy mother yet worships by thy permission.

¹ the prophets of thy father, and to ^{A. M. 3109.}
the prophets of thy mother. And the ^{B. C. 895.}
king of Israel said unto him, Nay: for the LORD hath called these three kings together, to deliver them into the hand of Moab.

14 And Elisha said, ^m As the LORD of hosts liveth, before whom I stand, surely, were it not that I regard the presence of Jehoshaphat the king of Judah, I would not look toward thee, nor see thee.

15 But now bring me a ⁿ minstrel. And it came to pass, when the minstrel played, that ^o the hand of the LORD came upon him.

16 And he said, Thus saith the LORD, ^p Make this valley full of ditches.

17 For thus saith the LORD, Ye shall not see wind, neither shall ye see rain; yet that

¹ 1 Kings xviii. 19.—^m 1 Kings xvii. 1; Ch. v. 16.—ⁿ 1 Sam. x. 5.—^o Ezek. i. 3; iii. 14, 22; viii. 1.—^p Chap. iv. 3.

Let these idols, which thou servest in thy prosperity, now help thee in thy distress. *The king of Israel said, Nay, &c.*—That is, I will not consult them; but do thou now give us counsel how we may be extricated from this great distress. *For the Lord hath called, &c.*—He was sensible it was by the particular providence of the God of Israel that he was brought into this strait, and perhaps secretly he believed in Jehovah alone as the true God, though, for political reasons, he worshipped the calves.

Verse 14. *Were it not that I regard the presence of Jehoshaphat*—Whom I reverence and love for his piety, and therefore for his sake will inquire of the Lord for you all. It is good being with those who possess God's favour and the love of his people. Wicked men often fare the better for the friendship and society of good men.

Verse 15. *Now bring me a minstrel*—One that can sing and play well upon an instrument of music. This he requires, that his mind, which had been disturbed at the sight of idolatrous Jehoram, might be composed, and that he might be excited to more fervent prayer, and thereby be prepared to receive the prophetic inspiration. See on 1 Sam. x. 5, and xvi. 16. Those that desire communion with God, must keep their spirits quiet and serene. All hurry of spirits, and all turbulent passions, make us unfit for divine visitations. *The hand of the Lord came upon him*—The spirit of prophecy, so called, to note that it was no natural or acquired virtue inherent in him, but a singular gift of God, given to whom and when he pleased.

Verses 16, 17. *Make this valley full of ditches*—Which may receive the water and retain it, for the use of men and beasts. They that expect God's blessings, must prepare room for them. *Ye shall not see wind*—Any of those winds which commonly bring rain. *Seeing* is here put for *perceiving* or

A. M. 3109. valley shall be filled with water, that
B. C. 895. ye may drink, both ye, and your
cattle, and your beasts.

18 And this is *but* a light thing in the sight of the LORD: he will deliver the Moabites also into your hand.

19 And ye shall smite every fenced city, and every choice city, and shall fell every good tree, and stop all wells of water, and ⁷mar every good piece of land with stones.

20 ¶ And it came to pass in the morning, when ⁹the meat-offering was offered, that behold, there came water by the way of Edom, and the country was filled with water.

21 And when all the Moabites heard that the kings were come up to fight against them,

⁷ Heb. *grieve*.—⁹ Exodus xxix. 39, 40.—⁴ Heb. *were cried together*.

feeling; the words belonging to one sense, being frequently applied to another. *Neither shall ye see rain*—Elijah, by prayer, obtained water from the sea and clouds: but Elisha fetches it nobody knows whence. God is not confined to second causes. Ordinarily it is by a *plentiful rain* that he *refreshes his inheritance*: but here it is done without any such means. *Yet that valley shall be filled with water*—That valley only, it seems, and no other place, however near or adjoining, which greatly increased the miracle.

Verse 18. *This is but a light thing in the sight of the Lord*—But a small favour in comparison of what he intends to do for you, for Jehoshaphat's sake. He will give you more than you expect or ask. For they were so weakened and discouraged by the great drought, that they had no hopes of proceeding in the offensive war, and thought it sufficient, if it were possible, to defend themselves from the Moabites, verse 13.

Verse 19. *Ye shall smite, &c.*—If this command seem severe, it must be considered that the Moabites were a very wicked people, perfidious, cruel, and implacable enemies to God's people upon all occasions, and now in a state of rebellion. But these words are rather to be considered as a prediction of their success, than as a command, enjoining them to do all these things; and thus understood, they imply that their victory should be so full and complete, that they should have it in their power to lay the country of the Moabites waste with fire and sword.

Verse 20. *In the morning when the meat-offering was offered*—That is, at the time of the morning sacrifice, which doubtless was attended with the solemn prayers of God's people. At this time Elisha joined his prayers with the prayers of God's people, especially those at Jerusalem. And this time God chose to answer their prayers, and to work this miracle, that thereby he might determine the contro-

they ⁴gathered all that were able to A. M. 3109
⁵put on armour and upward, and B. C. 895.
stood in the border.

22 And they rose up early in the morning and the sun shone upon the water, and the Moabites saw the water on the other side as red as blood:

23 And they said, *This is blood*: the kings are surely ⁶slain, and they have smitten one another: now therefore, Moab, to the spoil.

24 And when they came to the camp of Israel, the Israelites rose up and smote the Moabites, so that they fled before them: but ⁷they went forward smiting the Moabites, even in *their country*.

⁴ Heb. *gird himself with a girdle*.—⁶ Heb. *destroyed*.—⁷ Or, *they smote in it even smiting*.

versy between the Israelites and the Jews, about the place and manner of worship, and give a public testimony from heaven for the Jews, and against the Israelites. God, that commands all the waters both above and beneath the firmament, sent them abundance of water on a sudden.

Verse 21. *All that were able to put on armour and upward*—That is, from youths, that were but just able to put on armour, to those that were far advanced in life; so that none were exempted. *And stood in the border*—Of their country, intending to defend themselves, but not to march out of their country to give the enemy battle.

Verses 22, 23. *The sun shone upon the water, &c.*—They stood in such a situation, when they looked at the water, that those rays of the sun which gave a red colour, were reflected from the water to their eyes; or the light of the morning sun shining upon the water, through the vapours that arose from the earth, gave it a reddish appearance; so that they imagined it to be blood, which they were the more inclined to suppose, because they knew very well there was no water there before. *And they said—The kings are surely slain, &c.*—As they concluded what they saw could be nothing but blood, so they could not conceive it could be any other blood than that of the army of the three kings, who they thought had fallen out among themselves, vexed at the straits into which they had brought one another. *Now therefore, Moab, to the spoil*—Easily believing what they wished, they imagined they had nothing to do but to go and take the spoil, having no need to fight at all. Therefore they sent no scouts, but marched thither with their whole army, and that in great disorder: wherein, also, there was a divine hand, strengthening them in their mistakes, and hardening them to their destruction.

Verse 24. *They went forward, smiting the Moabites, even in their country*—They pursued them to their own country, and entered it with and after

A. M. 3109. 25 And they beat down the cities, B. C. 895. and on every good piece of land cast every man his stone, and filled it; and they stopped all the wells of water, and felled all the good trees: ⁸ only in ² Kir-haraseth left they the stones thereof; howbeit the slingers went about it, and smote it.

26 ¶ And when the king of Moab saw that the battle was too sore for him, he took with

⁸ Heb. until he left the stones thereof in Kir-haraseth.

them; the passes, which the Moabites had before defended, being now open to them.

Verse 25. *They stopped all the wells of water, &c.*—These, in all probability, are hyperbolic expressions, signifying the great devastation which they made. *Only in Kir-haraseth left they the stones thereof*—This was the royal city of Moab, into which the remnant of the Moabites were gathered, and where also their king was with them. The wall and buildings of this city only were left; their whole country being destroyed. *Howbeit the slingers went about it, and smote it*—By slinging stones, they drove those from the wall who defended it, and by raising batteries against it, made great breaches therein, by which they might enter the city and take it.

Verse 26. *He took with him seven hundred men—to break through, &c.*—He made a sally with seven hundred stout men, upon the quarter of the king of Edom, which he thought the weakest side, hoping to break through and escape. But they were repulsed, and compelled to retreat.

Verse 27. *He took his eldest son—and offered him for a burnt-offering upon the wall*—“Not only the Holy Scriptures, but several heathen writers assure us, that in case of great extremity, it was customary among various people to sacrifice to their gods

him seven hundred men that drew A. M. 3109. swords, to break through even unto B. C. 895. the king of Edom: but they could not.

27 Then ^a he took his eldest son, that should have reigned in his stead, and offered him for a burnt-offering upon the wall. And there was great indignation against Israel: ^c and they departed from him, and returned to *their own land*.

^a Isa. xvi. 7, 11.—^b Amos ii. 1.—^c Chap. viii. 20.

whatever was most dear to them.” Eusebius and Lactantius mention several nations who used these sacrifices. And “Cesar, in his war with the Gauls, tells us that when they were afflicted with grievous diseases, or in time of war or great danger, they either offered men for sacrifices, or vowed that they would offer them; because they imagined that their gods could never be appeased unless one man’s life was given for another’s. In conformity with this horrid custom, and to appease, no doubt, as he thought, the anger of his idol *Chemosh*, the king of Moab made this costly sacrifice of his eldest son; a deed which, it is plain from the text, was held in the greatest abhorrence by the Israelites.”—Dodd. For so, it seems, we are to understand the following words, which should be rendered, not, *There was great indignation against Israel*, but, *There was great trouble, or repentance upon (in or among) Israel*: that is, they were extremely grieved on account of this barbarous sacrifice, and wished they had not pushed on a war so far, which ended in such a horrid action. *They departed from him, and returned to their own land*—They resolved to prosecute the war no further; but raised the siege, by common consent, and returned home, for fear any such thing should be done again.

CHAPTER IV.

Elisha multiplies the widow's oil, 1-7. Obtains a son for the Shunammite, 8-17. Raises him again to life, 18-37. Heals the deadly pottage, 38-41. Feeds a hundred men with twenty small loaves, 42-44.

A. M. 3109. NOW there cried a certain woman B. C. 895. of the wives of ^a the sons of the

^a 1 Kings

prophets unto Elisha, saying, Thy A. M. 3109. servant my husband is dead; and B. C. 895.

xx. 35.

NOTES ON CHAPTER IV.

Verse 1. *A certain woman of the wives of the sons of the prophets*—Who, though they were wholly devoted to sacred employments, yet were not excluded from marriage, any more than the priests and Levites. *My husband—did fear the Lord*—His poverty, therefore, was not procured by his idleness

or prodigality, but by his piety, because he would not comply with the king’s way of worship, and therefore lost all worldly advantages. *The creditor is come to take—my two sons to be bond-men*—Either to use them as his slaves, or sell them to others, according to the law among the Hebrews in such a case.

A. M. 3109. thou knowest that thy servant did
B. C. 895. fear the LORD: and the creditor is
come ^b to take unto him my two sons to be
bond-men.

2 And Elisha said unto her, What shall I do
for thee? tell me, what hast thou in the house?
And she said, Thy handmaid hath not any
thing in the house save a pot of oil.

3 Then he said, Go, borrow thee vessels
abroad of all thy neighbours, *even* empty
vessels; ^a borrow ¹ not a few.

4 And when thou art come in, thou shalt
shut the door upon thee and upon thy sons,
and shalt pour out into all those vessels, and
thou shalt set aside that which is full.

5 So she went from him, and shut the door
upon her and upon her sons, who brought *the*
vessels to her; and she poured out.

6 And it came to pass, when the vessels were

^b Leviticus xxv. 39; Matthew xviii. 25.—^c Chapter iii. 16.
¹ Or, scant not.

Verse 2. *Elisha said, What shall I do for thee?*
—How shall I relieve thee, who am myself poor?
Tell me, what hast thou in the house?—Toward the
discharge of thy husband's debts.

Verses 4-6. *Thou shalt shut the door upon thee,*
and upon thy sons—That none might come in to dis-
turb or interrupt her in what she was doing; that
she and her sons might not seem proudly to boast
of this miraculous supply; and that they might have
opportunity for prayer and praise on this extraordi-
nary occasion. *And shalt pour out*—Of the pot of
oil which she had. *Thou shalt set aside that which*
is full—Which one of her sons was employed to do,
and the other to bring her the empty vessels. *Bring*
me yet a vessel—Doubtless they were all amazed to
find their pot, like a fountain of living water, always
flowing, and yet always full. They saw not the
bubbling spring that supplied it, but believed it to be
in Him, in whom all our springs are. *The oil stayed*
—When there was no vessel to receive it; to teach
us that we should not waste any of God's good
creatures, and that God would not work miracles
unnecessarily. This most signal miracle is like that
which Elijah had wrought for the widow of Zare-
phath. How it was effected it is to no purpose to
inquire, seeing it was the product of almighty power,
of the operation of which, in its full extent, we
cannot possibly have any conception. One import-
ant lesson we may learn from it; which is, that we
are never straitened in God, in his power, or bounty,
or the riches of his grace: all our straitness is in
ourselves: it is our faith that fails, not his promise:
he gives above what we ask: were there more ves-
sels, there is enough in God to fill them; enough for
all, enough for each.

Verse 7. *He said, Go, sell the oil*—She must not

full, that she said unto her son, Bring
me yet a vessel. And he said unto
her, *There is not a vessel more.* And the oil
stayed.

7 Then she came and told the man of God.
And he said, Go, sell the oil, and pay thy
²debt, and live thou and thy children of the
rest.

8 ¶ And ³it fell on a day, that Elisha passed
to ^dShunem, where *was* a great woman; and
she ⁴constrained him to eat bread. And *so* it
was, *that* as oft as he passed by, he turned in
thither to eat bread.

9 And she said unto her husband, Behold
now, I perceive that this *is* a holy man of God,
which passeth by us continually.

10 Let us make a little chamber, I pray
thee, on the wall; and let us set for him
there a bed, and a table, and a stool, and a

^a Or, creditor.—² Heb. *there was a day.*—^d Joshua xix. 18.
⁴ Heb. *laid hold on him.*

keep it for her own use. Those whom Providence
has made poor, must be content with poor accom-
modations for themselves: they must know how to
want, and must not think, when they get a little of
that which is better than ordinary, to feed their own
luxury therewith. *And pay thy debt*—Though her
creditors were too rigorous with her, yet they must
not therefore be deprived of what was due to them:
her first care, now she has wherewithal to do it, must
be to discharge that, even before she makes any pro-
vision for her children. We must first do justice,
and then expect God's blessing upon our endeavours
to provide for ourselves and families.

Verse 8. *Elisha passed to Shunem, where was a*
great woman—Great for estate, or birth and quality.
And she constrained him to eat bread—Pressed him
with great importunity, and at length, with great
difficulty, prevailed with him to dine with her. *As*
oft as he passed by he turned in thither—She made
him so welcome, that he did not scruple, when he
had occasion to go that way, to step in there and re-
fresh himself; which she probably invited him
to do.

Verses 9, 10. *She said to her husband*—In fre-
quent conversation with him. *This is a holy man*
of God—A prophet, and that of eminent holiness;
by our kindness to whom we shall procure a bless-
ing to ourselves. *Which passeth by us continually*
—For Shunem was in his way as he went from Car-
mel, which was not far from hence, to Beth-el and
Jericho, and other places of the sons of the prophets.
Let us make him a little chamber—on the wall—A
private room, remote from the house, where he may
retire, and be free from the noise of family business;
and enjoy that privacy, which, I perceive, he de-
sires for his prayers and meditations. *Let us set for*

A. M. 3109. candlestick : and it shall be, when
B. C. 895. he cometh to us, that he shall turn
in thither.

11 And it fell on a day, that he came thither,
and he turned into the chamber, and lay there.

12 And he said to Gehazi his servant, Call
this Shunammite. And when he had called
her, she stood before him.

13 And he said unto him, Say now unto her,
Behold, thou hast been careful for us with all
this care ; what *is* to be done for thee ? would-
est thou be spoken for to the king, or to the
captain of the host ? And she answered, I
dwell among my own people.

14 And he said, What then *is* to be done for
her ? And Gehazi answered, Verily she hath
no child, and her husband is old.

* Gen. xviii. 10, 14.

him there a bed and a table, &c.—He will not be
troublesome or chargeable to us : he cares not for
rich furniture or costly entertainment, but is content
with bare necessaries. *And—he shall turn in thi-
ther*—Take up his lodging there, if he think good.

Verse 12. *She stood before him*—The narrative
seems to be a little perplexed, but may be thus con-
ceived : it is in this verse recorded in the general,
that the prophet sent Gehazi to call her, and that
she came to him upon that call ; then follows a par-
ticular description of the whole business, with all the
circumstances ; first, of the message with which Ge-
hazi was sent when he went to call her, and of her
answer to that message, (verse 13,) and Gehazi's con-
jecture thereupon, (verse 14,) and then of her coming
to the prophet at his call ; which is there repeated
to make way for the following passages.

Verse 13. *What is to be done for thee?*—Wherein
can I serve thee ? For he was very desirous, as all
good men are, to be grateful. "They that receive
courtesies," says Henry, "should study to return
them. It ill becomes men of God to be ungrateful,
or to sponge upon those that are generous." *Wouldst
thou be spoken for to the king, &c.?*—For an office
for thy husband, civil or military ? Hast thou any
complaint to make ; any petition to present ; any
suit at law depending, that needs the countenance
of the higher powers ? It seems by this the pro-
phet had got such an interest at court, since the late
victory over the Moabites, that though he minded not
to prefer himself by it, yet he was capable of prefer-
ring his friends. *I dwell among my own people*—I
live among my kindred and friends ; nor have I any
cause to seek relief from the higher powers.

Verses 14, 15. *And he said, What then is to be
done for her?*—The above answer being returned to
his master by Gehazi, Elisha asked him what he
thought might be most welcome to her, as if he had
said, Hast thou observed any thing which she wants
or desires ? For the prophet kept himself much in

15 And he said, Call her. And A. M. 3109.
when he had called her, she stood in B. C. 895.
the door.

16 And he said, * About this ⁵ season, accord-
ing to the time of life, thou shalt embrace a
son. And she said, Nay, my lord, *thou man
of God,* † do not lie unto thy handmaid.

17 And the woman conceived, and bare a
son at that season that Elisha had said unto
her, according to the time of life.

18 ¶ And when the child was grown, it fell
on a day, that he went out to his father to the
reapers.

19 And he said unto his father, My head,
my head ! And he said to a lad, Carry him to
his mother.

20 And when he had taken him, and brought

* Heb. set time.—† Verse 28.

his chamber, while Gehazi went more freely about
the house, as occasion led him. *Gehazi answered,
Verily, she hath no child*—She has a great estate,
but no son to leave it to, and is past hopes of having
any, her husband being old : if Elisha can obtain
this favour from God for her, it will be the removal
of that which, at present, was her only grievance.
Those kindnesses are the most welcome which are
most suited to our necessities. *When he had called
her, she stood at the door*—Either out of modesty, or
reverence, or an unwillingness to disturb him.

Verses 16, 17. *About this season, according to the
time of life*—About this time next year ; see on
Gen. xviii. 10 ; *thou shalt embrace a son*—She had
received this prophet *in the name of a prophet*, and
now she receives, not a courtier's reward, in being
spoken for to the king, but a prophet's reward, a
signal mercy, given in answer to a prophet's prayer.
Nay, my lord, do not lie unto thy handmaid—Do
not delude me with vain hopes. She could not be-
lieve it for joy. *The woman—bare a son at that
season that Elisha had said unto her*—The event,
within the time limited, confirmed the truth of the
promise. God built up her house in reward of her
kindness in building the prophet a chamber.

Verses 18–21. *He went out to his father to the
reapers*—Either for pleasure, or with some message
to him. *He said to his father, My head, my head !*
—A more than common heat of the sun probably
made him thus ill. The hand of Providence, how-
ever, was in the affliction, that occasion might be
given to the prophet of working a wonderful miracle
for the manifestation of the glory of God, like that
which Elijah had wrought for the widow of Zare-
phath. *He sat on her knees till noon, and then died*
—His pain was so violent, that it killed him in a few
hours. *She laid him on the bed of the man of God*
—The pious mother possesses her soul in patience
under this surprising affliction : not one peevish, in-
decent word drops from her lips. She has a strong

A. M. 3109. him to his mother, he sat on her
B. C. 895. knees till noon, and *then* died.

21 And she went up, and laid him on the bed of the man of God, and shut *the door* upon him, and went out.

22 And she called unto her husband, and said, Send me, I pray thee, one of the young men, and one of the asses, that I may run to the man of God, and come again.

23 And he said, Wherefore wilt thou go to him to-day? *it is neither new moon, nor sabbath.* And she said, *It shall be* ^awell.

24 Then she saddled an ass, and said to her servant, Drive, and go forward; ⁷slack not *thy* riding for me, except I bid thee.

25 So she went and came unto the man of God ⁶to mount Carmel. And it came to pass,

^a Heb. *peace.*—⁷ Heb. *restrain not for me to ride.*—⁶ Chap. ii. 25.—^b Heb. *by his feet*, Matt. xxviii. 9.

belief that the child will be raised to life again; like a genuine daughter of Abraham, she accounts *that God is able to raise him from the dead*, for she had at first received him by as great a miracle. She had doubtless heard of the raising the widow's son at Zarephath, and that *the spirit of Elijah rested on Elisha*; and such confidence had she of God's goodness, that she was very ready to believe, He that so soon took away what he had given, would restore what he had now taken away. *By this faith women received their dead raised to life*, Heb. xi. 35. In this faith she makes no preparation for the burial of the dead child, but for his resurrection. *O woman, great is thy faith!* he that inspired it would not frustrate it.

Verses 22, 23. *She called to her husband, and said*—By a messenger whom she sent into the field to him. She seems not to have acquainted him with the child's death; probably she feared, if he knew on what errand she wished to go to the prophet, lest he should not have faith enough to let her go. *Wherefore wilt thou go to-day? it is neither new moon nor sabbath*—It appears by this that the prophets acted as public instructors of the people; and that their houses were a kind of schools, or synagogues, unto which they resorted, upon the days here mentioned, to be taught their duty out of the law of God, and to have their doubts resolved. *And she said, It shall be well*—My going will not be troublesome to him, nor prejudicial to thee or me.

Verses 25, 26. *She came to the man of God to mount Carmel*—This was a place which both he and Elijah much frequented; and it is probable there was a school of the prophets here, it being a mountain full of trees, and therefore a place proper for retirement and sacred exercises. *Run now, I pray thee, to meet her*—This he ordered, to show his respect for her. *She answered, It is well*—So it was in some respects, because it was the will of a

when the man of God saw her afar off, that he said to Gehazi his ser-
A. M. 3109. vant, Behold, *yonder is that Shunammite*:
B. C. 895.

26 Run now, I pray thee, to meet her, and say unto her, *Is it well with thee? Is it well with thy husband? Is it well with the child?* And she answered, *It is well.*

27 And when she came to the man of God to the hill, she caught ^ahim by the feet: but Gehazi came near to thrust her away. And the man of God said, Let her alone; for her soul is ^bvexed within her: and the LORD hath hid *it* from me, and hath not told me.

28 Then she said, Did I desire a son of my lord? ^bdid I not say, Do not deceive me?

29 Then he said to Gehazi, ¹Gird up thy loins, and take my staff in thy hand, and go

^a Heb. *bitter*, 1 Sam. i. 10.—^b Verse 16.—¹ 1 Kings xviii. 46; Chap. ix. 1.

wise and good God, and therefore best for her. When God calls away our dearest relations by death, it becomes us to say, it is well both with us and them. It is well, for all is well that God doth: all is well with them that are gone, if they are gone to heaven: and all is well with us that stay behind, if by the affliction we are furthered in our way thither.

Verse 27. *She caught him by the feet*—After the manner of a most humble and earnest supplicant; intimating, what she did not dare to express in words, that she desired him to go along with her. *Gehazi came near to thrust her away*—Either thinking she was rude, and made too free with the prophet; or knowing his master did not expect such abasement, especially from her who had been so kind and friendly to them, and that he would not be pleased to see her lie at his feet, Gehazi would have raised her up. *The man of God said, Let her alone*—Disturb her not, for this gesture is a sign of some extraordinary grief. *And the Lord hath hid it from me*—God hath not shown me the cause of it. By this he signifies, that what he knew or did, was not by any virtue inherent in himself, but from God, who revealed to him only what he pleased, and when he pleased.

Verse 28. *She said, Did I desire a son of my lord?*—This child was not given to me upon my immoderate desire, for which I might have justly been thus chastised; but was freely promised to me by thee in God's name, and from his special grace and favour. *Did not I say, Do not deceive me?*—With vain hopes of a comfort that I should never have. And I had been much happier if I had never had it, than to lose it so quickly.

Verse 29. *He said to Gehazi, Gird up thy loins*—Tie up thy long garments about thy loins for expedition. *If thou meet any man, &c.*—Make no delays or stops by the way, either through words or

A. M. 3109. thy way: if thou meet any man, B. C. 895. ^k salute him not; and if any salute thee, answer him not again: and ^l lay my staff upon the face of the child.

30 And the mother of the child said, ^m As the LORD liveth, and as thy soul liveth, I will not leave thee. And he arose, and followed her.

31 And Gehazi passed on before them, and laid the staff upon the face of the child; but *there was* neither voice, nor ¹⁰ hearing. Wherefore he went again to meet him, and told him, saying, The child is ⁿ not awaked.

32 And when Elisha was come into the house, behold, the child was dead, and laid upon his bed.

33 He ^o went in therefore, and shut the door upon them twain, ^p and prayed unto the LORD.

^k Luke x. 4.—^l Exodus vii. 19; xiv. 16; Chapter ii. 8, 14; Acts xix. 12.—^m Chapter ii. 2.—¹⁰ Heb. attention.—ⁿ John xi. 11.—^o Verse 4; Matt. vi. 6.—^p 1 Kings xvii. 20.

actions, but go with all possible speed. See Luke x. 4. He requires this haste that the miracle might be done secretly and speedily, before the child's death was divulged, which might cause many inconveniences. *And lay my staff upon the face of the child*—For God can work a miracle by the most unlikely and contemptible means, as he did by a rod, Exod. xiv. 16; and a mantle, chap. ii. 8.

Verse 30. *And the mother of the child said, I will not leave thee*—Until thou goest with me; for she had no great confidence in Gehazi, nor was her faith so strong as to think that the prophet could work so great a miracle at that distance, and by his staff. *And he arose, and followed her*—Being overcome by her importunity, and his tenderness toward so great a friend.

Verse 31. *There was neither voice nor hearing*—No sign of life appeared, which Gehazi, probably through unbelief, expected would be the case. It is likely the power was withheld, which might have accompanied the laying on of the staff; because the prophet having changed his mind, and yielded to her request that he would go with her, did alter his course of proceeding, and not join his prayers with Gehazi's action. Or, perhaps, God did not see fit that the child should come to life again by the touch of the staff, lest it might be thought that he had only lain in a swoon, which at length went off of itself. *The child is not awaked*—That is, not revived; death being oft and fitly compared to a sleep, because of the resurrection, which will in due time follow it, and here followed speedily, which makes the expression peculiarly proper in this place.

Verses 33, 34. *He shut the door upon them twain*—Upon himself and the dead child, that he might pray to God without interruption, and might more freely use those means which he thought fit. *And*

34 And he went up, and lay upon A. M. 3109. the child, and put his mouth upon B. C. 895. his mouth, and his eyes upon his eyes, and his hands upon his hands: and ^q he stretched himself upon the child; and the flesh of the child waxed warm.

35 Then he returned and walked in the house ¹¹ to and fro; and went up, ^r and stretched himself upon him: and ^s the child sneezed seven times, and the child opened his eyes.

36 And he called Gehazi, and said, Call this Shunammite. So he called her. And when she was come in unto him, he said, Take up thy son.

37 Then she went in, and fell at his feet, and bowed herself to the ground, and ^t took up her son, and went out.

^q 1 Kings xvii. 21; Acts xx. 10.—¹¹ Heb. *once hither and once thither*.—^r 1 Kings xvii. 21.—^s Chap. viii. 1, 5.—^t 1 Kings xvii. 23; Heb. xi. 35.

put his mouth, &c.—One part upon another successively; for the disproportion of the bodies would not permit it to be done together. *The flesh of the child grew warm*—Not by any external heat, which could not be transmitted to the child's body by such slight touches of the prophet's body; but from a principle of life, which was already infused into the child, and by degrees enlivened all the parts of his body.

Verse 35. *Then he returned and walked in the house*—Exercising his mind in prayer to God. *And went up, &c.*—Repeating his former actions, to teach us not to be discouraged in our prayers, if we be not speedily answered. *And the child sneezed seven times*—Whereby his head was cleared, in which his pain had chiefly lain; and *the child opened his eyes*—So the work begun in the former verse is here perfected. Although miracles were for the most part done in an instant, yet sometimes they were done by degrees. See here the power of God, who kills and makes alive again! see the power of prayer; as it has the key of the clouds, so it has the key of death! see the power of faith; that fixed law of nature, namely, that death is a way whence there is no returning, shall rather be dispensed with, than this believing Shunammite shall be disappointed!

Verses 36, 37. *When she was come in unto him*—Hebrew, *come to him*, namely, to the door of his chamber, where probably he met her with the joyful message. *Then she went in*—Into his chamber: and after she had thrown herself at his feet, full of humility and gratitude, and reverencing him as an angel of God, she went to the bed, *took up her son, and went out*—Publishing, no doubt, this wonderful work of God to all her family; who made it known abroad.

A. M. 3109. 38 ¶ And Elisha came again to
B. C. 895.

^a Gilgal. And *there was a* ² dearth in the land; and the sons of the prophets *were* ³ sitting before him: and he said unto his servant, Set on the great pot, and see the pottage for the sons of the prophets.

39 And one went out into the field to gather herbs, and found a wild vine, and gathered thereof wild gourds his lap full, and came and shred *them* into the pot of pottage: for they knew *them* not.

40 So they poured out for the men to eat. And it came to pass, as they were eating of the pottage, that they cried out, and said, O thou man of God, *there is* ² death in the pot. And they could not eat *thereof*.

41 But he said, Then bring meal. And ^a he

^a Chapter ii. 1.—² Chap. viii. 1.—³ Chap. ii. 3; Luke x. 39; Acts xxii. 3.—⁴ Exod. x. 17.—⁵ Exod. xv. 25; Chap. ii. 21; v. 10; John ix. 6.—¹² Heb. *evil thing*.—¹³ 1 Sam. ix. 4.

Verse 38. *There was a dearth in the land*—The same that we read of chap. iii. 1. It continued seven years, just as long again as that in the time of Elijah. For if a wicked nation will not be reformed by a lesser judgment, they must expect to be visited with a greater. *The sons of the prophets were sitting before him*—To hear his wisdom, and be instructed in the law, that they might teach others. *He said unto his servant, See the pottage, &c.*—By this it appears that they lived together in society, and, after their lectures, were wont to eat together with their master; who now ordered his servant to prepare some food for them, which was very plain and common, such as the gardens and the fields would produce.

Verses 39–41. *And found a wild vine*—This is generally supposed to have been the *coloquintida* plant, which has a leaf something like that of the vine, but is so very bitter, that some have called it “the gall of the whole earth:” it purges vehemently, and is a sort of poison if not qualified and taken in a moderate quantity. *For they knew them not*—Neither he that gathered them, nor they that shred them, knew what they were, but took them to be the leaves of a wild vine. *They cried out, O thou man of God, there is death in the pot*—That is, some deadly thing. This they concluded from its being so bitter and distasteful. *He said, Bring meal and cast it into the pot*—Together with the pottage, which they had taken out of it. *And there was no harm in the pot*—Which alteration was not from any virtue in the meal, but from the power of God.

Verse 42. *A man—brought—bread of the first-*

cast *it* into the pot; and he said, Pour out for the people, that they may eat.

And there was no ¹² harm in the pot.

42 ¶ And there came a man from ^b Baalshalisha, ^c and brought the man of God bread of the first-fruits, twenty loaves of barley, and full ears of corn ¹³ in the husk thereof. And he said, Give unto the people, that they may eat.

43 And his servitor said, ^d What! should I set this before a hundred men? He said again, Give the people, that they may eat: for thus saith the LORD, ^e They shall eat, and shall leave *thereof*.

44 So he set *it* before them, and they did eat, ^f and left *thereof*, according to the word of the LORD.

^c 1 Sam. ix. 7; 1 Cor. ix. 11; Gal. vi. 6.—¹² Or, *in his scrip, or, garment*.—^d Luke ix. 13; John vi. 9.—^e Luke ix. 17; John ix. 11.—^f Matt. xiv. 20; xv. 37; John vi. 13.

fruits, &c.—This was a seasonable present, it being a time of dearth, when bread was very scarce. The *first-fruits* were due to the priests, but these, and probably the rest of the priests' dues, were usually brought by the pious Israelites, according to their ability and opportunity, to the Lord's prophets, because they were not permitted to carry them to Jerusalem. *Twenty loaves of barley*—Of what weight is not said, but it is likely they were but small, being intended only for the prophet's own eating. *And full ears of corn in the husk thereof*—Which, being parched, they were wont to eat, Ruth ii. 15. But Dr. Hammond thinks these words should be rendered, They brought ears of corn in a *satchel*, or *scrip*. *Give unto the people that they may eat*—That is, to the sons of the prophets, with whom he then was, when this present was brought to him.

Verse 43. *What! should I set this before a hundred men?*—Just as the apostles said to the Lord Jesus, when he intended to feed a far greater number with less food. *He said again, Give unto the people, &c.*—Do as I order you, and make no objections. *For thus saith the Lord, They shall eat, and shall leave thereof*—As the multitude left of the loaves and fishes which Christ caused to be set before them. The similitude between several of the miracles of Elijah and Elisha, and those of the Lord Jesus, is very striking, and may be considered as a proof that they all acted by the power of one and the same Spirit. The miracles of the Son of God, however, were both far more in number, and far greater, than those which were performed by these his servants.

CHAPTER V.

Naaman hears of Elisha, 1-4. The king of Syria sends him to the king of Israel, 5-7. He goes to Elisha and is healed, 8-14. His grateful acknowledgment to Elisha, 15-19. Gehazi follows him, and receives gifts from him, 20-24. The leprosy of Naaman entailed on Gehazi's family, 25-27.

A. M. 3110.
B. C. 894. **N**OW *Naaman, captain of the host of the king of Syria, was ^ba great man ¹with his master, and ²honourable,³ because by him the LORD had given ⁴deliverance unto Syria: he was also a mighty man in valour, *but he was a leper.*

2 And the Syrians had gone out by companies, and had brought away captive out of the land of Israel a little maid; and she ⁶waited on Naaman's wife.

3 And she said unto her mistress, Would God my lord *were* ⁶with the prophet that *is* in Samaria! for he would ⁷recover him of his leprosy.

^a Luke iv. 27.—^b Ex. xi. 3.—¹ Heb. before.—² Or, gracious.
³ Heb. lifted up, or, accepted in countenance.—⁴ Or, victory.

NOTES ON CHAPTER V.

Verse 1. *Naaman—was a great man with his master*—In great power and favour with the king of Syria; and *honourable*—Highly esteemed, both for his quality and success; *because the Lord by him had given deliverance unto Syria*—He had been victorious in such battles as he had fought, which coming to pass through the permission or appointment of the Divine Providence, the sacred writer would have the Israelites to look upon it as the Lord's doing. Let Israel know, that, when the Syrians prevailed, it was from the Lord. He gave them success in their wars, even with Israel, and for Israel's chastisement. *But he was a leper*—This did not exclude him from the society of men in that country, where the Jewish law was not in force. But it was a great blemish upon him, and also likely to prove deadly; there being no cure for this disease, a disease very common in Syria.

Verse 2. *The Syrians had gone out by companies*—Making inroads into the land of Israel, to rob and plunder, after the manner of those times. *And had brought away captive a little maid*—The providence of God so ordering it for very important reasons. *And she waited on Naaman's wife*—Was preferred into Naaman's family, where she published Elisha's fame, to the honour of Israel and Israel's God.

Verse 3. *Would God my Lord were with the prophet that is in Samaria*—In the kingdom of Samaria; or, rather, in the city of Samaria; where Elisha was when she was taken, and where he commonly resided, though he went to other places as need required. *For he would recover him of his leprosy*—She had heard of the wonderful things which he had done, and therefore was confident he could work this cure. Children should betimes acquaint themselves with the wondrous works of God, that wherever they go they may speak of them, to

4 And *one* went in, and told his lord, saying, Thus and thus said the maid that *is* of the land of Israel. A. M. 3110.
B. C. 894.

5 And the king of Syria said, Go to, go, and I will send a letter unto the king of Israel. And he departed, and ⁶took ⁸with him ten talents of silver, and six thousand *pieces* of gold, and ten changes of raiment.

6 And he brought the letter to the king of Israel, saying, Now when this letter is come unto thee, behold, I have *therewith* sent Naaman my servant to thee, that thou mayest recover him of his leprosy.

^a Hebrew, was before.—⁶ Hebrew, before.—⁷ Heb. gather in.
⁸ 1 Sam. ix. 8; Chap. viii. 8, 9.—⁹ Heb. in his hand.

the profit of others. Yea, and servants, like this little maid, may be blessings to the families in which Providence casts their lot, by telling what they know of the glory of God, and the honour of his ministers.

Verse 4. *And one went in and told his lord*—One of Naaman's servants, hearing this, told it to Naaman, and he to the king of Syria, begging his leave to go to the prophet in Israel. For though he neither loved nor honoured the Jewish nation, yet if one of that nation can but heal him of his leprosy, he will gladly and thankfully accept the cure. And he hopes that one can, from the intelligence he has received, which he does not despise because of the meanness of her that gave it. O that they who are spiritually diseased would hearken thus readily to the tidings brought them of the great Physician!

Verse 5. *The king said, I will send a letter to the king of Israel*—It was very natural for a king to suppose that the king of Israel could do more than any of his subjects. *He took with him ten talents of silver, &c.*—That he might honourably reward the prophet, in case he should be cured by him. But it was a vast sum that he took for this purpose; for if they were Hebrew talents, the silver only amounted to four thousand five hundred pounds sterling.

Verse 6. *Now when this letter is come unto thee, &c.*—The beginning of the letter, which, it is likely, contained the usual compliments, is omitted, as not pertinent to the matter in hand. *That thou mayest recover him of his leprosy*—Or, *That, by thy command, the prophet that is with thee may cleanse him*; for kings are often said to do those things which they *command* to be done: in which view, there is no ambiguity in this letter of the king of Syria. But this not being plainly expressed, the king of Israel apprehended that the intention of this demand was only to pick a quarrel with him, and seek an occasion, or rather a pretence, for a war with him.

A. M. 3110. 7 And it came to pass, when the
B. C. 894. king of Israel had read the letter, that
he rent his clothes, and said, *Am I a God*, to
kill and to make alive, that this man doth
send unto me to recover a man of his leprosy?
Wherefore consider, I pray you, and see how
he seeketh a quarrel against me.

8 ¶ And it was so, when Elisha the man of
God had heard that the king of Israel had rent
his clothes, that he sent to the king, saying,
Wherefore hast thou rent thy clothes? let him
come now to me, and he shall know that there
is a prophet in Israel.

9 So Naaman came with his horses and with
his chariot, and stood at the door of the house
of Elisha.

A. M. 3110. 10 And Elisha sent a messenger
B. C. 894. unto him, saying, Go and wash in
Jordan seven times, and thy flesh shall come
again to thee, and thou shalt be clean.

11 But Naaman was wroth, and went away,
and said, Behold, I thought, He will surely
come out to me, and stand, and call on the
name of the LORD his God, and strike his
hand over the place, and recover the leper.

12 Are not Abana and Pharpar, rivers of
Damascus, better than all the waters of Israel?
may I not wash in them, and be clean? So he
turned and went away in a rage.

13 And his servants came near, and spake
unto him, and said, My father, if the prophet
had bid thee do some great thing, wouldest

⁴ Gen. xxx. 2; Deut. xxxii. 39; 1 Sam. ii. 6.—⁵ Chap. iv. 41;
John ix. 7.—⁶ Heb. *I said*.

¹⁰ Or, *I said with myself, he will surely come out, &c.*—¹¹ Heb.
move up and down.—¹² Or, *Amana*.

Verse 7. *The king of Israel rent his clothes*—Either as one in great affliction and trouble, or because he looked upon it as blasphemy, to ascribe that power to him which belonged to God alone. *Am I God, to kill and make alive?*—He expresses himself thus, because the leprosy is a kind or degree of death, Num. xii. 12; and he thought it as impossible to cure it as to raise the dead. Every body can kill; but when a person is killed, to make him alive again is the work only of the Almighty. *See how he seeketh a quarrel against me*—For not doing what he requires, which he knows to be impossible for me to do. Though he had seen what miracles Elisha had done, yet he either had forgot them, or thought this to be beyond his power. Or, it may be, he was loath to see still further demonstration of his power with God, and therefore did not send to him on this occasion.

Verse 8. *Elisha sent to the king, saying, Wherefore hast thou rent thy clothes?*—There is no just occasion for thee to do so. *Let him come now to me*—It was not for his own honour, but for the honour of God and his people, that he desires the leprous Syrian to be sent to him. *And he shall know there is a prophet in Israel*—One who can do that which the king of Israel dares not attempt, and which the prophets of Syria cannot pretend to: and it were sad with Israel if there were not. As the word prophet commonly signifies a man who declares things which none could know but God, and those to whom he revealed them, so here it signifies a man endued with a divine power, and who thereby could do what no man could effect, unless God were with him.

Verses 9, 10. *Naaman stood at the door of the house of Elisha*—Waiting for Elisha's coming to him. *And Elisha sent a messenger, &c.*—Which he did partly to try and exercise Naaman's faith and obedience; partly for the honour of his religion and ministry, that it might appear he sought not his own

glory and profit, but only God's honour and the good of men; and partly for the manifestation of the almighty power of God, which could cure such a desperate disease by such slight means.

Verse 11. *Naaman was wroth*—Supposing himself to be despised and insulted by the prophet. *And said, Behold I thought, &c.*—Herein he gives us an example of the perverseness of mankind, who are prone to prefer their own fancies to God's appointments. Big with the expectations of a cure, he had been imagining how this cure would be wrought: and the scheme he had devised was this: *He will surely come out to me*—That is the least he can do to me, a peer of Syria; *to me*, who am come to him in all this state, with my horses, chariot, and retinue; *to me*, who have so often been victorious over the armies of Israel. *And stand and call on the name of his God*—On my behalf. *And strike his hand over the place*—Wave it over the afflicted part, where the leprosy is: without which it seemed ridiculous to him to expect a cure.

Verse 12. *Are not Abana and Pharpar—better than all the waters of Israel*—How magnificently doth he speak of these two rivers, which watered Damascus, and how scornfully of all the waters of Israel! *May I not wash in them and be clean?*—Is there not as great virtue in them to this purpose? But he should have considered that the cure was not to be wrought by the water, but by the power of God, who might use what means and method of cure he pleased.

Verse 13. *His servants came near*—Though at other times they kept their distance, and now saw him in a passion, yet knowing him to be a man that would hear reason at any time, and from any one, they drew near, and made bold to argue the matter with him. Happy they who have such servants as these, who both had the courage to speak the truth, and prudence to order their speech with skill, submission, and reverence. *My father*—Or, *our father*:

A. M. 3110. thou not have done *it*? how much
B. C. 894. rather then, when he saith to thee,
Wash, and be clean?

14 Then went he down, and dipped himself seven times in Jordan, according to the saying of the man of God: and ^fhis flesh came again like unto the flesh of a little child, and ^ehe was clean.

15 ¶ And he returned to the man of God, he and all his company, and came and stood before him: and he said, Behold, now I know that *there is* ^hno God in all the earth, but in Israel: now therefore, I pray thee, take ⁱa blessing of thy servant.

^f Job xxxiii. 25. — ^e Luke iv. 27. — ^h Dan. ii. 47; iii. 29; vi. 26, 27. — ⁱ Gen. xxxiii. 11.

a title of honour in that country, and a name by which they called their lords, as kings are called the fathers of their people. They use it to show their reverence and affection for him. *If the prophet had bid thee do some great thing*—Had ordered thee into a tedious course of physic, or enjoined thee to submit to some painful operation, suppose blistering, or cupping, or salivating, wouldst thou not have done it? No doubt thou wouldst. And wilt thou not submit to so easy a method as this, *Wash and be clean*? It appears they had conceived a great opinion of the prophet, having probably heard more of him from the common people, whom they had conversed with, than Naaman had from the king and courtiers.

Verse 14. *Then went he down and dipped himself, &c.*—Upon second thoughts he yielded to make the experiment, yet probably with no great faith or resolution. However, God was pleased to honour himself and the word of his prophet, and to effect the cure, notwithstanding his evil reasoning and unbelief. *His flesh came again like the flesh of a little child*—No doubt to his great surprise and joy. *And he was clean*—Fresh and pure, free from every the least mixture or mark of the disease. This he got by yielding to the will of God, and obeying the injunction of his prophet, which he at first despised as unreasonable and foolish: and it is in the way of observing, not in the way of contemning and neglecting divine institutions, that we must expect the cure of our spiritual diseases.

Verse 15. *He returned to the man of God*—To give him thanks and a recompense for the great benefit which he had received. *I know there is no God in all the earth but in Israel*—By this wonderful work I am fully convinced that the God of Israel is the only true God, and that other gods are impotent idols. A noble confession! but such as speaks the misery of the Gentile world; for the nations that had *many gods*, really had *no God*, but were *without God in the world*. He had formerly thought the gods of Syria gods indeed, but now ex-

16 But he said, ^kAs the LORD liveth, ^{A. M. 3110.} before whom I stand, ^{B. C. 894.} ^lI will receive none. And he urged him to take *it*; but he refused.

17 And Naaman said, Shall there not then, I pray thee, be given to thy servant two mules' burden of earth? for thy servant will henceforth offer neither burnt-offering nor sacrifice unto other gods, but unto the LORD.

18 In this thing the LORD pardon thy servant, *that* when my master goeth into the house of Rimmon to worship there, and ^mhe leaneth on my hand, and I bow myself in the house of Rimmon: when I bow down myself

^k Chap. iii. 14. — ^l Gen. xiv. 23; Matt. x. 8; Acts viii. 18, 20. ^m Chap. vii. 2, 17.

perience had rectified his mistake, and he knew Israel's God was God alone, the sovereign Lord of all. Had he merely seen other lepers cleansed, perhaps it would not have convinced him; but the *mercy* of the cure affected him more than the *miracle* of it. Those are best able to speak of the power of divine grace, who have themselves experienced it. *I pray thee take a blessing of thy servant*—A thankful acknowledgment, or token of gratitude. The Hebrews called every gift *a blessing*.

Verse 16. *He said, As the Lord liveth, I will receive none*—Not that he thought it unlawful to receive presents, which he did receive from others; but because of the special circumstances of the case, it being much for the honour of God that the Syrians should see the generous piety and kindness of his ministers and servants, and how much they despised all that worldly wealth and glory, which the prophets of the Gentiles so greedily sought after.

Verse 17. *Two mules' burden of earth*—Wherewith I may make an altar of earth, as was usual, Exod. xx. 24. He desires the earth of this land, because he thought it more holy and acceptable to God, and proper for his service; or because he would, by this token, profess and declare his conjunction with the Israelites in the worship of God, and constantly put himself in mind of his great obligation to that God, from whose land this was taken: and though he might freely have taken this earth without asking any leave, yet he rather desires it from the prophet's gift, as believing that he, who had put so great a virtue into the waters of Israel, could put as much into the earth of Israel, and make it as useful and beneficial to him in a better way. And these thoughts, though extravagant and groundless, yet were excusable in a heathen and a novice, who was not yet thoroughly instructed in true religion.

Verse 18. *When my master goeth into the house of Rimmon*—Or rather, *went, or hath gone*, namely, formerly; for the Hebrew text of the whole verse may be properly rendered in the past time, thus: *In*

A. M. 3110. in the house of Rimmon, the LORD
B. C. 894. pardon thy servant in this thing.

19 And he said unto him, Go in peace. So he departed from him ¹³ a little way.

20 ¶ But Gehazi, the servant of Elisha the man of God, said, Behold, my master hath spared Naaman this Syrian, in not receiving at his hands that which he brought: but as the LORD liveth, I will run after him, and take somewhat of him.

21 So Gehazi followed after Naaman. And when Naaman saw *him* running after him, he lighted down from the chariot to meet him, and said, ¹⁴ *Is all well?*

22 And he said, All is well. My master hath sent me, saying, Behold, even now there be come to me from mount Ephraim two young men of the sons of the prophets: give them, I

¹³ Heb. a little piece of ground, as Gen. xxxv. 16.

this thing the Lord pardon thy servant, that when my master went into the house of Rimmon to worship there, and he leaned on my hand, and I bowed myself in the house of Rimmon; when I bowed myself in the house of Rimmon, the Lord pardon thy servant in this thing. Rimmon, it must be observed, was a Syrian idol, called here by the Seventy *Remman*, and Acts vii. 43, *Remphan*. And as Naaman, in the preceding verses, had declared that he would worship no other God but Jehovah, this translation seems evidently the true one, and is approved by many learned men, as Mr. Locke, Dr. Lightfoot, Lord Clarendon, and others. Certainly, as Dr. Dodd observes, "the incongruity would be great, if Naaman, who had just before declared his renunciation of idolatry, should now confess his readiness to relapse into the same crime, and desire God's pardon for it beforehand; whereas to ask pardon for what he had done amiss, and to desire the prophet's intercession with God in that behalf, argued a mind truly sensible of his former transgression, and very much resolved to avoid it for the future; and accordingly it is supposed that upon his return home he refused to worship Rimmon any more, and was thereupon dismissed from being general of the king's forces."

Verse 20. *Gehazi, the servant of Elisha*—One would have expected that Elisha's servant should have been a saint; but we find him far otherwise. The best men, the best ministers, have often had those about them that were their grief and shame. *My master hath spared this Syrian*—A stranger, and one of that nation who are the implacable enemies of God's people. *As the Lord liveth*—He swears, that he might have some pretence for the action to which he had bound himself by his oath; not considering, that to swear to do any wicked ac-

pray thee, a talent of silver, and two ^{A. M. 3110.}
changes of garments. ^{B. C. 894.}

23 And Naaman said, Be content, take two talents. And he urged him, and bound two talents of silver in two bags, with two changes of garments, and laid *them* upon two of his servants; and they bare *them* before him.

24 And when he came to the ¹⁵ tower, he took *them* from their hand, and bestowed *them* in the house: and he let the men go, and they departed.

25 But he went in, and stood before his master: and Elisha said unto him, Whence comest thou, Gehazi? And he said, Thy servant went ¹⁶ no whither.

26 And he said unto him, Went not my heart *with thee*, when the man turned again from his chariot to meet thee? *Is it a time to*

¹⁴ Heb. is there peace?—¹⁵ Or, secret place.—¹⁶ Heb. not hither or thither.

tion, is so far from excusing it, that it makes it much worse.

Verses 21–23. *He lighted down from his chariot to meet him*—Thereby testifying his great respect to the prophet his master. *He said—My master hath sent me, &c.*—This story of Gehazi was a very unlikely one: Naaman, however, was not willing to question it, but glad of the opportunity of showing his gratitude to the prophet. *And he—Naaman, urged him*—Who at first refused it upon a pretence of modesty and obedience to his master's command.

Verse 24. *When he came to the tower*—A safe and private place, which he chose for the purpose, and where possibly he hid and kept other things, which he had got by such like frauds and artifices. *And let the men go*—Before they came within sight of his master.

Verse 26. *Went not my heart with thee? &c.*—Was not I present with thee in mind, *when the man, &c.* *Is it a time to receive money? &c.*—Was this a fit season for this action? I had but just refused his gifts, and that obstinately, for important reasons; and now thou hast given him cause to think that this was done in mere vain-glory, and that I inwardly desired, and sought only a fitter place and opportunity, to take secretly in private what I refused in public; thus bringing reproach on our religion, and on the God we worship. *And olive-yards, &c.*—Which Gehazi intended to purchase with this money; and therefore the prophet names them, to inform him that he exactly knew, not only his outward actions, but even his most secret intentions. What a folly is it to presume upon sin in hopes of secrecy! When thou goest aside into any by-path, doth not thy own conscience go with thee? Nay, doth not the eye of God go with thee? What then avails the absence of human witnesses?

A. M. 3110. receive money, and to receive gar-
B. C. 894. ments, and olive-yards, and vine-
yards, and sheep, and oxen, and men-servants,
and maid-servants?

* 1 Tim. vi. 10.

Verse 27. *The leprosy of Naaman shall cleave unto thee and thy seed for ever*—That is, for some generations, as the expression is often used, and as may be thought by comparing this with Exod. xx. 5, and xxxiv. 7. This was a sentence which Gehazi justly deserved, for his crime was aggravated by a greedy covetousness, which is idolatry, profanation of God's name, a downright theft, in taking that to himself which was given for others, deliberate and impudent lying, a desperate contempt of God's omnipotence, justice, and holiness, a horrible reproach cast upon the prophet and his religion, and a pernicious scandal given to Naaman, and every other Syrian who should chance to hear of it. We are

27 The leprosy therefore of Naa- A. M. 3110.
man ^a shall cleave unto thee and B. C. 894.
unto thy seed for ever. And he went out from
his presence ^o a leper *as white as snow*.

^o Exod. iv. 6; Num. xii. 10; Chap. xv. 5.

taught from hence that God knows our sins, though committed in secret, and will punish them; and particularly that his wrath pursues, not only the unrighteous, but all those in general who are given to covetousness and dishonest gain; and that goods acquired by wicked means carry a curse with them, which often descends from *parents to their children*. *He went out from his presence a leper as white as snow*—Which is the worst kind of leprosy, and noted by physicians to be incurable. Those who get money by any way which is displeasing to God, make a dear purchase. What was Gehazi profited by the two talents of silver, when he lost his health, if not his soul, for ever?

CHAPTER VI.

Elisha causes iron to swim, 1-7. Discloses to the king of Israel the secret counsels of the king of Syria, 8-12. Saves himself out of the hands of those who were sent to apprehend him, 13-23. Samaria is besieged by the Syrians, and reduced to extremity, 24-33.

A. M. 3110. **AND** ^a the sons of the prophets said
B. C. 894. unto Elisha, Behold now, the
place where we dwell with thee is too strait
for us.

2 Let us go, we pray thee, unto Jordan, and take thence every man a beam, and let us make us a place there, where we may dwell. And he answered, Go ye.

3 And one said, Be content, I pray thee, and go with thy servants. And he answered, I will go.

* Chap. iv. 38.

4 So he went with them. And A. M. 3110.
when they came to Jordan, they cut B. C. 894.
down wood.

5 But as one was felling a beam, the ¹axe-head fell into the water: and he cried, and said, Alas, master! for it was borrowed.

6 And the man of God said, Where A. M. 3111.
fell it? And he showed him the place. B. C. 893.
And ^b he cut down a stick, and cast *it* in thither; and the iron did swim.

¹ Heb. iron.—> Chap. ii. 21.

NOTES ON CHAPTER VI.

Verses 1, 2. *The sons of the prophet said to Elisha*—Probably those that were at Gilgal, for that is the place last mentioned where the prophet was, (chap. iv. 38,) and was also near to Jordan. *Let us go—unto Jordan*—To the woods near Jordan; and *take thence every man a beam*—A piece of timber for the building. Hence it may be gathered, that although the sons of the prophets principally devoted themselves to religious exercises, yet they sometimes employed themselves about manual arts.

Verse 5. *The axe-head fell*—The iron fell from the wood. *Alas, master, for it was borrowed!*—He was the more concerned, both because he was

now compelled to be idle and useless to them in the common work, and because it was his friend's loss, who was now likely to suffer for his kindness in lending him the axe; for though justice obliged him to restore it, his poverty rendered him unable.

Verse 6. *He cut down a stick, and cast it in thither*—This was undoubtedly done with no other design than to raise the attention of the beholders, and make it more evident that the iron was made to swim by the divine power alone; for the casting in of the stick could contribute no more to it than his casting salt into the springs at Jericho to the healing of the waters, the mantle of Elijah to the division of Jordan, or the clay, put by Jesus Christ upon the eyes of the blind man, to the recovery of his

A. M. 3111.
B. C. 893. 7 Therefore said he, Take it up to thee. And he put out his hand, and took it.

8 ¶ Then the king of Syria warred against Israel, and took counsel with his servants, saying, In such and such a place shall be my camp.

9 And the man of God sent unto the king of Israel, saying, Beware that thou pass not such a place; for thither the Syrians are come down.

10 And the king of Israel sent to the place which the man of God told him and warned him of, and saved himself there, not once nor twice.

11 ¶ Therefore the heart of the king of Syria was sore troubled for this thing; and he called his servants, and said unto them, Will ye not show me which of us is for the king of Israel?

* Or, encamping.—³ Heb. No.—^c Genesis xxxvii. 17.
⁴ Heb. heavy.

sight. These inadequate means were employed on these occasions only to set forth more fully the reality and greatness of the miracles.

Verse 8. *The king of Syria warred against Israel*—This probably happened many years after Naaman was cured, and when he was either dead, or had lost his place through his refusing to worship Rimmon: for it is not to be supposed that he would lead an army against the Israelites. *In such and such a place*—Hebrew, *In the place of such a man. Shall be my camp*—Or, *my encamping*: Houbigant, *I will lie in wait*. Thither I will send my forces to surprise some place; or to lie in ambush where the king or his people were to pass.

Verse 10. *The king of Israel sent to the place*—Either spies, to know whether the information which the prophet had given him was true, or soldiers, to secure the place and passage designed. By this means he frequently saved himself or his people from falling into the hands of the Syrians, who lay in wait for them in places to which they would certainly have gone, if they had not been told of the danger.

Verses 11, 12. *Will you not show me which of us is for the king of Israel?*—Betrays my counsels to him: for he could not suppose that he should meet with such constant disappointments, unless it were by treachery. *One of the servants said, &c.*—It is likely Naaman had spread the fame of the prophet so much in this court, that some of them made farther inquiry after him, and heard more of his miraculous works; and thence concluded that he could tell the greatest secrets, as well as do such wonders as were reported of him.

Verse 13. *Spy where he is, that I may send and fetch him*—Foolish man! Did he believe that Elisha had informed the king of Israel of his secret

12 And one of his servants said, A. M. 3111.
B. C. 893. ³ None, my lord, O king: but Elisha, the prophet that is in Israel, telleth the king of Israel the words that thou speakest in thy bed-chamber.

13 And he said, Go, and spy where he is, that I may send and fetch him. And it was told him, saying, Behold, he is in ^o Dothan.

14 Therefore sent he thither horses, and chariots, and a ⁴ great host: and they came by night, and compassed the city about.

15 ¶ And when the ^a servant of the man of God was risen early, and gone forth, behold, a host compassed the city both with horses and chariots. And his servant said unto him, Alas, my master! how shall we do?

16 And he answered, Fear not: for ^d they that be with us are more than they that be with them.

* Or, minister.—⁴ 2 Chron. xxxii. 7; Psalm lv. 18; Romans viii. 31.

counsels, or not? If he did not, what quarrel had he with him? If he did, could he be so weak as to imagine that the prophet would not discover the designs laid against him? and that, having interest enough in heaven to discover them, he would not have interest enough to defeat them? Those that fight against God, his people, and prophets, know not what they do. *It was told him, Behold, he is in Dothan*—A city in the tribe of Manasseh, not far from Shechem and Samaria: hither therefore the king of Syria sent a great host, who were to come upon him by night, and bring him alive or dead.

Verse 15. *The servant said, Alas! my master*—Perhaps the Syrians had assured the inhabitants they intended no harm to them, but only came to take Elisha; which the young man hearing, was put into great fear: for, having probably not been long with the prophet, (being only taken into his service since Gehazi's dismissal,) and having not yet seen any of his wonderful works, he gave himself and his master up for lost men. *How shall we do?*—It is to no purpose to think either of fighting or flying, but we must unavoidably fall into their hands.

Verse 16. *He answered, Fear not*—He was concerned to remove the fears of his servant, and impart to him the same satisfaction and peace of mind he possessed himself in this time of extraordinary danger; for good men desire not only to be easy themselves, but to make those about them easy. And all those whose faith is strong, ought tenderly to consider and compassionate those who are weak, and of a timorous spirit, and do what they can to strengthen their hands. *For they that be with us*—To protect us, *Are more than they that be against us*—To destroy us: the angels are unspeakably more numerous, and God infinitely more powerful.

A. M. 3111. 17 And Elisha prayed, and said,
B. C. 893.

LORD, I pray thee, open his eyes, that he may see. And the LORD opened the eyes of the young man; and he saw: and behold, the mountain *was* full of ^a horses and chariots of fire round about Elisha.

18 ¶ And when they came down to him, Elisha prayed unto the LORD, and said, Smite this people, I pray thee, with blindness. And ^f he smote them with blindness, according to the word of Elisha.

* Chap. ii. 11; Psa. xxxiv. 7; lxxviii. 17; Zech. i. 8; vi. 1-7.

Verse 17. *Lord, I pray thee, open his eyes*—The eyes of his body were open, and with them he saw the danger; Lord, said the prophet, open the eyes of his faith, and the eyes of his mind, that with them he may see the protection we are under, may see the invisible guard of heavenly beings which encompass and defend us. Angels, whether they be purely spiritual, or clothed with some material vehicle, it is allowed, cannot be seen by mortal eyes: and, therefore, as the prophet himself would not have seen them, unless God by a miracle had rendered them visible to his eyes, so he requests of God that, for the causes above mentioned, he would vouchsafe to his servant the same privilege. *And behold, the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire*—Fire is both dreadful and devouring: that power, which was engaged for Elisha, could both terrify and consume the assailants. *Round about Elisha*—The mountains, which were full of these fiery chariots and horses, were round about the city, and therefore round about Elisha, who was within it: or he saw, as if he, Elisha, was in the midst of a glorious camp of angels, who defended him so that nothing could penetrate and break through unto him. “The opening of our eyes,” says Henry, “will be the silencing of our fears. In the dark we are most apt to be frightened. The clearer sight we have of the sovereignty and power of heaven, the less we shall fear the calamities of this earth.”

Verse 18. *And when they came down to him*—Either in the city, into which they easily got admission, when they declared that the only end of their coming was to take Elisha; or rather, in the field, without the city, whither he went to meet them. *Elisha prayed, and said, Smite this people, I pray thee, with blindness*—Not of the eyes, or, at least, not with total blindness, for in that case they could not have seen to have followed him; but rather with blindness of the mind, or imagination, which was rendered stupid and confused, or with that dimness and confusion in their sight, which prevented their distinguishing one object from another; the city of Dothan, for instance, from the city of Samaria. We have a similar case Gen. xix. 11. Thus it happens to several men in their liquor, that though their eyes are open, and they can perceive the several objects which surround them, yet they cannot discern

146

19 And Elisha said unto them, A. M. 3111.
B. C. 893.

This is not the way, neither is this the city: ^e follow me, and I will bring you to the man whom ye seek. But he led them to Samaria.

20 And it came to pass, when they were come into Samaria, that Elisha said, LORD, open the eyes of these men, that they may see. And the LORD opened their eyes, and they saw; and behold, *they were* in the midst of Samaria.

^f Gen. xix. 11.—^g Heb. come ye after me.

wherein they differ. And if we may suppose that the Syrian army was under the same *αοραία*, as the Greeks happily term such a degree of blindness or want of distinct vision, we need no more wonder that they readily accepted a guide who offered his service, than that a drunkard, after having lost his way, and found himself bewildered, should be thankful to any hand which should undertake to conduct him safe home.—Houbigant and Dodd.

Verse 19. *Elisha said, This is not the way, &c.*—Elisha does not speak this in answer to an inquiry made by the Syrians respecting the way to Dothan; if he had, his words would have contained a falsehood, from which they are clear, because he does not say, *This is not the way to Dothan—This is not the city of Dothan*: but he uses a feint or stratagem, (which has always been allowed in war,) and that against enemies who sought his life, from whom he was delivered only by a miracle, and whom, nevertheless, he afterward treated very humanely and kindly. Indeed, his expressions are ambiguous; but in that ambiguity he intended their benefit; and the very wonderful manner in which, unknown to themselves, he brought them into Samaria, and the generosity with which he treated them there, were sufficient to have given them high ideas of the God of Israel, whose prophet he was, and thereby to have brought them to the worship of the true God, which might have proved an infinite and everlasting blessing to them. *I will bring you to the man whom you seek*—And so he did, though not in such a manner as they expected and desired.

Verse 20. *The Lord opened their eyes, and behold, they were in the midst of Samaria*—To their great astonishment and terror, no doubt, there being a standing force there sufficient to cut them all off, or make them prisoners of war. Thus when God has opened the eyes of those whom Satan had blinded, and deluded to their ruin, they see themselves in the midst of their enemies, captives to Satan, and in danger of hell, although before they thought their condition good. And thus, when the enemies of God and his church, like this Syrian host encompassing Elijah and Dothan, fancy themselves ready to triumph, they will, to their amazement and confusion, find themselves conquered and triumphed over.

(10*)

2

A. M. 3111. 21 And the king of Israel said unto
B. C. 893. Elisha, when he saw them, My father,
shall I smite *them*? shall I smite *them*?

22 And he answered, Thou shalt not smite *them*: wouldest thou smite those whom thou hast taken captive with thy sword and with thy bow? [¶] set bread and water before them, that they may eat and drink, and go to their master.

23 And he prepared great provision for them: and when they had eaten and drunk, he sent

¶ Rom. xii. 10.

Verses 21, 22. *Shall I smite them? shall I smite them?*—This repetition of the question shows his eager desire to fall upon them and kill them. Perhaps he remembered how God was displeased at his father for dismissing out of his hands those whom he had put it into his power to destroy, and he would not offend in like manner: yet such reverence has he now for the prophet, that he will not lift a hand against them without his permission. *He answered, Thou shalt not smite them*—It is against the laws of humanity to kill captives, though thou thyself hadst taken them with thy own sword and bow, which might seem to give thee some colour to destroy them; but much more unworthy will it be in cold blood to kill these, whom not thy arms, but God's providence hath put into thy hands. *Set bread before them*—Give them meat and drink, which may refresh and strengthen them for their journey. This was an action of singular piety and charity, in doing good to their enemies, which was much to the honour of the true religion, and of no less prudence; that hereby the hearts of the Syrians might be mollified toward the Israelites. Elijah had given a specimen of divine justice, when he called for flames of fire on the heads of his persecutors to consume them: but Elisha here gave a specimen of divine mercy, in heaping coals of fire on the heads of his persecutors to melt them.

Verse 23. *When they had eaten and drunk, he sent them away*—Refreshed, but disarmed, as is most probable. *So the bands of Syria came no more into the land of Israel*—For some considerable time, came no more as yet, as Dr. Waterland reads it; not until the memory and influence of these examples were gone out of their minds: or they came no more upon this errand, to take Elisha: they saw it was to no purpose to attempt that; nor would any of their bands be persuaded to make an assault on so great and good a man. The most glorious victory over an enemy is to turn him into a friend.

Verse 24. *And it came to pass after this, &c.*—How long after we are not informed; but probably some years, when they had forgotten the kindnesses they had received in Samaria, which for a time, it appears, had quite disarmed them of their hatred against Israel, and caused them to lay aside all thoughts of war. Now, however, they alter their

them away, and they went to their master. So ^h the bands of Syria came no more into the land of Israel.

24 ¶ And it came to pass after this, that Ben-hadad king of Syria gathered all his host, and went up, and besieged Samaria.

25 And there was a great famine in Samaria: and behold, they besieged it, until an ass's head was sold for fourscore pieces of silver, and the fourth part of a cab of dove's dung for five pieces of silver.

^h Chap. v. 2; Verses 8, 9.

minds, and break out again into hostilities. *Ben-hadad king of Syria gathered all his host*—He whom Ahab wickedly spared, now comes to requite his kindness, and fulfil the divine prediction contained in 1 Kings xx. 42. They will not now, as before, make incursions and inroads into the country, in small bands and companies, which, as they had experienced, might easily be entrapped; but will wage an open and solemn war, and fall upon the Israelites at once, with all their forces united. *Ben-hadad* was a name very frequent among the kings of Syria, if not common to them all. *And went up, and besieged Samaria*—Plundering and laying waste the country, no doubt, as he went; and meeting with no opposition till he came to the capital city.

Verse 25. *There was a great famine in Samaria*—Probably the dearth, which had of late been in the land, was the cause of their stores being so empty; or the siege was so sudden, that they had no time to lay in provisions. *An ass's head was sold for fourscore pieces of silver*—Supposed to be shekels, and the common shekel being valued at fifteen pence of English money, they amount to five pounds: a vast price, especially for that which had on it so little meat, and was unwholesome, and unclean according to the law, Lev. xi. 26. In times of famine, however, and extreme necessity, the Jews themselves were absolved from observing the law with regard to meats. There are not wanting instances, in history, where other people, upon the same occasion, have been reduced to the like distress, and been glad to purchase an ass's head at an enormous price. See Plutarch's Life of Artaxerxes. *The fourth part of a cab*—A measure which, according to the Jews, contained as much as the shells of twenty-four eggs. *Of dove's dung*—Bochart has shown that there is among the Arabians a kind of *vetches* or *pulse* called by this name, which is undoubtedly here meant, for we can scarcely suppose that they used the excrements of doves for food. These vetches were a very coarse food, and yet much in use among the poorer Israelites, and therefore fit to be joined here with the ass's heads: and a *cab* was the usual measure of all kinds of grain, and fruits of that sort. In confirmation of the above it may be observed, some travellers tell us, that at Grand Cairo and Damascus there are magazines where they constantly fry this kind of

A. M. 3112. 26 ¶ And as the king of Israel was
B. C. 892. passing by upon the wall, there cried a woman unto him, saying, Help, my lord, O king.

27 And he said, 'If the LORD do not help thee, whence shall I help thee? out of the barn-floor, or out of the wine-press?

28 And the king said unto her, What aileth thee? And she answered, This woman said unto me, Give thy son, that we may eat him to-day, and we will eat my son to-morrow.

29 So ⁱ we boiled my son, and did eat him: and I said unto her on the ^s next day, Give thy

⁷ Or, *Let not the LORD save thee.*—¹ Levit. xxvi. 29; Deut. xxviii. 53, 57.—^s Heb. *other.*

grain, which those who go on pilgrimage buy, and take with them, as part of the provision for their journey. The Arabs, it appears, to this day call this kind of *pulse* or *vetches* by the name of *dove's dung*.—See Bochart Hieroz., p. 2, l. 1, c. 7.

Verses 26, 27. *The king of Israel was passing on the wall*—To give necessary directions for the defence of the city against assault; to see if the several guards were watchful and diligent, and if his orders were executed, and to observe the motions of the enemy. *There cried a woman unto him, Help, my lord, O king*—For whither should the subject, in distress, go for help, but to the prince, who is by office the protector of right, and the avenger of wrong? *He said, If the Lord do not help thee, whence shall I help thee?*—Dost thou ask of me corn or wine, which I want for myself? If God do not help thee, I cannot. Or his words may be considered as the language of passion or desperation, and rendered, *The Lord will not, and I cannot help thee.*

Verses 28, 29. *The king said, What aileth thee?*—Is there any thing singular in thy case? Dost thou fare worse than thy neighbours? Truly, yes: she and one of her neighbours had made a barbarous agreement, that, all provisions failing, they should boil and eat her son first, and then her neighbour's: hers was eaten, (who can think on it without horror?) and now her neighbour hid hers. This shocking story is a terrible effect of the divine vengeance, which Moses, about six hundred years before, had warned the Israelites would fall upon them in case of their apostacy from, and rebellion against, God; as the reader may see in the passages referred to in the margin. The same dreadful calamity befell them at two other times besides this; at the siege of Jerusalem, under Nebuchadnezzar, Lam. ii. 20; Ezek. v. 10; and that under Titus. See Joseph., *Jewish War*, lib. 7, c. 10.

Verse 30. *When the king heard the words of the woman, he rent his clothes*—Partly through grief for such a horrid fact, and partly through indignation at the prophet. *And the people looked*—Who were

son, that we may eat him: and she
hath hid her son. A. M. 3112.
B. C. 892.

30 ¶ And it came to pass, when the king heard the words of the woman, that he ^k rent his clothes; and he passed by upon the wall, and the people looked, and behold, *he had sackcloth within upon his flesh.*

31 Then he said, ¹ God do so and more also to me, if the head of Elisha the son of Shaphat shall stand on him this day.

32 But Elisha sat in his house, and ^m the elders sat with him; and *the king sent a man from before him: but ere the messenger came to him, he said to the elders, ⁿ See ye how this*

^k 1 Kings xxi. 27.—¹ Ruth i. 17; 1 Kings xix. 2.—^m Ezek. viii. 1; xx. 1.—ⁿ Luke xiii. 32.

in great numbers upon the wall, chiefly for the defence of the city. *And behold, he had sackcloth upon his flesh*—Under his inner garments, in token of his sorrow for the miseries of his people, and lamenting that it was not in his power to help them.

Verse 31. *If the head of Elisha shall stand on him this day*—If I do not this day take his head and his life. This wretched and partial prince overlooks his own great and various sins, and, among the rest, his obstinate adherence to the worship of the calves, and his conniving at the idolatries and witchcrafts of his mother Jezebel, (chap. ix. 22,) and the wickedness of the people, which were the true and proper causes of this and all their calamities; and he lays the blame of all upon Elisha, either supposing that he who had the spirit of Elijah resting upon him had brought this famine on the land by his prayers, as Elijah had formerly done, or because he had encouraged them to withstand the Syrians by promising them help from God.

Verse 32. *Elisha sat in his house*—In the house where he lodged; for it is probable he had no house of his own, having forsaken all to follow Elijah. *And the elders sat with him*—Either the sons of the prophets, or rather some good and godly men, such as are frequently termed elders in the prophecy of Ezekiel, who bore some office either in the court, army, or city, as seems probable from the prophet's desiring their help and protection. For though Jehoram was a wicked man, and most of his officers, probably, as wicked as himself; yet, as Poole justly observes, we cannot doubt but there were some among them whom his holy life, powerful ministry, and glorious miracles, with the great benefits procured by him for the public, had won to God and the true religion; at least to the profession of it, among whom Jehu might be one; and these were here sitting with him, either to receive counsel and comfort from him in this distressing time, or to solicit him to use his power with God for their relief; which he accordingly did, and pronounced the joyful news which follows in the beginning of the next chapter. *The king sent a man before him*—One of

A. M. 3112. son of ^o a murderer hath sent to take
B. C. 892. away my head? look, when the messenger cometh, shut the door, and hold him fast at the door: *is not the sound of his master's feet behind him?*

^o 1 Kings xviii. 4.

his guard, or some other officer, to *take away his head*, as it follows. *But ere the messenger came, he said, &c.*—Being admonished by God of his danger. *See how this son of a murderer*—The genuine son of that wicked Ahab, the murderer of the Lord's prophets. This expression may seem very harsh and unfit, nor is it to be drawn into imitation by others: but it must be considered that he was an extraordinary prophet, intrusted with a power in some sort superior to that of Jehoram, and had authority to control and rebuke him in the name of the King of kings. *Shut the door, and hold him*—That he may not break in upon me, and take away my life, before the king comes. *Is not the sound of his master's feet behind him?*—You shall not need to hold him long, for the king is just at his heels. It is probable he was coming, either to recall his rash order, or, at least, to debate the matter with the prophet, and obtain relief.

Verse 33. *While he yet talked with them, the messenger came*—Namely, to the door, where we are to

33 And while he yet talked with A. M. 3112. them, behold, the messenger came B. C. 892. down unto him: and he said, Behold, this evil *is of the LORD*; ^p what should I wait for the LORD any longer?

^p Job ii. 9.

understand he was stopped that he could not come at the prophet till the king came. *And he said, Behold, this evil, &c.*—Either the messenger said this in the king's name and words, or rather the king himself, who, though not here named, may be presumed to be present, both by the prophet's prediction of his speedy coming, and by the presence of the lord, *on whose hand the king leaned*, chap. vii. 2. *This evil*—This dreadful famine, which is now so extreme, that women are forced to eat their own children; *is of the Lord*—He hath inflicted it, and, for aught I see, he will not remove it. All penal evil is of the Lord as the first cause and sovereign judge: and this we ought to apply to particular cases: if all evil, then this evil which we are groaning under. Whoever are the instruments, God is the principal agent. *What should I wait for the Lord any longer?*—Thou biddest me wait upon God for help; but I perceive I may wait long enough before deliverance comes: I am weary with waiting, I can wait no longer.

CHAPTER VII.

Elisha foretells plenty, and the death of the unbelieving lord, 1, 2. Four lepers discover that the Syrians are fled, and bring the news into the city, 3-11. The king sends messengers in order to be assured of the truth, 12-15. Sudden plenty, and the death of the unbelieving lord, 16-20.

A. M. 3112. **T**HEN Elisha said, Hear ye the
B. C. 892. word of the LORD; Thus saith the LORD, ^a To-morrow about this time shall a measure of fine flour be sold for a shekel, and

^a Verses 18, 19.—^b Verses 17, 19, 20.—^c Hebrew, a lord

NOTES ON CHAPTER VII.

Verse 1. *Then*—When things were at the worst; when all help and relief were despaired of, and the king was impatient of waiting any longer; *said Elisha*—To the king, who was now come to him, (verse 18.) and to his courtiers, who were come with him, verse 2. *Hear ye the word of the Lord*—Hear what he saith; hear it, and believe it. *Thus saith the Lord*—He whom you have so highly offended, and at present despise and refuse to wait upon, or wait for, any longer; *He, I say*, of his own mere grace and bounty, hath sent you glad tidings of your deliverance. *To-morrow shall a measure of fine flour be sold for a shekel*—The Hebrew סאה, *seah*, which is rendered *a measure* here, implies a quantity equal

2

two measures of barley for a shekel, A. M. 3112. in the gate of Samaria. B. C. 892.

2 ^b Then ^a a lord on whose hand the king leaned answered the man of God, and said,

which belonged to the king leaning upon his hand, Chap. v. 18.

to six eabs, or a peck, or, according to some, a peck and two quarts, of our measure. The shekel was about three shillings; and though to have a peck of fine flour for three shillings at other times would not have been extraordinary, yet in the present situation of affairs it was wonderful. Thus, as has often been observed, man's extremity is God's opportunity of magnifying his power; and his time of appearing for his people is when *their strength is gone*, Deut. xxxii. 36.

Verse 2. *A lord on whose hand the king leaned*—When he walked; *said, Behold, if the Lord would make windows in heaven*—Through which he should rain down corn, as once he did manna; *might this thing be?*—He could not conceive, considering the

149

A. M. 3112. Behold, ^cif the LORD would make
B. C. 892. windows in heaven, might this thing
be? And he said, Behold, thou shalt see it with
thine eyes, but shalt not eat thereof.

3 ¶ And there were four leprous men ^d at the
entering in of the gate: and they said one to
another, Why sit we here until we die?

4 If we say, We will enter into the city,
then the famine *is* in the city, and we shall
die there: and if we sit still here, we die
also. Now therefore come, and let us fall unto
the host of the Syrians: if they save us alive,
we shall live; and if they kill us, we shall
but die.

5 And they rose up in the twilight to go unto

^c Mal. iii. 10.—^d Lev. xiii. 46.—^e 2 Samuel v. 24; Chapter
xix. 7; Job xv. 21.

prodigious famine that then reigned in Samaria, and
their being surrounded by a powerful army, that it
was possible there should be such a change wrought
by any means in a few hours, as that there should be
such plenty to-morrow, where there was such want
and distress to-day. He judged, as we too generally
do, according to the visible appearance of natural
and instrumental causes, and did not consider that
*with God all things are possible. Thou shalt see
it with thine eyes, but shalt not eat thereof*—A just
punishment for his unbelief, by which he made not
only the prophet, but God himself, (in whose name
Elisha had long given full proof that he spoke and
acted,) a liar. Here we see, as we have often seen
elsewhere, that unbelief of God's declarations and
promises is a sin whereby men both greatly dis-
please him, and deprive themselves of the favours
he designed for them. The murmuring Israelites
saw Canaan, but could not enter in because of unbel-
ief. "Such," says Bishop Patrick, "will be the por-
tion of those who believe not the promise of eternal
life; they shall see it at a distance, but never taste
it." Take care, reader, that this be not thy case!
that a promise being left thee of entering into his
rest, thou do not fall short of it.

Verses 3-5. *There were four leprous men at the
entering in of the gate*—Namely, of the city, out of
which they were shut by virtue of God's law. They
had either had their dwelling-place near the gate,
or had come near it for fear of the Syrian army.
*They said one to another, Why sit we here till we
die?*—None passed through the gate to relieve
them, and they were ready to perish with hunger.
Should they go into the city, there was nothing to
be had there, they must die in the streets; should
they sit still, they must pine to death in their cot-
tage: they therefore determine to go over to the
enemy, and throw themselves upon their merey;
for death seemed unavoidable every other way.
They rose up, therefore, in the twilight—In the
evening twilight, as appears from verses 9, 12. *To
go to the camp of the Syrians*—Which, to their

the camp of the Syrians: and when ^{A. M. 3112.}
they were come to the uttermost part ^{B. C. 892.}
of the camp of Syria, behold, *there was no
man there.*

6 For the LORD had made the host of the
Syrians ^e to hear a noise of chariots, and a
noise of horses, *even* the noise of a great host:
and they said one to another, Lo, the king of
Israel hath hired against us ^f the kings of the
Hittites, and the kings of the Egyptians, to
come upon us.

7 Wherefore they ^g arose and fled in the twi-
light, and left their tents, and their horses, and
their asses, *even* the camp as it *was*, and fled
for their life.

^e 1 Kings x. 29.—^f Psa. xlviii. 4, 6; Prov. xxviii. 1.

great surprise and joy, they found wholly deserted,
not a man being to be seen or heard in it.

Verse 6. *The Lord had made the host of the Sy-
rians hear a noise of chariots, &c.*—The air, by
the ministry of angels, doubtless, was put into such
a motion about the camp of the Syrians, as to give
sounds like to those it would have given if it had
been agitated by the rattling of chariots, the pranc-
ing of horses, and all the other motions and actions
of a numerous army and their attendants: so that
the Syrians could not well draw any other conclu-
sion than that an exceeding large army was march-
ing against them and was just at hand, as they heard
exactly the same noise as if it had been actually so.
Some have supposed that it was not the air which
was influenced, or acted upon, in this miracle, but
the ears of the Syrians: if so, the work was the
more wonderful, for in that case there must have
been as many distinct miracles wrought as there
were individuals that heard the noise. In either
way their hearing was imposed upon, just as the
sight of those that besieged Dothan had been im-
posed on: for God knows how to work upon any
and every sense, pursuant to his own counsels.
*They said, Lo, the king of Israel hath hired
against us the kings of the Hittites*—Under which
name, as elsewhere under the name of Amorites,
seem to be comprehended all, or any of the people
of Canaan. For though the greatest number of
that people were destroyed, yet very many of them
were spared, and many of them, upon Joshua's
coming, fled away, some to remote parts, others to
the lands bordering upon Canaan, where they seat-
ed themselves, and grew numerous and powerful.
Kings of the Egyptians—Either the king of Egypt,
the plural number being put for the singular, or the
princes and governors of the several provinces in
Egypt.

Verse 7. *Wherefore they arose and fled*—And
that with incredible precipitation, as for their lives,
leaving their camp as it was, and even their horses,
which, if they had taken them, might have expe-

A. M. 3112. 8 And when these lepers came to
B. C. 892. the uttermost part of the camp, they
went into one tent, and did eat and drink, and
carried thence silver, and gold, and raiment, and
went and hid it: and came again, and entered
into another tent, and carried thence *also*, and
went and hid it.

9 Then they said one to another, We do not
well: this day is a day of good tidings, and
we hold our peace: if we tarry till the morning-
light, ² some mischief will come upon us: now
therefore come, that we may go and tell the
king's household.

10 So they came and called unto the porters
of the city: and they told them, saying, We
came to the camp of the Syrians, and behold,
there was no man there, neither voice of man,
but horses tied, and asses tied, and the tents as
they *were*.

11 And he called the porters; and they told
it to the king's house within.

12 ¶ And the king arose in the night, and
said unto his servants, I will now show you

² Heb. we shall find punishment.

dited their flight. None of them had so much sense
as to send scouts to discover the supposed enemy,
much less courage enough to face them. God can,
when he pleases, dispirit the boldest, and make the
stoutest hearts to tremble. They that will not fear
God, he can make them fear at the shaking of a leaf.
Perhaps Gehazi was one of these lepers, which
might occasion his being taken notice of by the
king. chap. viii. 4.

Verses 9-11. *They said—We do not well*—Not
well for our brethren, whom we should pity and
help; nor well for ourselves, for we may suffer for
this neglect; either from the Syrians, who may be
lurking hereabouts, or from our king and people,
or from God's immediate hand. Thus their own
consciences spoke to them, and they hearkened to
the dictates thereof, and acquainted the sentinel
with what they had discovered, who straightway
carried the intelligence to the court, which was not
the less acceptable for being first brought by lepers;
and these poor afflicted men increased their own
joy by thus communicating it. Selfish, narrow-
spirited people cannot expect to be happy or pros-
perous: the most comfortable prosperity is that in
which our brethren share with us.

Verse 12. *The king said, I will show you what
the Syrians have done*—He was jealous of a strata-
gem, and feared the Syrians had only retreated to
be in ambush, and draw out the besieged, that they
might fall upon them to more advantage. He knew
he had no reason to expect that God should appear
thus wonderfully for him, having forfeited his fa-

what the Syrians have done to us. A. M. 3112
They know that we *be* hungry; B. C. 892
therefore are they gone out of the camp, to
hide themselves in the field, saying, When
they come out of the city, we shall catch them
alive, and get into the city.

13 And one of his servants answered and said,
Let *some* take, I pray thee, five of the horses
that remain, which are left ³ in the city, (be-
hold, they *are* as all the multitude of Israel that
are left in it: behold, *I say*, they *are* even as
all the multitude of the Israelites that are con-
sumed :) and let us send and see.

14 They took therefore two chariot horses;
and the king sent after the host of the Syrians,
saying, Go and see.

15 And they went after them unto Jordan:
and lo, all the way *was* full of garments and
vessels, which the Syrians had cast away in
their haste. And the messengers returned, and
told the king.

16 And the people went out, and spoiled the
tents of the Syrians. So a measure of fine

³ Heb. in it.

vour by his unbelief and impatience. And he knew
no reason the Syrians had to flee; for it does not
appear that either he, or any of his attendants, or,
indeed, any in Samaria, had heard the noise of the
chariots, &c., which had affrighted the Syrians.

Verse 13. *Let some, I pray thee, take five of the
horses, &c.*—The sense seems to be, We may well
venture these five horses, though we have no more,
because both they and we are ready to perish with
hunger: let us, therefore, use them while we may,
for our common good, or to make the discovery.
Behold, they are as the multitude of Israel—The
words may be rendered, *Behold, they are of a truth*
(the Hebrew prefix, *Caph*, being not here a note of
similitude, but an affirmation of the truth and cer-
tainty of the things, as it is taken Num. xi. 1; Deut.
ix. 10) *all the multitude of the horses of Israel that
are left in it: behold, I say, they are even all the
multitude of the horses of the Israelites, which
(which multitude) are consumed*, reduced to this
small number, all consumed except these five. And
this was indeed worthy of a double *behold*, to show
what mischief the famine had done both upon
men and beasts, and to what a low ebb the king
of Israel was come, that all his troops of horses,
to which he had trusted, were shrunk to so small a
number.

Verses 14-16. *They took therefore two chariot
horses*—It is probable the king would venture no
more than two horsemen, whom he thought suffi-
cient: and these took two of his own horses to make
the discovery. *They went after them unto Jordan*

A. M. 3112. flour was sold for a shekel, and two
B. C. 892. measures of barley for a shekel, ^b according to the word of the LORD.

17 ¶ And the king appointed the lord on whose hand he leaned to have the charge of the gate: and the people trode upon him in the gate, and he died, ⁱ as the man of God had said, who spake when the king came down to him.

18 And it came to pass as the man of God had spoken to the king, saying, ^k Two measures of

^b Verse 1.—ⁱ Chap. vi. 32; Verse 2.

—Finding the camp empty, as the lepers had related, they followed them as far as this river. *All the way was full of garments, &c., cast away in their haste*—Hebrew, כחפזם, *bechaphesam*, in their fear, trepidation, or consternation, wherewith God had struck them. *So a measure of fine flour was sold for a shekel, &c.*—They found such store of provisions in the tents of the Syrians, that it made this sudden change in the price of corn, according to Elisha's prediction.

Verses 17–20. *The king appointed the lord to have the charge of the gate*—To prevent tumults and disorders among the people, and to take care to have the gates shut, if need were, and if the Syrians should happen to return upon them. *And that lord answered, &c.*—This part of the history is re-

barley for a shekel, and a measure of A. M. 3112. fine flour for a shekel, shall be to- B. C. 892. morrow about this time in the gate of Samaria:

19 And that lord answered the man of God, and said, Now, behold, *if* the LORD should make windows in heaven, might such a thing be? And he said, Behold, thou shalt see it with thine eyes, but shalt not eat thereof.

20 And so it fell out unto him: for the people trode upon him in the gate, and he died.

^k Verse 1.

peated, because it attests a remarkable fulfilment of a divine prediction. *The people trode upon him in the gate, and he died*—Before he could enjoy, in any measure, the benefit of that plenty which God had bestowed upon them. This fact is an awful proof how heinously God resents men's distrust of him, and of his power, providence, and promise. When Israel said, *Can God furnish a table? the Lord heard and was wroth*. Infinite wisdom will not be limited by our folly. God never promises the end, but he knows where to provide the means. Here also we learn how certain God's threatenings are, and how sure to fall on the heads of the guilty. Let all men fear before the great God, who treads upon princes as mortar, and is terrible to the kings of the earth.

CHAPTER VIII.

Elisha's advice to the Shunammite, 1, 2. The king restores her land, 3–6. Elisha's prophecy to Hazael, and the death of Ben-hadad, 7–15. The reign of Jehoram, 16–24. Succeeded by Ahaziah, 25–29.

A. M. 3113. **T**HEN spake Elisha unto the wo-
B. C. 891. man ^a whose son he had restored to life, saying, Arise, and go thou and thy household, and sojourn wheresoever thou canst

^a Chap. iv. 35.

NOTES ON CHAPTER VIII.

Verse 1. *Then spake Elisha*—There is nothing in the Hebrew for this particle of time, *then*. It is literally, *And Elisha spake*, or, as Houbigant renders it, *had spoken*. So verse 2, *The woman had arisen, and done, &c.* He conjectures, from verse 4, that this event happened before Gehazi was struck with the leprosy: this, however, is by no means certain. On the other hand, most commentators seem to be of opinion that it took place in the order in which it is recorded in the history, after the events related in the former chapter, and some think several years after. *Unto the woman whose son he had restored to life*—Manifesting his grati-

sojourn: for the LORD ^b hath called A. M. 3113. for a famine; and it shall also come B. C. 891. upon the land seven years.

2 And the woman arose, and did after the

^b Psa. cv. 16; Hag. i. 11.

tude for her former kindness, by taking special care for her preservation. *Go thou, and sojourn, &c.*—In any convenient place out of the land of Israel. *For the Lord hath called for a famine*—Hath appointed to bring a famine upon the country, or a great scarcity of provisions. The manner of speaking intimates that all afflictions are sent by God, and come at his call. *Seven years*—A double time to the former famine under Elijah, which was but just, because they were still incorrigible under all the judgments of God, and under the powerful ministry of Elisha, who confirmed his doctrine by so many astonishing miracles.

Verse 2. *The woman arose, and sojourned in the*

A. M. 3119. saying of the man of God: and she
B. C. 885.

went with her household, and sojourn-
ed in the land of the Philistines seven years.

About 3 And it came to pass at the seven
B. C. 885. years' end, that the woman returned
out of the land of the Philistines: and she
went forth to cry unto the king for her house,
and for her land.

4 And the king talked with ° Gehazi the
servant of the man of God, saying, Tell me,
I pray thee, all the great things that Elisha
hath done.

5 And it came to pass, as he was telling the
king how he had ^d restored a dead body to
life, that behold, the woman, whose son he had
restored to life, cried to the king for her house
and for her land. And Gehazi said, My lord,

^c Ch. v. 27.—^d Ch. iv. 35.—¹ Or, *enough*.—² 1 Kings xix. 15.

land of the Philistines—Which, though bordering
upon Israel, was free from the famine: by which it
appeared, that the special hand of God was in that
calamity, and that it was a judgment from him upon
the Israelites for their idolatry, and abuse of the
means of grace, which they now enjoyed in such
abundance through Elisha and many other prophets.

Verse 3. *She went to cry unto the king for her
house and land*—Which, having been forsaken by
her, were possessed by her kindred or others, who
probably had obtained a grant of them from the
king, and now intended to keep possession of them.

Verse 4. *The king talked with Gehazi, the ser-
vant of the man of God*—Or, who had been his ser-
vant formerly. The law did not forbid conversing
with lepers at a due distance, but only the dwelling
with them. Thus Naaman conversed with Elisha's
family at a distance; and the lepers called to our
Lord, as he went along the highway.

Verses 5, 6. *As he was telling the king, &c., the
woman cried to the king, &c.*—By the order of Pro-
vidence she came to present her petition, and brought
her son with her, in that very instant of time when
Gehazi was telling the story of Elisha's restoring
him to life, that the king might be more fully satis-
fied of the truth of what he related from her own
mouth, and that it might make the deeper impres-
sion upon him. Providence ought to be carefully
observed, and devoutly acknowledged, in ordering
the circumstances of events; for sometimes, as here,
those that are minute of themselves, prove of great
consequence. *And when the king asked the woman,
she told him*—That is, she confirmed what Gehazi
had said. Thus did God even force him to believe,
what he might have had some colour to question, if
he had only had Gehazi's word for it. *So the king
appointed, saying, Restore all that was hers*—Not
only her house and land, but all the profits that had
been made of them, and brought into his treasury.

2

O king, this *is* the woman, and this ^{A. M. 3119.}
^{B. C. 885.} *is* her son, whom Elisha restored
to life.

6 And when the king asked the woman, she
told him. So the king appointed unto her a
certain ¹ officer, saying, Restore all that *was*
hers, and all the fruits of the field since
the day that she left the land, even until
now.

7 ¶ And Elisha came to Damascus: and
Ben-hadad the king of Syria was sick; and it
was told him, saying, The man of God is come
hither.

8 And the king said unto ° Hazael, 'Take a
present in thy hand, and go, meet the man of
God, and ² inquire of the LORD by him, saying,
Shall I recover of this disease?

¹ 1 Sam. ix. 7; 1 Kings xiv. 3; Chap. v. 5.—² Chap. i. 2.

This was a high act of justice, and an argument of
some goodness left in a bad man.

Verse 7. *Elisha came to Damascus*—Either to
the city so called, or rather, as it seems from verse
9, to the kingdom of Damascus; as *Samaria*, which
properly was the name of a city, sometimes means the
kingdom of which that city was the capital. Some
have thought that Elisha went thither to avoid the
famine; but it is more probable that he was sent by
God, on the errand following. *Ben-hadad, the king
of Syria, was sick*—For neither honour, wealth, nor
power will secure men from the common diseases
and disasters of human life: palaces and thrones
lie as open to the arrests of death as the meanest
cottage. *It was told him, saying, The man of God
is come hither*—Which doubtless had rarely, if ever,
been the case before; and his having cured Naaman
had raised a great opinion of his power with God in
that country.

Verse 8. *The king said, Go, meet the man of
God, and inquire of the Lord, &c.*—In his health
he bowed down in the house of Rimmon, but now he
sends to inquire of the God of Israel. It is not long
since he sent a great force to seize and treat Elisha
as an enemy; yet now he courts and inquires of
him as a prophet: thus affliction brings those to
God, who, in their prosperity, made light of him:
it opens men's eyes, and rectifies their mistakes: and
among other instances of the change it produces in
their minds, this is one, and not the least consider-
able, that it often gives them other thoughts of God's
ministers, and teaches them to value those whom
they before hated and despised. Affliction, how-
ever, has not this good effect upon all: it only blinds
and hardens some. We lately saw even a king of
Israel sending, in his sickness, to inquire of the god
of Ekron, as if there had been no God in Israel.
How does the conduct of this heathen, in similar
circumstances, reprove and condemn the idolatrous

153

A. M. 3119. 9 So Hazael went to meet him, and
B. C. 885.

took a present ² with him, even of every good thing of Damascus, forty camels' burden, and came and stood before him, and said, Thy son Ben-hadad king of Syria hath sent me to thee, saying, Shall I recover of this disease?

10 And Elisha said unto him, Go, say unto him, Thou mayest certainly recover: howbeit, the LORD hath showed me, that ^h he shall surely die.

^a Heb. in his hand. — ^b Ver. 15. — ^c Heb. and set it. — ^d Luke xix. 41. — ^e Chap. x. 32; xii. 17; xiii. 3, 7; Amos i. 3.

and incorrigible Israelite! Thus does God sometimes fetch that honour to himself from strangers, which is denied him, and alienated from him, by his own professing people.

Verse 9. *And took a present with him; forty camels' burden*—By this noble present, consisting of every good thing of Damascus, the king testified his affection to the prophet, bid him welcome to Damascus, and provided for his sustenance while he was there, and the sustenance of those that were with him: for some have inferred, from the king's sending him so very large a quantity of provisions, beyond measure too much for a single person, that Elisha, besides his servant, had several of the sons of the prophets with him. It is probable he accepted this present; for if he had refused it, it is likely his refusal would have been noticed.

Verse 10. *Say unto him, Thou mayest certainly recover: howbeit, &c.*—Here is no contradiction: for the first words contain an answer to Ben-hadad's question, *Shall I recover?* To which the answer is, *Thou mayest*, notwithstanding thy disease, which is not mortal. The latter words contain the prophet's addition to that answer, which is, that he should die, not by the power of his disease, but by some other cause. But it must be observed, that this is according, not to the Hebrew text, but the marginal reading of the Jewish rabbins, who have substituted the pronoun ^ל, *lo*, to him, for the adverb ^ל, *lo*, not. In the text it is, *Go say, Thou shalt not recover*; or, as Dr. Waterland renders it, *Thou shalt certainly not live; for the Lord hath showed me that he shall surely die*. Dr. Kennicott is clearly of opinion that this is the true reading and sense of the passage. See his first *Dissert.*, p. 163. Houbigant, however, prefers our translation, and thinks that the words contain a silent reproof from Elisha, who well knew that a courtier, like Hazael, would certainly flatter his king: he therefore understands the meaning to be, *Go thou, and, courtier-like, say to him, Thou wilt certainly recover; howbeit, the Lord hath shown me very much the contrary; he will surely die, and die by thy traitorous hand.*

Verse 11. *He settled his countenance steadfastly*—Elisha fixed his eyes on Hazael, and looked upon him so earnestly, so long, and with such a settled

A. M. 3119. 11 And he settled his countenance
B. C. 885.

³ steadfastly, until he was ashamed: and the man of God ⁱ wept.

12 And Hazael said, Why weepeth my lord? And he answered, Because I know ^h the evil that thou wilt do unto the children of Israel: their strong holds wilt thou set on fire, and their young men wilt thou slay with the sword, and ⁱ wilt dash their children, and rip up their women with child.

13 And Hazael said, But what! ^m is thy ser-

¹ Chapter xv. 16; Hosea xiii. 16; Amos i. 13. — ¹ Samuel xvii. 43.

countenance, that Hazael was ashamed, as apprehending that the prophet discerned or suspected something of an evil and shameful nature in him. The Hebrew words, however, rendered *till he was ashamed*, are ambiguous, and may be indifferently referred either to the prophet or to Hazael: but they seem more properly to belong to the latter, because it follows by way of distinction, *The man of God wept*.

Verse 12. *I know the evil thou wilt do unto the children of Israel*—It was not in Hazael's countenance that Elisha read what he would do; but God did at this time reveal it to him, and gave him such a clear and full view of it, that it greatly affected him. The sins of Israel provoked God to give them up into the hands of their cruel enemies: yet Elisha wept to think that ever Israelites should be so abused as he foresaw they would be by Hazael. For though he foretold, he did not desire, *the woful day. Their strong holds wilt thou set on fire, &c.*—See what havoc and destruction war makes! what destruction sin makes! and how the nature of man is changed by the fall, and stripped even of humanity itself! *Will dash their children*—That dashing young children against the stones was one piece of barbarous cruelty which the people of the East were apt to run into, in the prosecution of their wars, is plainly intimated Psal. cxxxvii. 8, 9. Nor was this inhuman practice out of use among nations pretending to more politeness; for, according to the remains of ancient fame, the Grecians, when they became masters of Troy, were so cruel as to throw Astyanax, Hector's son, a child in his mother's arms, headlong from one of the towers of the city. *The ripping up of women with child* is the highest degree of brutal cruelty; but there is reason to believe that Hazael, in his war with the Gileadites, (chap. x. 32, 33,) verified this part of the prophet's prediction concerning him; for, what Amos, complaining of his cruelty to this people, calls *thrashing Gilead with thrashing instruments of iron*, both the Seventy and Arabic versions read, *He saved the pregnant women with iron saws*.—Le Clerc and Calmet.

Verse 13. *Hazael said, But what, is thy servant a dog?* &c.—The expression is used in Scripture to signify vile and unworthy, as in 2 Sam. iii. 8, and ix.

A. M. 3112. B. C. 892. vant a dog that he should do this great thing? And Elisha answered, "The LORD hath showed me that thou shalt be king over Syria.

14 So he departed from Elisha, and came to his master; who said to him, What said Elisha to thee? And he answered, He told me that thou shouldst surely recover.

15 And it came to pass on the morrow, that he took a thick cloth, and dipped it in water, and spread it on his face, so that he died: and Hazael reigned in his stead.

*1 Kings xix. 15.—² 2 Chron. xxi. 3, 4.—⁴ Heb. reigned. Began to reign in consort with his father.

8; and fierce, barbarous, and inhuman, Psa. xxii. 16, 21, and lix. 6. *That he should do this great thing*—So he terms it, as being, 1st, A thing that supposed great power, and not to be done but by a crowned head: as if he had said, It must be some mighty potentate that must prevail thus against Israel, and therefore not L. Accordingly, the Hebrew may be rendered, *What! thy servant, a dog! that he should do this great thing!* 2d, An act of great barbarity, which could not be done but by a person lost to all honour and virtue. This is the sense in which Hazael's words have been generally understood; and it seems evidently the true sense. He felt, at this time, no inclination to be so barbarous and cruel as the foregoing words of Elisha implied, and he wondered that the prophet should suppose him capable of ever acting in such a manner. Is thy servant a dog, to rend, and tear, and devour? Unless I were a dog I could not do it. He was evidently startled at the mention of the cruelties which the prophet foretold he should perpetrate, and thought it impossible he should ever be guilty of them. Thus we are very apt to think ourselves sufficiently secure against the commission of those sins which yet we are afterward overcome by, and practise. *The Lord hath showed me that thou shalt be king over Syria*—And then, when thou shalt have the power, thou wilt have the will to commit these enormities and barbarities, and actually wilt commit them. Those who are little and low in the world, cannot imagine how strong the temptations of power and prosperity are, to which if they ever arrive, they will find how deceitful their hearts were, and how much more corrupt than they suspected.

Verse 14. *He told me that thou shouldst surely recover*—This was abominably false. He told him he should die, verse 10; but Hazael unfairly and unfaithfully concealed that, either because he was loath to put the king out of humour with bad news, or because he thought he should thereby the more easily put in execution the design which he had already formed against his life, finding he was to be his successor, and which he was eager to see accomplished. Elisha's prediction might give Satan an occasion of suggesting this villany to his mind; but,

16 ¶ And in the fifth year of Joram the son of Ahab king of Israel, Jehoshaphat being then king of Judah, Jehoram the son of Jehoshaphat king of Judah began to reign.

17 ¶ Thirty and two years old was he when he began to reign; and he reigned eight years in Jerusalem.

18 And he walked in the way of the kings of Israel, as did the house of Ahab: for the daughter of Ahab was his wife: and he did evil in the sight of the LORD.

¶ 2 Chron. xxi. 5, &c.—¶ Verse 26.

as Mr. Scott justly observes, "it was not the cause of his crime, and forms no excuse for it. Had he been of David's disposition, he would have waited in the path of duty till the Lord had performed his word in that manner which pleased him." Thus he soon began to manifest the rapaciousness and cruelty of the dog, of which he desired to be thought incapable.

Verse 15. *And spread it on his face*—Pretending, it may be, to cool his immoderate heat with it, but applying it so closely that he choked him therewith; the king being weak, and unable to help himself, or perhaps asleep. By this artifice he prevented his crying out, and his death would appear to be natural, there being no signs of violence upon his body. Such a bubble is the life of the greatest men, and so exposed are princes to treachery and outrage. We found this haughty monarch (1 Kings xx. 1-10) *the terror of the mighty in the land of the living*; but now he goes down slain into the pit, with his iniquity upon his bones, Ezek. xxxii. 25. *And Hazael reigned in his stead*—Being, it is likely, in great favour, both with the people and the soldiery, and not suspected of the murder of Ben-hadad; and he leaving no son to succeed him in the government.

Verse 16. *Jehoram the son of Jehoshaphat began to reign*—Jehoram was first made king or viceroy by his father, divers years before this time, at his expedition to Ramoth-gilead, which dominion of his ended at his father's return. But now Jehoshaphat, being not far from his death, and having divers sons, and fearing some competition among them, makes Jehoram king the second time, as David did Solomon upon the like occasion. See note on chap. i. 17.

Verse 18. *And he walked in the way of the kings of Israel*—That is, after his father's death. *For the daughter of Ahab*—Namely, Athaliah, verse 26; *was his wife*—By whom he was seduced from the religion of his pious father and grandfather. This unequal marriage, though Jehoshaphat possibly designed it as a means of uniting the two kingdoms under one head, is here and elsewhere noted, as the cause both of the great wickedness of his posterity, and of those sore calamities which befell them. No

A. M. 3119. 19 Yet the LORD would not¹ destroy
B. C. 885. Judah, for David his servant's sake,
as he promised him to give him always a
light, and to his children.

20 ¶ In his days Edom revolted from under
the hand of Judah, and made a king over
themselves.

21 So Joram went over to Zair, and all the
chariots with him: and he rose by night, and
smote the Edomites which compassed him about,
and the captains of the chariots: and the peo-
ple fled into their tents.

22 Edom revolted from under the hand
of Judah unto this day. Then Libnah revolted
at the same time.

23 ¶ And the rest of the acts of Joram, and
all that he did, are they not written in the book
of the Chronicles of the kings of Judah?

About B. C. 885. 24 And Joram slept with his fathers,
and was buried with his fathers in the
city of David; and Ahaziah² his son reigned
in his stead.

25 ¶ In the twelfth year of Joram the son of

¹ 2 Samuel vii. 13; 1 Kings xi. 36; xv. 4; 2 Chron. xxi. 7.
² Heb. candle, or, lamp.—Gen. xxvii. 40; Chapter iii. 27;
2 Chron. xxi. 8, 10.—1 Kings xxii. 47.—And so fulfilled,
Genesis xxvii. 40.—2 Chron. xxi. 10.—2 Chron. xxii. 1.
³ Called Azariah, 2 Chron. xxii. 6, and Jehoahaz, 2 Chronicles

good could be reasonably expected from such a
union. Those that are ill matched are already half
ruined.

Verse 19. *To give him always a light*—A son and
successor, until the coming of the Messiah: for so
long, and not longer, this succession might seem ne-
cessary for the making good of God's promise and
covenant made with David. But when the Messiah
was once come, there was no more need of any suc-
cession, and the sceptre might and did without any
inconvenience depart from Judah, and from all the
succeeding branches of David's family, because the
Messiah was to hold the kingdom for ever in his own
person, though not in so gross a way as the carnal
Jews imagined.

Verse 20. *In his days Edom revolted*—After they
had been subject to Judah one hundred and fifty
years, ever since the time of David, who subdued
that country. This was a great dishonour to him.
Hereby, however, the prophecy of Isaac (Genesis
xxvii. 40) was fulfilled.

Verse 21. *Joram went over to Zair*—This word
is written differently from *Seir*, and therefore, it
seems, does not signify any part of the country of
Edom, but some city near to it. *And smote the
Edomites which compassed him about*—The Edom-
ites were not wanting in their own defence, but had
surrounded him with an army; through which he
broke in the night, and routed them. *And the peo-
ple fled, &c.*—The common soldiers of the Edom-

A. M. 3119. Ahab king of Israel did Ahaziah the
B. C. 885. son of Jehoram king of Judah begin
to reign.

26 Two and twenty years old was Ahaziah
when he began to reign; and he reigned one
year in Jerusalem. And his mother's name
was Athaliah, the daughter of Omri king of
Israel.

27 And he walked in the way of the house
of Ahab, and did evil in the sight of the LORD,
as did the house of Ahab: for he was the son-
in-law of the house of Ahab.

28 ¶ And he went with Joram the
son of Ahab to the war against Ha-
zael king of Syria in Ramoth-gilead; and the
Syrians wounded Joram.

About B. C. 884. 29 And King Joram went back to be healed
in Jezreel of the wounds which the Syrians
had given him at Ramah, when he fought
against Hazael king of Syria. And Ahaziah
the son of Jehoram king of Judah went down
to see Joram the son of Ahab in Jezreel, because
he was sick.

xxi. 17; xxv. 23.—2 Chron. xxii. 2.—Or, grand-daughter,
Verse 18.—2 Chronicles xxii. 3.—2 Chronicles xxii. 5.
^b Chap. ix. 15.—^c Heb. wherewith the Syrians had wounded.
¹⁰ Called Ramoth, Verse 28.—^c Chap. ix. 16; 2 Chronicles
xxii. 6.—¹¹ Heb. wounded.

ites herein following the example of their captains.
Yet Edom revolted—Notwithstanding this victory,
Joram could not recover his dominion over this
country; probably because he was recalled by the
revolt of some of his own subjects, who had taken
the occasion of his absence to rebel, and he feared
that others would follow their example if they had
the like opportunity. So that Edom continued a
kingdom under its own king. *Unto this day*—
When this record was written. Indeed, they were
not brought again under the power of the Jews till
after their return from the captivity of Babylon.
Then Libnah revolted—A considerable city in Ju-
dah belonging to the priests. For the reason why
they revolted, see 2 Chron. xxi. 10, 11. It is pro-
bable they returned to their obedience, because those
words, *unto this day*, which are added to the former
clause, are omitted here.

Verses 26, 27. *Two and twenty years old was
Ahaziah when he began to reign*—How this agrees
with 2 Chron. xxii. 2, see on that place. *The
daughter of Omri*—That is, his grand-daughter,
verse 18. *He walked in the way of the house of
Ahab*—He not only worshipped the calves, but also
Baal. *For he was son-in-law of the house of Ahab*
—And so was corrupted in his religion by his con-
nection with that idolatrous and wicked family. He
was the proper son of Athaliah, daughter of Ahab,
and the grandson-in-law of Ahab, his father Joram
being properly Ahab's son-in-law.

CHAPTER IX.

Elisha sends a young prophet to Ramoth-gilead, with instructions to anoint Jehu king over Israel, whom he charges to destroy the house of Ahab, and fleeth, 1-10. Jehu, being made king, kills Joram in the field of Naboth, 11-26. He kills also Ahaziah, king of Judah, 28-29. Causes Jezebel to be thrown out of a window, who is devoured by dogs, 30-37.

A. M. 3120.
B. C. 884. **A**ND Elisha the prophet called one of ^a the children of the prophets, and said unto him, ^b Gird up thy loins, and take this box of oil in thy hand, ^c and go to Ramoth-gilead:

2 And when thou comest thither, look out there Jehu the son of Jehoshaphat, the son of Nimshi, and go in, and make him arise up from among ^d his brethren, and carry him to an ^e inner chamber;

3 Then ^f take the box of oil, and pour it on his head, and say, Thus saith the LORD, I have anointed thee king over Israel. Then open the door, and flee, and tarry not.

4 ¶ So the young man, even the young man

A. M. 3120.
B. C. 884. the prophet, went to Ramoth-gilead. 5 And when he came, behold, the captains of the host were sitting; and he said, I have an errand to thee, O captain. And Jehu said, Unto which of all us? And he said, To thee, O captain.

6 And he arose, and went into the house; and he poured the oil on his head, and said unto him, ^g Thus saith the LORD God of Israel, I have anointed thee king over the people of the LORD, even over Israel.

7 And thou shalt smite the house of Ahab thy master, that I may avenge the blood of my servants the prophets, and the blood of all the servants of the LORD, ^h at the hand of Jezebel.

^a 1 Kings xx. 35.—^b Chap. iv. 29; Jer. i. 17.—^c Chap. viii. 28, 29.—^d Verses 5, 11.

^e Heb. chamber in a chamber.—^f 1 Kings xix. 16.—^g 1 Kings xix. 16; 2 Chron. xxii. 7.—^h 1 Kings xviii. 4; xxi. 15.

NOTES ON CHAPTER IX.

Verse 1. *And Elisha the prophet called, &c.*—The Prophet Elijah was commanded to anoint Jehu about twelve years before this time; but, because of Ahab's humiliation, the execution of the judgment pronounced upon him and his family was deferred. The office of anointing Jehu therefore, it seems, was left to be performed by Elisha; who did not go himself, either because he was grown old and unfit for such a journey, or because he was a person too well known to be employed in an affair that required secrecy. *Go to Ramoth-gilead*—The kings of Israel and Judah were both absent, and Jehu, it is probable, was left commander-in-chief of the king's army which lay there.

Verses 2, 3. *Make him arise up from among his brethren*—From the other officers of the army, verse 5. *Carry him to an inner chamber*—This he orders, partly that the work might not be hindered, and partly for the security of the young prophet's own person. *And say, Thus saith the Lord, I have anointed, &c.*—This was not the whole message he was to deliver: but the rest of it is particularly declared verses 7-10, and is to be understood here. "According to the Jews, none of the kings of Israel were anointed but those of the house of David, and these only when there was a question about their succession; as Solomon, they say, need not have been anointed, had it not been for the faction of Adonijah. But in the case of Jehu, in whom the succession of the kingdom of Israel was to be translated out of the right line of the family of Ahab into another family, which had no right to the kingdom, but merely the appointment of God, there was a necessity for his unction, in order both

to convey to him a title, and to invest him in the actual possession of the kingdom."—Dodd.

Verse 4. *So the young man went to Ramoth-gilead*—It argued great faith in this young prophet that he undertook so readily the execution of this command. For there was no small danger in anointing a new king, as Elisha himself plainly intimated, when he ordered him to flee away as fast as he could, as soon as he had performed his office.

Verse 5. *Jehu said, Unto which of us all?*—It does not appear that Jehu aimed at the government, or that he ever thought of it, but the commission given him was a perfect surprise to him. Some indeed think he had been anointed before by Elijah, but privately, and with an intimation that he must not act till he received further orders, as Samuel anointed David long before he was to come to the throne. But this is not at all probable.

Verse 6. *He arose and went into the house*—That is, into an inner chamber in the house. *And he poured the oil on his head*—Thereby giving him, in God's name, both a right to the kingdom and the actual possession of it. The Israelites, it must be observed, were still by right and profession the people of God, though they worshipped other gods with him. And it belonged to him to appoint what ruler he pleased over them; which he now did by his prophet. Without this authority, if Jehu had taken the government upon him, he had been a usurper.

Verse 7. *And thou shalt smite the house of Ahab*—Thou shalt execute my judgment upon them, pronounced long ago. *That I may avenge the blood of my servants the prophets, &c.*—That they were idolaters was bad enough, and merited all that

A. M. 3120. 8 For the whole house of Ahab
B. C. 884.

shall perish: and ^b I will cut off from Ahab ⁱ him that pisseth against the wall, and ^h him that is shut up and left in Israel:

9 And I will make the house of Ahab like the house of ¹ Jeroboam the son of Nebat, and like the house of ^m Baasha the son of Ahijah:

10 ^a And the dogs shall eat Jezebel in the portion of Jezreel, and *there shall be none to bury her*. And he opened the door and fled.

11 ¶ Then Jehu came forth to the servants of his lord: and *one* said unto him, *Is all well? wherefore came ^o this mad fellow to thee?* And he said unto them, *Ye know the man, and his communication.*

^h 1 Kings xiv. 10; xxi. 21.—ⁱ 1 Sam. xxv. 22.—^b Deut. xxxii. 36.—¹ 1 Kings xiv. 10; xv. 29; xxi. 22.—^m 1 Kings xvi. 3, 11.—^a 1 Kings xxi. 23; Verses 35, 36.

was brought upon them; yet this is not mentioned here; but the controversy God has with them is for their being persecutors. Nothing fills up the measure of the iniquity of any prince or people so much as this doth; nor brings a surer or sorer ruin. This was the sin which principally brought on Jerusalem both its first and its final destruction, 2 Chron. xxxvi. 16, and Matt. xxiii. 37, 38. Jezebel's whoredoms and witchcrafts were not so provoking to God as her persecuting the prophets and other faithful worshippers of God, killing some, and driving the rest into corners and caves, 1 Kings xviii. 4.

Verse 8. *For the whole house of Ahab shall perish*—That is, all his posterity and all his kindred. Jehu, therefore, having received such a charge, is to be considered, in what he afterward did to the house of Ahab, as acting not out of a spirit of revenge, for he had no quarrel with the house of Ahab; but, as the minister of God, who, by his prophet, authorized and enjoined him to do what follows.

Verse 10. *In the portion of Jezreel*—In that portion of land, in or near the city, which belonged to Naboth. *There shall be none to bury her*—That is, none shall bury her, or she shall not be buried; for it appears from verse 34, that Jehu gave orders to have her buried, sending out persons for that purpose, but they could only find some small remains of her carcass, the dogs having eaten the rest.

Verses 11, 12. *Wherefore came this mad fellow to thee?*—What business has he with thee? And why wouldst thou gratify him so far as to retire to converse with him? They perceived him to be a prophet by his air, habit, and manner of speech, as well as by his accosting Jehu so boldly, and so suddenly vanishing when he had done his business. And these profane soldiers accounted the Lord's prophets madmen, judging their neglect of themselves, and their contempt of temporal wealth and honours, which the wise men of this world so eagerly seek, with their rigid and obscure course of life, to be a kind of infatuation: and considering the holy exercises to

12 And they said, *It is false*; tell us now. And he said, Thus and thus spake he to me, saying, Thus saith the LORD, I have anointed thee king over Israel.

13 Then they hasted, and ^p took every man his garment, and put *it* under him on the top of the stairs, and blew with trumpets, saying, Jehu ² is king.

14 So Jehu the son of Jehoshaphat, the son of Nimshi, conspired against Joram. (Now Joram had kept Ramoth-gilead, he and all Israel, because of Hazael king of Syria.)

15 But ^q King ³ Joram was returned to be healed in Jezreel of the wounds which the Syrians ⁴ had given him, when he fought with

^p Jer. xxix. 26; John x. 20; Acts xxvi. 24; 1 Cor. iv. 10. ^q Matt. xxi. 7.—³ Heb. reigneth.—⁴ Chap. viii. 29.—² Heb. Jehoram.—⁴ Heb. smote.

which they devoted themselves as the effects of a religious phrensy. Indeed, those that have no religion commonly speak of those that are religious with disdain, and look upon them as crack-brained. They said of our Lord, *He is beside himself*, and of St. Paul, that *much learning had made him mad*. The highest wisdom is thus represented as folly, and they that best understand themselves, as persons beside themselves. *He said, You know the man, and his communication*—You know him to be a prophet: why then do you call him a *mad fellow*? And, being a prophet, you may guess what his business is with me; that it is to teach me my duty. Thus he thought to have put them off; but they said, *It is false*—We do not know, and cannot conjecture, what was his errand: but that there is something extraordinary and of great importance in it we plainly perceive, by his calling thee into an inner chamber, by his great exaltation, and by his gesture and carriage. *Tell us now*—His concealing the matter made them the more eager to know it.

Verse 13. *Then they hasted*—Being well pleased with the thing; partly from the advantage which hereby they expected; partly from that desire of change which is in the nature of most men; and principally by God's providence inclining their hearts to Jehu. *And took every man his garment, and put it under him*—In token of great reverence for his person, that they would not have his feet to touch the ground, and that they put themselves and their concerns under his feet and into his disposal. It was a ceremony used in the eastern countries toward superiors: see Matt. xxi. 7. *On the top of the stairs*—In some high and eminent place, whence he might be seen and owned by all the soldiers, who were called together on this great occasion. *Saying, Jehu is king*—They proclaimed him by sound of trumpet to be appointed by God to the kingdom of Israel.

Verses 14, 15. *So Jehu conspired against Joram*—Contrived with the rest of the captains how to

A. M. 3120. Hazael king of Syria.) And Jehu
B. C. 884. said, If it be your minds, *then* ⁵ let
none go forth *nor* escape out of the city to go
to tell it in Jezreel.

16 ¶ So Jehu rode in a chariot, and went to
Jezreel; for Joram lay there. ¹ And Ahaziah
king of Judah was come down to see Joram.

17 And there stood a watchman on the tower
in Jezreel, and he spied the company of Jehu
as he came, and said, I see a company. And
Joram said, Take a horseman and send to meet
them, and let him say, *Is it peace?*

18 So there went one on horseback to meet
him, and said, Thus saith the king, *Is it peace?*
And Jehu said, What hast thou to do with
peace? turn thee behind me. And the watch-
man told, saying, The messenger came to them,
but he cometh not again.

19 Then he sent out a second on horseback,
which came to them, and said, Thus saith the
king, *Is it peace?* And Jehu answered, What

⁵ Heb. *let no escaper go, &c.*—¹ Chap. viii. 29.—² Or, *march-
ing.*—³ Heb. *in madness.*

destroy Joram: for which they had the fairer oppor-
tunity, because he was gone from the army to Jez-
reel. *Now Joram had kept Ramoth-gilead*—That
is kept a strong garrison there, upon the frontiers
of his kingdom, it having been taken by him before
this time, although the taking of it be not mentioned.
He and all Israel, because of Hazael, &c.—He left
an army also there, or in the neighbouring parts, to
watch Hazael's motions; so that Jehu had the army
with him which Joram had left, being gone home to
Jezreel, ill wounded. *Jehu said, Let none go forth
out of the city*—Or, *from the city*: that is, from
within it, or from before it; from the siege or army;
to go tell it in Jezreel—For he knew how necessary
secrecy was to the execution of such great designs
as he had in hand.

Verses 17, 18. *There stood a watchmen on the
tower*—For watchmen were set on high places in
time of peace as well as war wherever the king was,
that he might not be surpris'd. *Let him say, Is it
peace?*—Inquire who it is that comes, and if he
comes on peaceable terms. For he feared lest either
the Syrians had prevail'd at Ramoth-gilead, or some
sedition or rebellion was rais'd against him, which
the example of Libnah, and his own guilty con-
science, made him fear. *Jehu said, What hast thou
to do with peace?*—It is not to thee, but to him that
sent thee, that I will give answer. *Turn thee be-
hind me*—Join thyself to my followers, if thou
wishest for safety. This order he did not dare to
disobey, seeing such a company of soldiers with
Jehu.

Verse 21. *They went out against him*—Or rather,
to meet him, that they might know his intention,

hast thou to do with peace? turn thee
behind me. A. M. 3120.
B. C. 884.

20 And the watchman told, saying, He came
even unto them, and cometh not again: and
the ⁶ driving is like the driving of Jehu the son
of Nimshi; for he driveth ⁷ furiously.

21 And Joram said, ⁸ Make ready. And his
chariot was made ready. And ⁹ Joram king
of Israel and Ahaziah king of Judah went out,
each in his chariot, and they went out against
Jehu, and ⁹ met him in the portion of Naboth
the Jezreelite.

22 And it came to pass, when Joram saw
Jehu, that he said, *Is it peace, Jehu?* And he
answered, What peace, so long as the whore-
doms of thy mother Jezebel and her witchcrafts
are so many?

23 And Joram turned his hands, and fled,
and said to Ahaziah, *There is treachery, O
Ahaziah.*

24 And Jehu ¹⁰ drew a bow with his full

⁶ Heb. *bind.*—² 2 Chron. xxii. 7.—⁷ Heb. *found.*—⁸ Heb.
filled his hand with a bow.

and, by their presence, repress any seditious inclina-
tions which might be in Jehu or his followers. *And
met him in the portion of Naboth*—The very sight
of that ground was enough to make Jehu triumph,
and Joram tremble. The circumstances of events
are sometimes so ordered by Divine Providence as to
make the punishment answer the sin, as face answers
face in a glass.

Verse 22. *Is it peace, Jehu?*—Dost thou come to
me with a peaceable mind, or in a way of hostility?
For now, when it was too late, he began to suspect
some treachery, God hiding it from him before, in
order to his destruction. *And he answered, What
peace, &c.?*—What cause hast thou to expect peace,
when thou hast so long abetted, and dost still abet,
thy mother in her abominable practices? *So long
as the whoredoms, &c.*—This may be understood,
either literally or spiritually; spiritual whoredom,
which is idolatry, being often punished with corpor-
al, and *witchcraft* being often practis'd by idolaters;
or rather, spiritually, of her idolatry, which is often
called *whoredom*, because it is a departing from God,
to whom we are tied by many obligations; and
witchcraft, because it doth so powerfully bewitch
men's minds; and because it is a manifest entering
into covenant with the devil. He mentions not
Joram's, but his mother's sins, because they were
more notorious and infamous; and because they
were the principal cause why God inflicted, and he
was come to execute these judgments. The way of
sin can never be the way of peace.

Verses 23, 24. *Joram turned his hands*—Or the
reins of his chariot; *and said, There is treachery,
O Ahaziah*—Jehu is our enemy: it is time for us to

A. M. 3120. strength, and smote Jehoram between
B. C. 884. his arms, and the arrow went out at his heart, and he ¹¹sunk down in his chariot.

25 Then said *Jehu* to Bidkar his captain, Take up, and cast him in the portion of the field of Naboth the Jezreelite: for remember how that, when I and thou rode together after Ahab his father, 'the LORD laid this burden upon him;

26 Surely I have seen yesterday the ¹²blood of Naboth, and the blood of his sons, saith the LORD; and 'I will requite thee in this ¹³plat, saith the LORD. Now therefore take and cast him into the plat of ground, according to the word of the LORD.

27 ¶ But when Ahaziah the king of Judah

¹¹ Hebrew, bowed.—¹ 1 Kings xxi. 29.—¹² Hebrew, bloods.
¹³ 1 Kings xxi. 19.—¹³ Or, portion.

shift for our safety. *Jehu drew a bow and smote Jehoram between his arms*—Or shoulders, when he was turned or turning back, the chariot being probably open behind, as many times they were. *The arrow went out at his heart*—It was one of God's arrows, which he ordained against the persecutor, and it killed him on the spot. *Cast him in the portion of the field of Naboth*—He died a criminal under the sentence of God, which Jehu, the executioner thereof, pursues in the disposal of the dead body. *When I and thou rode together after Ahab, &c.*—Probably when Ahab went in his chariot, attended with his nobles or chief officers, of which these were two, to take a formal and solemn possession of Naboth's land: for then the Prophet Elijah met him, and denounced this judgment against him, (1 Kings xxi. 17-21,) which was extended to his son. *The Lord laid this burden upon him*—This predicted punishment: prophecies of calamities to come upon individuals or nations are frequently termed burdens in the Scriptures.

Verse 26. *And the blood of his sons*—Who, many commentators have thought, were killed by their father, by Jezebel's advice, to make the possession of the vineyard more sure to Ahab. Some, however, are of opinion, as we have no account in the history of Naboth, (1 Kings xxi.,) that his sons were killed with him, that Jehu does not here repeat the exact words of God by Elijah, but exaggerates the matter, and represents the sons as slain with their father, because, by their being deprived of him and of his estate, they were, in a manner, in as bad a condition as though they had been destroyed. *I will requite thee in this plat*—That very piece of ground, which Ahab, with so much pride and pleasure, had made himself master of, at the expense of the guilt of innocent blood, now became the theatre on which his son's dead body lay unburied and exposed, a spectacle to the world, and a prey to the dogs or fowls, according to the prediction, 1 Kings xxi. 19. *Thus the Lord is*

seen *this*, he fled by the way of the A. M. 3120
garden-house. And Jehu followed B. C. 884.
after him, and said, Smite him also in the chariot. *And they did so* at the going up to Gur, which is by Ibleam. And he fled to ²Megiddo, and died there.

28 And his servants carried him in a chariot to Jerusalem, and buried him in his sepulchre with his fathers in the city of David.

29 And in the eleventh year of Joram the son of Ahab began Ahaziah ^{About}
to reign over Judah. B. C. 884.

30 ¶ And when Jehu was come to Jezreel, Jezebel heard of it; ^{About}
and she B. C. 884.
¹⁴ painted her face, and tired her head, and looked out at a window.

² In the kingdom of Samaria, 2 Chron. xxiii. 9.—⁷ Ezek. xxiii. 40.—¹⁴ Heb. put her eyes in painting.

known by the judgments which he executeth. The son justly deserved the punishment due to the father, because he gave his approbation to the deed of his father, by continuing to keep possession of Naboth's vineyard, and taking no care to repair the injury done to Naboth and his family by the false accusation which had been preferred against him.

Verses 27, 28. *He fled by the way of the garden-house*—By some secret way, hoping to escape while they were busy about Joram. *Jehu said, Smite him also*—As you have done Joram, for he also is of the house of Ahab, chap. viii. 18. *And they did so*—They wounded him, but not mortally; being the more remiss in executing Jehu's sentence against him, either because they were not so much concerned in his, as in Joram's death; or because they had some regard for him for Jehoshaphat's sake. *He fled to Megiddo, and died there*—The account of his death is briefly and imperfectly given here, and the defects are supplied in the book of Chronicles, (which was in a great part written to supply things omitted in the book of Kings,) and out of both, the history may be thus completed. He fled first to Megiddo, and thence to Samaria, where he was taken, and thence brought to Jehu, and by his sentence was put to death at Megiddo. *And his servants carried him to Jerusalem, &c.*—Which they did, by Jehu's permission, out of respect to Jehoshaphat's memory, 2 Chron. xxii. 9.

Verse 30. *Jezebel heard of it, &c.*—She had heard that Jehu had slain her son, and slain him for her murders, idolatries, and other crimes, and thrown his dead body into the portion of Naboth, according to the word of the Lord; and now she learned he was come to Jezreel, where she could not but dread falling herself next a sacrifice to his revenging sword. Here we see how she meets her fate. *She painted her face*—Rendered in the margin, *put her eyes in painting.* The word פּוּחַ, *puh*, translated *painting*, signifies a mineral substance, *stibium*, otherwise called

A. M. 3120. 31 And as Jehu entered in at the
B. C. 884. gate, she said, "Had Zimri peace,
who slew his master?"

32 And he lifted up his face to the window,
and said, Who is on my side? who? And
there looked out to him two or three ¹⁶ eunuchs.

33 And he said, Throw her down. So they

* 1 Kings xvi. 9-20.—¹⁶ Or, chamberlains.

plumbago, or black-lead, a kind of ochre of very fine and loose parts. The word occurs again, Jer. iv. 30, and both there and here is mentioned as somewhat with which women coloured their eyes. It made them look black, and also larger, by dilating their eye-brows; both which circumstances were thought to give them additional beauty. At this day the women, in many parts of the East, tinge their eyes with black to heighten their beauty. *And tired her head*—That is, dressed and adorned it, as the word *תִּיב*, *thet-b.* here used, signifies. These things she did, hoping that, by her majestic dress and demeanour, she should strike Jehu and his followers with such awe, that they would be intimidated, and thereby prevented from offering her any personal injury; or rather, because, perceiving her case to be desperate, and that she would not be suffered to live, she was resolved to die with honour and gallantry. *And looked out at a window*—She placed herself at a window at the entering of the gate of the king's palace, to affront Jehu, and set him at defiance.

Verse 31. *Had Zimri peace, who slew his master?*—Remember that thy brother traitor, Zimri, had but a very short enjoyment of the benefit of his treason, and was speedily and severely punished for it by my grand-father Omri, (see the margin,) and expect thou the same treatment from some of my posterity. She took no notice of the hand of God gone out against her family, but flew in the face of him who was only a sword in that hand. Thus men are very apt, when they are in trouble, to break out into passion against the instruments of their trouble, when they ought to be submissive to God, and angry at themselves only. The cases of Zimri and Jehu were not at all parallel. Zimri, who had come to the throne by blood and treachery, and who, within seven days, was constrained to burn the palace over his head, and himself in it, had no warrant for assuming the government, but was incited to do it purely by his own ambition and cruelty; whereas Jehu was anointed to be king at the express command of God, given to Elijah (1 Kings xix. 16,) and in all he did against the house of Ahab, acted by divine direction. In comparing persons and things, we must carefully distinguish between the precious and the vile; and take heed, lest in the fate of sinful men we read the doom of useful men.

Verses 32, 33. *He said, Who is on my side?*—He had been called out by God to the work of punishing those who had corrupted the land, and he here calls out for assistance in doing it. *And there looked out to him two or three eunuchs*—Or chamberlains,

threw her down: and *some* of her blood was sprinkled on the wall, and on the horses: and he trode her under foot.

34 And when he was come in, he did eat and drink, and said, Go, see now this cursed woman, and bury her: for "she is a king's daughter."

* 1 Kings xvi. 31.

for such used to attend upon queens in their chambers. "And by their great fidelity and obsequiousness, they generally gained the esteem, and were admitted to the confidence, of those they served; and so, very often, into places of great trust and profit. It is remarkable, however, of Jezebel's eunuchs, that they were far from being faithful to her; to let us see how suddenly courtiers are wont to change with the fortune of their masters." *He said, Throw her down. So they threw her down*—Being mercenary creatures, they quickly comply with Jehu's command, sacrificing her life to save their own. "Thus, as she had done, so she suffered. She had commanded Naboth to be stoned, and now she is stoned herself: for there were two ways of stoning among the Hebrews, either by throwing stones at malefactors till they were knocked down and killed, or by throwing them down from a high place, and so dashing them to pieces."—Dodd, who refers to Patrick and Calmet on the punishments of the Jews. *And he trode her under foot*—Houbigant renders it, *they, that is, the horses, trod her under foot*, after she had been dashed against the wall and pavement, which, with the horses, were besmeared with her blood.

Verse 34. *Go, see now this cursed woman*—She had been the greatest delinquent in the house of Ahab. She had introduced Baal; slain the Lord's prophets; contrived the murder of Naboth; excited her husband first, and then her sons, to do wickedly. She had been a curse to her country, and one whose memory all who loved their country execrated. Three reigns her reign had lasted, but now, at length, her day was come to fall, and meet with the due reward of her deeds. *And bury her, for she is a king's daughter*—He does not say, *because she was a king's wife*, lest he should seem to show any respect to that wicked house of Ahab, which God had devoted to ignominy and destruction. When Jehu gave this order about burying Jezebel, he seems to have forgotten the prediction of the prophet, and the charge given, verse 10. But though he had forgotten it, God had not: while he was eating and drinking, the dogs had devoured her dead body; so that there was nothing left but her bare skull, (the painted face was gone,) and her feet and hands. The hungry dogs paid no respect to the dignity of her extraction: a king's daughter was no more to them than a common person. It is probable, when the horsemen were gone, who trod her under foot, the footmen stripped her, and left her in her own blood exposed to the dogs, that came out of the city in great numbers, by the ordination of Providence, and with a

A. M. 3120. 35 And they went to bury her: but
B. C. 884. they found no more of her than the
scull, and the feet, and the palms of *her*
hands.

36 Wherefore they came again, and told him.
And he said, This is the word of the LORD,
which he spake ¹⁶ by his servant Elijah the

¹⁶ Heb. by the hand of.

more than common hunger, otherwise they could
not have devoured the body in so short a time.

Verses 36, 37. *He said, This is the word of the
Lord*—He now calls to mind the words of the Pro-
phet Elijah, which before he had forgot, or did not
regard. *And the carcass of Jezebel, &c.*—These
words are not extant in the place where this prophe-
cy is first mentioned, 1 Kings xxi. 23; but are
here added by Jehu, by way of explication and am-
plification. *So that they shall not say, This is Je-
zebel*—No memory of her, nothing whereby it might
be known there had been such a woman as Jezebel,
should remain of her, as a picture or effigies, to

Tishbite, saying, ^b In the portion of A. M. 3120.
Jezreel shall dogs eat the flesh of B. C. 884.
Jezebel:

37 And the carcass of Jezebel shall be ^a as
dung upon the face of the field in the portion
of Jezreel; so that they shall not say, This is
Jezebel.

^b 1 Kings xxi. 23.—^a Psa. lxxxiii. 10.

which men might point and say, *This is Jezebel*.
No monument was made of her, and she had no sepulchre but in the belly of dogs.

Upon the whole, what is recorded in this chapter
shows that the divine threatenings are never in vain:
that the curse of God pursues princes and families
where impiety reigns. Let it be observed, likewise,
that Ahaziah king of Judah, because he imitated the
kings of Israel in their idolatries and other sins, and
was united with Jehoram king of Israel, perished
with him. Those who become the companions and
imitators of the wicked, are involved, sooner or later,
in the same judgments with them.

CHAPTER X.

*Jehu destroys all the family of Ahab, 1-12. And the brethren of Ahaziah king of Judah, 13, 14. Takes Jehonadab with
him, 15-17. Causes the priests and worshippers of Baal to be slain, 18-25. Destroys the images and house of Baal,
26-28. Yet retains the worship of the calves, 29-31. Which God punishes by Hazael, 32, 33. Jehu's death, 34-37.*

A. M. 3120. **AND** Ahab had seventy sons in
B. C. 884. Samaria. And Jehu wrote let-
ters, and sent to Samaria, unto the rulers of
Jezreel, to the elders, and to ¹ them that brought
up Ahab's children, saying,

2 Now as soon as this letter cometh to you,

¹ Hebrew,

seeing your master's sons are with A. M. 3120.
you, and there are with you chariots B. C. 884.
and horses, a fenced city also, and armour;

3 Look even out the best and meekest of your
master's sons, and set *him* on his father's throne,
and fight for your master's house.

nourishers.

NOTES ON CHAPTER X.

Verse 1. *Ahab had seventy sons*—Grandsons are
probably comprehended here under the name of
sons, as is usual in the Scriptures: though, by several
wives, he might have as many sons as Gideon had.
These sons or grandsons were now in Samaria, either
because they had been bred up there, that being the
chief city of the kingdom; or because they had fled
thither, upon receiving tidings of the slaughter of
Joram; or had been conveyed thither, from different
parts, by their friends, as to the strongest place.
Here, as appears probable from Jehu's message, they
intended to defend themselves and Ahab's children,
and to set up one as king in Joram's stead. *Jehu
wrote letters unto the rulers of Jezreel*—Hebrew,
the princes of Jezreel, that is, the great persons and
officers of the court, which then was, and for some
time had been, at Jezreel. These, it seems, had

either fled to Samaria upon the news of Jehu's ac-
tions and successes, or had been sent thither by
Joram with his sons, to take care of them there. *To
the elders*—Termed such from their age, or rather
from their office, being the magistrates or senators
of Samaria. *And to them that brought up Ahab's
children*—That had a more particular care of the
several children under the inspection of the princes
and elders here mentioned.

Verse 3. *Fight ye for your master's house*—This
he said, because, perhaps, he had received notice of
their intentions to do so, and that they were consult-
ing about a successor to Joram: or to try them,
whether they would do so, or would be true to him
and his designs: or, which is still more likely, he
insults over them, and denounces war against them
with scorn and derision, being secure of the event,
and knowing that they were not able to oppose him.

A. M. 3120. 4 But they were exceedingly afraid, B. C. 884. and said, Behold, two kings stood not before him: how then shall we stand?

5 And he that was over the house, and he that was over the city, the elders also, and the bringers up of the children, sent to Jehu, saying, We are thy servants, and will do all that thou shalt bid us; we will not make any king: do thou that which is good in thine eyes.

6 Then he wrote a letter the second time to them, saying, If ye be mine, and if ye will hearken unto my voice, take ye the heads of the men your master's sons, and come to me to Jezreel by to-morrow this time. (Now the king's sons being seventy persons, were with the great men of the city, which brought them up.)

^a Heb. for me.—^a 1 Kings xxi. 21.

Verse 4. *Behold, two kings stood not before him*—All the power and interest of two kings, either in Jezreel or in the army, could not prevent his executing his design, his killing them both, and invading the kingdom of one of them. It is true, he surprised these kings, which considerably weakens their argument; but fear and self-love made them easily yield to it.

Verse 5. *He that was over the house*—The chief governor of the king's palace. *He that was over the city*—The chief magistrate, or military governor. *We will do all that thou shalt bid us*—They propose no conditions or delays, but submit all to his mercy.

Verse 6. *He wrote a letter the second time*—Thus Jezebel is requited for her letter, directed in like manner to the elders of Naboth's city, whereby his life was wickedly taken away: and it is probable that some of these elders were concerned in that very business, which makes the judgment of God more remarkable. *Take ye the heads of the men*—This word, *men*, seems to imply that some of them, at least, were grown up, who doubtless trod in their parents' steps: and those that were younger were justly cut off for their parents' sins; of which see on Exod. xx. 5. "Besides the accomplishment of the divine decree," says Dr. Dodd, "Jehu had a further design in requesting this cruel service of the rulers, and elders, and great men of the nation, namely, hereby to involve them in the same crime and conspiracy with himself; for, by prevailing with them to murder Ahab's kinsmen in this manner, he bound them so closely to his interest, that if any of the inferior people had been inclined to oppose his designs, they were, by this means, deprived of any man of distinction to head them; and not only so, but, by this expedient, Jehu thought that he might in a great measure lessen, if not entirely remove the odium of his own cruel and perfidious conduct."

Verse 7. *They took the king's sons, and slew*

7 And it came to pass, when the letter came to them, that they took the king's sons, and slew seventy persons, and put their heads in baskets, and sent them to Jezreel.

8 ¶ And there came a messenger, and told him, saying, They have brought the heads of the king's sons. And he said, Lay ye them in two heaps at the entering in of the gate until the morning.

9 And it came to pass in the morning, that he went out, and stood, and said to all the people, Ye be righteous: behold, I conspired against my master, and slew him: but who slew all these?

10 Know now that there shall fall unto the earth nothing of the word of the LORD, which

^b Chap. ix. 14, 24.—^c 1 Sam. iii. 19.

seventy persons—Having been wickedly obsequious to Jezebel's order for the murder of Naboth, now, by the same base spirit, they are as pliable to Jehu, and as ready to obey his orders for the murder of Ahab's sons. From this example, princes may learn two important lessons: 1st, Not to place any dependence on the attachment or fidelity of those who are not influenced by the fear of God, and the dictates of conscience: for who can reasonably expect him to be true to his prince who is false to his God? 2d, Not to aim at arbitrary power, lest they be found rolling a stone, which, some time or other, will return upon themselves. Princes that make their people slaves, take the readiest way to make them rebels; and by forcing men's consciences, as Jezebel did, they lose their hold of them.

Verse 8. *Lay them at the entering in of the gate*—The place of judicature, to signify that this was an act of God's righteous judgment: and this being the place of public concourse for justice and other business, and where people were continually passing and repassing, the laying them there was to expose them to public view, that all might know there was no one left of Ahab's posterity to reign over them.

Verses 9, 10. *He said to all the people, Ye be righteous*—This is spoken ironically: as much as to say, You may look upon me as a very wicked man, for rebelling against my master and killing him: but look here; see, your chief men, the confidants and favourites of Joram, have slain seventy of his sons committed to their custody! *Know now, &c.*—As if he had said, The truth is, neither I nor they are to be blamed, nor you, that assisted and encouraged me herein; for this is not man's work, but God's, and done at his command. *The Lord hath done that which he spake by his servant Elijah*—Whom he mentions rather than Elisha; partly because Elijah was now dead, and therefore his name and memory were more sacred than Elisha's, who was yet alive;

A. M. 3120. the LORD spake concerning the house
B. C. 884. of Ahab: for the LORD hath done
that which he spake ^d by ^b his servant Elijah.

11 So Jehu slew all that remained of the house of Ahab in Jezreel, and all his great men, and his ⁴ kinsfolks, and his priests, until he left him none remaining.

12 ¶ And he arose and departed, and came to Samaria. And as he was at the ⁵ shearing-house in the way,

13 ⁶ Jehu met with the brethren of Ahaziah king of Judah, and said, Who are ye? And they answered, We are the brethren of Ahaziah; and we go down ⁷ to salute the children of the king and the children of the queen.

14 And he said, Take them alive. And they

⁴ 1 Kings xxi. 19, 21, 29.—⁵ Heb. by the hand of.—⁶ Or, acquaintance.—⁷ Hebrew, house of shepherds binding sheep. Chap. viii. 29; 2 Chron. xxii. 8.—⁸ Heb. found.

it being the general practice and folly of mankind, to value and honour, after their death, those whom they contemned while they lived; and partly because Elijah's prophecy was known and famous, while Elisha's was delivered in a corner, and that not from his own mouth, but by one of the sons of the prophets.

Verse 11. *So Jehu slew all his great men*—Whom Ahab had advanced and made great in wealth, or honour and quality; who had been partners with him in his sins, and were likely to avenge Joram's death. *And his priests*—Who had served him in his idolatrous worship, and confirmed him in it. Or, *his chief officers of state*, as the word rendered *priests* sometimes signifies, and is translated: see 2 Sam. viii. 18; 1 Chron. xviii. 17. *Until he left him none remaining*—To wit, in that place: but there were still some remaining in Samaria, (verse 17,) whom he afterward destroyed, and some of the royal seed of Judah, descended from Ahab's daughter.

Verses 12–14. *And he arose, and came to Samaria*—Having finished his work in Jezreel, he went to prosecute it in the chief city of his kingdom, which most needed reformation. *Jehu met the brethren of Ahaziah*—Not strictly such; for his brethren, properly speaking, had been carried captive, and, it seems, killed also, before this time, as we read 2 Chron. xxi. 17. Therefore, by *brethren* here, we must understand his brother's sons, as is explained 2 Chron. xxii. 8, or others of his near kinsmen, such being often called *brethren* in Scripture. *We go down to salute the children of the king, &c.*—They undoubtedly had set out from Jerusalem for this purpose, before they knew any thing of Joram's being killed, and Jehu's having seized the kingdom: and it appears by their answer, that they did not yet know any thing of it. *And he said, Take them alive, &c.*—They were allied to the family of Ahab by the mother's side, (chap. viii. 18,) and therefore

took them alive, and slew them at the
pit of the shearing-house, *even two*
and forty men; neither left he any of them.

15 ¶ And when he was departed thence, he ⁸ lighted on ^f Jehonadab the son of ^g Rechab coming to meet him: and he ⁹ saluted him, and said to him, Is thy heart right, as my heart is with thy heart? And Jehonadab answered, It is. If it be, ^h give me thy hand. And he gave *him* his hand; and he took him up to him into the chariot.

16 And he said, Come with me, and see my ⁱ zeal for the LORD. So they made him ride in his chariot.

17 And when he came to Samaria, ^k he slew all that remained unto Ahab in Samaria, till he

⁷ Heb. to the peace of, &c.—⁸ Heb. found.—^f Jer. xxxv. 6, &c.—^g 1 Chron. ii. 55.—⁹ Heb. blessed.—^h Ezra x. 19. ⁱ 1 Kings xix. 10.—^k Chap. ix. 8; 2 Chron. xxii. 8.

being afraid lest, if they were suffered to live, they might find means to be avenged of him for the death of Joram, Ahaziah, Jezebel, and their children, whom they were going to visit, he ordered them to be slain; perhaps under pretence of fulfilling Elijah's prophecy, 1 Kings xxi. 21. It seems, however, evident, that prediction did not extend so far, but would have been amply fulfilled by cutting off all of his family and blood within the kingdom of the ten tribes.

Verses 15, 16. *He lighted on Jehonadab*—A Kenite, (1 Chron. ii. 55,) and a man of singular prudence and piety, as appears from this history, and from Jer. xxxv. 6; from him descended the race of the Rechabites. *And he saluted him*—That is, Jehu saluted Jehonadab. It is likely Jehonadab was in great favour with the people, on account of the strictness of his life and virtue, and that this, in part, induced Jehu to speak so kindly to him, and court his friendship. *And said, Is thy heart right, &c.*—Dost thou love me as sincerely and fervently as I love thee, and approve of my present proceedings, as I approve of thy institutions? *If it be, give me thy hand*—As a sign of friendship and fidelity. These seem to be the words of Jehu. *And he said, Come, and see my zeal for the Lord*—For the vindication of his honour, and the execution of his commands. Do not believe my words, but mine actions, which thine eyes shall behold. *So they made him ride in his chariot*—The servants opened the door of his chariot, and Jehu took him up into it. And while he thus put some honour upon Jehonadab, he received more honour from him. For all pious and sober people would think the better of Jehu when they saw Jehonadab in the chariot with him. "This is not the only time," says Henry, "that the piety of some has been made to serve the policy of others; and that designing men have strengthened themselves by drawing good men into their interests."

Verse 17. *He slew all that remained unto Ahab in Samaria*—Either all his household, or, rather, all

A. M. 3120. had destroyed him, according to the
B. C. 854. saying of the LORD, ¹ which he spake
to Elijah.

18 ¶ And Jehu gathered all the people together, and said unto them, ^a Ahab served Baal a little; but Jehu shall serve him much.

19 Now therefore call unto me all the ^a prophets of Baal, all his servants, and all his priests; let none be wanting: for I have a great sacrifice to do to Baal: whosoever shall be wanting, he shall not live. But Jehu did it in

¹ 1 Kings xxi. 21.—^a 1 Kings xvi. 31, 32.—^a 1 Kings xxii. 6.
¹⁰ Heb. sanctify.

his kindred and relations, though more remote from him. This he did, no doubt, under pretence of zeal for God, and to fulfil the prophecy of Elijah; but there is too much reason to apprehend, from several of his actions, and, indeed, his general conduct, that in this, as well as in several of the other slaughters which he made, his chief motive was to secure the kingdom to himself and his posterity.

Verse 18. *Jehu gathered all the people together*—By their representatives, their elders, or rulers, as was usual, to whom he imparts his mind, and who, being generally corrupt, and mere time-servers, and such as had no sense of religion, made no opposition to his resolution, but seemed to comply with it. *Ahab served Baal a little, but Jehu shall serve him much*—As if he had said, My quarrel is only with Ahab's family, and not with Baal, which my actions shall show: which words, being manifestly false, and spoken with a design to deceive, cannot be excused from sin; this being an immoveable principle, that we must not do the least evil, that the greatest good may come. Though it was lawful, and even commendable, to slay the worshippers of Baal, God's law having enjoined that idolaters should be put to death, yet it was by no means lawful to use treachery, and to deceive them to their destruction, on the faith of false pretences. These were actions no way suitable or agreeable to the God of truth, and such as ought never to have been practised by any that desired to please him.

Verse 19. *Call unto me all the prophets of Baal, and all his servants*—Either, 1st, All his ministers, of whom it seems there were several sorts, of which two are here distinctly mentioned, his prophets and priests; and the rest, of the inferior sort, may be comprehended under the general title of servants, because they were to attend upon the others in their ministrations. Or, 2d, All his worshippers, as the word here rendered servants is translated in the close of this verse. If it be inquired how all these could be contained in one house of Baal, it may be answered, that the number of the worshippers of Baal had been greatly diminished by the ministry of Elijah and Elisha, and the rest of the prophets; and by Joram's neglect and disuse of that worship. Besides, this house or temple of Baal was probably very large and capacious, being in the royal city,

subtlety, to the intent that he might destroy the worshippers of Baal. A. M. 3120. B. C. 684.

20 And Jehu said, ¹⁰ Proclaim a solemn assembly for Baal. And they proclaimed it.

21 And Jehu sent through all Israel: and all the worshippers of Baal came, so that there was not a man left that came not. And they came into the ^o house of Baal; and the house of Baal was ¹¹ full from one end to another.

22 And he said unto him that was over the vestry, Bring forth vestments for all the wor-

^o 1 Kings xvi. 32.—¹¹ Or, so full, that they stood mouth to mouth.

nigh the king's palace, and intended for the use of the king, queen, and whole court, and for great and high solemnities, and therefore was the chief building of the sort in the kingdom. Moreover, as by the house or temple of God, at Jerusalem, we are frequently to understand, not only the principal building, but all the other buildings or courts belonging to it, in which the worshippers stood when they worshipped, so it might be here; and in that case there would be space sufficient for all the worshippers of Baal that can reasonably be thought to have been at that time in Israel.

Verses 20, 21. *Jehu said, Proclaim, &c.*—Hebrew, sanctify. Prepare yourselves and all things necessary for this solemn day, and sacrifice, and feast, which I intend to keep. *There was not a man left that came not*—It may seem strange, after what Jehu had done in destroying the family of Ahab, that the worshippers of Baal could be induced to assemble together. But it should be observed, that as Jehu was a person of known indifference in matters of religion, who in this respect had always conformed to the humours of the court, and in the reign of King Ahab had been a strenuous worshipper of Baal; the people could not tell, when they read his proclamation for a great feast to Baal, but that he had returned, in good earnest, to the religion which he once embraced, and only deserted for a while, in complacency to others. But whether they deluded themselves into this persuasion or not, they knew by experience that Jehu was a man of a fierce and bloody temper, who would not fail to put his threats in execution; and, therefore, reading in the same proclamation, *Whosoever shall be wanting, he shall not live*, (verse 19,) they found themselves reduced to this sad dilemma, either to go or die. Hence they thought it the wisest method to run the hazard, and throw themselves upon his mercy; having this, at least, to plead for themselves, that they were not disobedient to his commands. See Poole and Dodd.

Verse 22. *He said, Bring forth vestments*—Sacred garments, such as were used by the priests, and others of God's ministers in his service; whence idolaters borrowed the custom of using such garments in the worship of their false gods. *For all the worshippers of Baal*—It can hardly be sup-

A. M. 3120. shippers of Baal. And he brought
B. C. 884. them forth vestments.

23 And Jehu went, and Jehonadab the son of Rechab, into the house of Baal, and said unto the worshippers of Baal, Search, and look that there be here with you none of the servants of the Lord, but the worshippers of Baal only.

24 And when they went in to offer sacrifices and burnt-offerings, Jehu appointed fourscore men without, and said, *If any of the men whom I have brought into your hands escape, he that letteth him go, his life shall be for the life of him.*

25 And it came to pass, as soon as he had made an end of offering the burnt-offering, that Jehu said to the guard and to the captains, Go

in, and slay them; let none come forth. And they smote them with

the edge of the sword; and the guard and the captains cast them out, and went to the city of the house of Baal.

26 And they brought forth the images out of the house of Baal, and burned them.

27 And they brake down the image of Baal, and brake down the house of Baal, and made it a draught-house unto this day.

28 Thus Jehu destroyed Baal out of Israel.

29 ¶ Howbeit, from the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who made Israel to sin, Jehu departed not from after them, to wit, the golden calves that were in Beth-el, and that were in Dan.

¶ 1 Kings xx. 39.—¹² Hebrew, the mouth.—¹³ Hebrew, statues.

¶ 1 Kings xiv. 23.—[†] Ezra vi. 11; Daniel ii. 5; iii. 29.
¶ 1 Kings xii. 28.

posed, that absolutely all the people that worshipped Baal, and were now assembled, are included here, and had vestments brought them; because the people in general wore no distinct garments in their worship, whether of Jehovah or Baal, but the priests and other ministers only.

Verse 23. *And Jehonadab*—Whom the Baalites, possibly, did not know, and therefore suspected nothing inimical to their worship: or, if any of the more sagacious began to suspect any thing, it was now too late to amend their error. *Look that there be here with you none of the servants of the Lord*—Intimating that their presence would offend Baal, and pollute his worship. Jehu's real intention, however, was, that none but the worshippers of Baal should be slain, and therefore he caused this search to be made, lest any other Israelite, out of curiosity, or from any other motive, should have entered the temple.

Verses 24, 25. *When they went in to offer sacrifices*—When some went to the altar to offer in the name of the rest. *Jehu appointed fourscore men without*—Far more being, doubtless, in readiness to assist them in case of any opposition. *As he had made an end of offering*—That is, as the chief priest of Baal had made an end. So far Jehu suffered them to proceed, either because till then they were not all come into the house; or because, being taken in the very act of gross idolatry, their punishment would appear to be more just and reasonable. *Jehu said to the guard and the captains*—To the fourscore men and their officers. *The guard, &c., cast them out*—Cast their carcasses out of the house. *And went to the city of the house of Baal*—To some buildings belonging to that house; which may be here called the city, because they were very numerous and capacious. For as there were divers chambers and rooms built without the temple, belonging to it, for the use of the priests and Levites; so it may probably be conceived that this famous temple of Baal

had many such buildings, in some of which the priests of Baal, or of the groves, (whereof there were numbers belonging to the king's court, 1 Kings xviii. 19,) peradventure might dwell; and others of them might be for divers uses, belonging to the house and service of Baal: and to these buildings the guard might hastily go to surprise and put to death these inferior ministers of Baal, who were there employed in services belonging to that house, or that solemnity.

Verses 26, 27. *The images of the house of Baal*—A collection of different images. *The image of Baal*—The chief image, which they worshipped more than the rest. *And brake down the house of Baal*—As, no doubt, they did the rest of the houses of Baal in Israel. *And made it a draught-house*—A sink or common shore; that the remembrance of it might be blotted out or made infamous. Thus was the worship of Baal quite destroyed, at least for the present, out of Israel, though it had once prevailed so far, that there were but seven thousand, of all the thousands of Israel, that had not bowed the knee to Baal. Thus will Jehovah, sooner or later, triumph over all the gods of the heathen.

Verse 29. *Jehu departed not from them*—He was partial in his reformation, and did not put away all the evil, because his heart was not right with God. He departed from the sins of Ahab, but not from the sins of Jeroboam: discarded Baal, but adhered to the calves. The worship of Baal was indeed the greater evil, and more heinous in the sight of God, but the worship of the calves was a great evil; and true religion not only implies conversion from gross sin, but from all sin, and not only from false gods, but from false modes of worshipping the true God. The worship of Baal, being upheld by the house of Ahab, also contributed to uphold that house, the numerous ministers of that idolatry being, of course, engaged to support the family which supported them, and with which they must stand or fall; hence Jehu

A. M. 3130. 30 And the LORD said unto Jehu,
B. C. 884. Because thou hast done well in exe-
cuting *that which is right* in mine eyes, and
hast done unto the house of Ahab according
to all that *was* in my heart, ¹thy children of
the fourth generation shall sit on the throne
of Israel.

31 But Jehu ¹⁴took no heed to walk in the
law of the LORD God of Israel with all his
heart: for he departed not from ²the sins of
Jeroboam, which made Israel to sin.

B. C. 860. 32 ¶ In those days the LORD began
¹⁵to cut Israel short: and ³Hazeael
smote them in all the coasts of Israel;

¹ Verse 35; Chap. xiii. 1, 10; xiv. 23; xv. 8, 12.—¹⁴ Heb. observed not.—² 1 Kings xiv. 16.—¹⁵ Hebrew, to cut off the ends.

could easily part with that worship, and labour to destroy it; but the worship of the calves was a politic idolatry, begun and kept up for reasons of state, to prevent the return of the ten tribes to the house of David, and therefore Jehu clave to it. But true religion is not only a conversion from those sins which are hostile to our secular interests, but from those that appear to be friendly to them; in forsaking which is the great trial, whether we can deny ourselves for God, and trust in him.

Verse 30. *The Lord said unto Jehu*—By some prophet. *Because thou hast done well, &c.*—That is, in part. The extirpating of idolaters and idolatry was a thing so far right in God's eyes, idolatry being an iniquity which he visits as surely and severely as any other, and which is a source of a variety of other abominations. *Thy children of the fourth generation shall sit on the throne*—Which they did, namely, Jehoahaz, Joash, Jeroboam, and Zachariah. This was more than took place in any of the other royal families of that kingdom. Of the house of Ahab, indeed, there were four kings, but the last two, namely, Ahaziah and Joram, were brothers, so that its reign reached only to the third generation, and that whole family continued but about forty-five years in all: whereas Jehu's house continued in power for four generations after himself, and in all

33 From Jordan ¹⁶eastward, all the A. M. 3120.
land of Gilead, the Gadites, and the B. C. 884.
Reubenites, and the Manassites, from Aroer,
which *is* by the river Arnon, ¹⁷even ⁷Gilead
and Bashan.

34 ¶ Now the rest of the acts of Jehu, and all that he did, and all his might, *are* they not written in the book of the Chronicles of the kings of Israel?

35 And Jehu slept with his fathers: and they buried him in Samaria. And Jehoahaz his son reigned in his stead.

36 And ¹⁸the time that Jehu reigned over Israel in Samaria *was* twenty and eight years.

² Chapter viii. 12.—¹⁶ Hebrew, toward the rising of the sun. ¹⁷ Or, even to Gilead and Bashan.—⁷ Amos i. 3.—¹⁸ Heb. the days were.

about a hundred and twenty years: for no services done for God shall go unrewarded.

Verse 31. *But Jehu took no care to walk in the law of the Lord God of Israel*—He abolished the worship of Baal, but did not keep up the worship of God, nor walk in his law. He showed great zeal and care for the rooting out of a false religion; but in the true religion he showed no care, took no heed: was not solicitous to please God and do his duty. *With all his heart*—His heart, his whole heart, was not engaged in, nor influenced by religion; nor was he truly zealous for the glory of God, and the advancement of true and genuine piety in himself and others. It is evident his own religion was very superficial, and yet God made use of him as an instrument of effecting some reformation in Israel. It is a pity that those who do good to others, are not always good themselves.

Verse 32. *In those days*—In the time of Jehu's life and reign, verse 34. *The Lord began to cut Israel short*—Either to diminish the number of the people by cutting them off, or to straiten their borders. *Hazeael smote them in all the coasts of Israel*—In their borders, or the outermost part of their land, beyond Jordan, as it is explained verse 33; and at this time, probably, he executed the cruelties predicted by Elisha, chap. viii. 12.

CHAPTER XI.

Athaliah destroys all the seed royal, except Joash, who is saved by Jehoshcaba, and hid six years in the house of God, 1-3. In the seventh year he is made king by Jehoiada and the captains, 4-12. Athaliah is slain, 13-16. Jehoiada restores the worship of God, and the people break down the images of Baal, 17-21.

A. M. 3120.
B. C. 884.

AND when ^aAthaliah ^bthe mother of Ahaziah saw that her son was dead, she arose and destroyed all the ¹seed royal.

2 But ²Jehosheba, the daughter of King Joram, sister of Ahaziah, took ³Joash the son of Ahaziah, and stole him from among the king's sons *which were slain*; and they hid him, *even* him and his nurse, in the bed-chamber, from Athaliah, so that he was not slain.

3 And he was with her hid in the house of

^a 2 Chron. xxii. 10. — ^b Chapter viii. 26. — ¹ Heb. *seed of the kingdom*.

NOTES ON CHAPTER XI.

Verse 1. *And destroyed all the seed royal*—All of the royal family that had not been cut off by Jehu and others, except one, mentioned verse 2. To this wickedness she was impelled by many motives: 1st, By rage to see Ahab's family destroyed, which made her resolve that the family of David should share the same fate. 2d, By ambition and desire of rule, to make way for which many persons have destroyed their nearest relations. 3d, By her zeal for idolatry and the worship of Baal, which she intended to establish, and to which she knew the house of David were implacable enemies. 4th, By a regard to her own defence, that, by getting into the throne, which she could not do without destroying the royal family, she might secure herself from Jehu's fury, who, she understood, was resolved utterly to destroy all the branches of Ahab's house, of which she was one. Possibly those whom she slew were Jehoram's children by another wife. This was the fruit of Jehoshaphat's marrying his son to a daughter of that idolatrous house of Ahab: and this dreadful judgment God permitted to come upon him and his, to show how much he abhors all such affinities. "The consideration of the fate," says Dr. Dodd, "which attended these royal families, is sufficient to make one thankful to God for having been born of meaner parentage. The whole offspring of Jeroboam, Baasha, and Ahab, was cut off for their idolatry; and the kings of Judah, having contracted an affinity with the house of Ahab, and being by them seduced into the same crime, were so destroyed, by three successive massacres, that there was but one left: for first Jehoram slew all his brethren, then Jehu all his brother's children, and now Athaliah destroys all the rest that her executioners can meet with."

Verse 2. *But Jehosheba*—Called Jehoshabeath, 2 Chron. xxii. 11; *the daughter of King Joram*—Namely, by another wife, and not by this Athaliah: for Athaliah would not have suffered her daughter to be married to the high-priest of the true God, nor would he, in all likelihood, have married the daughter of such an idolatrous woman. *Stole him from among the king's sons, &c.*—Either took him from among the slain, he happening not to be quite despatched; or else secretly conveyed him away, before the execution was done. *And they hid him*—Je-

the LORD six years. And Athaliah ^{A. M. 3126.} did reign over the land. ^{B. C. 878.}

4 ¶ And ^cthe seventh year Jehoiada sent and fetched the rulers over ^{B. C. 878.} hundreds, with the captains and the guard, and brought them to him into the house of the LORD, and made a covenant with them, and took an oath of them in the house of the LORD, and showed them the king's son.

5 And he commanded them, saying, *This is the thing that ye shall do: A third part of you*

^a 2 Chron. xxii. 11, *Jehoshabeach*. — ^b Or, *Jehoash*. — ^c 2 Chron. xxiii. 1, &c.

hosheba and her husband Jehoiada. *And his nurse, in the bed-chamber*—Which, according to the next verse, was in the house of the Lord: so that it was one of those chambers adjoining to the temple, that were for the uses of the *priests* and *Levites* only, which made it more proper for this purpose. Now was the promise made to David bound up in one life, and yet it did not fail. Thus to the son of David will God, according to his promise, secure a spiritual seed; which, though sometimes reduced to a small number, brought very low, and seemingly lost, yet will be preserved to the end of time. It was a special providence, that Joram, though a king, a wicked king, married his daughter to Jehoiada, a priest, a holy priest: this some might think a disparagement to the royal family, but it saved the royal family from ruin; for Jehoiada's interest in the temple gave her an opportunity to preserve the child, and her interest in the royal family gave him an opportunity of setting him on the throne. See what blessings they lay up in store for their families, who marry their children to those that are wise and good.

Verse 3. *He was hid with her six years*—Probably Athaliah thought they were dead; or, if she suspected this child was preserved, she supposed an infant could do her no great harm; and that she could so well establish herself in the possession of the kingdom within a few years, that she need not fear any such weak competitor. *And Athaliah did reign over the land*—Which she had the better opportunity of doing, because she was not only the late king's wife, but also, probably, made queen-regent upon Joram's going to Ramoth-gilead.

Verse 4. *With the captains and the guard*—The chief commanders of the soldiery, and those that had been the former king's guard; for it is not likely that he would dare to call the guard of the present queen: and it is probable that the former could not well brook the dominion of a woman, and that woman a foreigner. *And brought them into the house of the Lord*—Into the courts of that house; for into the house itself, strictly speaking, none but the priests or Levites might enter. *And showed them the king's son*—He discovered to them the true heir of the crown, and they entered into a covenant to restore him, which they confirmed with an oath.

Verses 5, 6. *A third part of you*—Of the Levites,

A. M. 3126. that enter in ^d on the sabbath shall
B. C. 878. even be keepers of the watch of the
king's house;

6 And a third part *shall be* at the gate of Sur; and a third part at the gate behind the guard: so shall ye keep the watch of the house, ⁴ that it be not broken down.

7 And two ⁵ parts ⁶ of all you that go forth on the sabbath, *even* they shall keep the watch of the house of the LORD about the king.

8 And ye shall compass the king round about, every man with his weapons in his hand: and he that cometh within the ranges, let him be slain. And be ye with the king as he goeth out and as he cometh in.

9 ⁷ And the captains over the hundreds did according to all *things* that Jehoiada the priest commanded: and they took every man his men that were to come in on the sabbath,

with them that should go out on the sabbath, and came to Jehoiada the priest.

10 And to the captains over hundreds did the priest give King David's spears and shields, that *were* in the temple of the LORD.

11 And the guard stood, every man with his weapons in his hand, round about the king, from the right ⁷ corner of the temple to the left corner of the temple, *along* by the altar and the temple.

12 And he brought forth the king's son, and put the crown upon him, and *gave him* the testimony; and they made him king, and anointed him; and they clapped their hands, and said, ⁸ God ⁹ save the king.

13 ¶ ¹⁰ And when Athaliah heard the noise of the guard *and* of the people, she came to the people into the temple of the LORD.

⁴ 1 Chron. ix. 25.—⁵ Or, from breaking up.—⁶ Or, companies.
⁷ Heb. hands.—⁸ 2 Chron. xxiii. 8.

⁷ Heb. shoulder.—⁸ Heb. let the king live.—⁹ 1 Samuel x. 24.
¹⁰ 2 Chron. xxiii. 12, &c.

who were distributed into twenty-four courses, to minister in turns, each course consisting of about a thousand men for a week. *That enter in, &c.*—That come into the temple to attend your ministry. *Shall be keepers of the king's house*—Of that part which led to the king's palace, which Athaliah now possessed. *A third part shall be at the gate of Sur*—The chief gate of the temple, called the *high gate*, 2 Kings xv. 35; the *foundation gate*, 2 Chron. xxiii. 5; the *east gate*, Jer. xix. 2; the *middle gate*, Jer. xxxix. 3; and the *gate of entrance*, Ezek. xl. 15. *A third part at the gate behind the guard*—Either, 1st, The king's guard: or, 2d, The guard of the temple; this gate was in the south side. *So shall ye keep, &c.*—So you shall guard all the gates or entrances into the temple, that neither Athaliah nor any of her soldiers may break in.

Verses 7, 8. *Two parts that go forth on the sabbath*—Who, having finished their course, should have gone home, but were detained, 2 Chron. xxiii. 8. *Shall keep*—While the rest guard the entrances into the temple, these shall have a special care of the king's person. *Ye shall compass the king, &c.*—When you have set your watches and guards, all the rest of you shall draw near to the king, to preserve his royal person from all assaults and dangers. *He that cometh within the ranges*—Or *fences*, the walls wherewith the courts of the temple were environed; or your *ranks*. If any of Athaliah's guard shall attempt to break in upon you, or come within your bounds. *As he goeth out, and as he cometh in*—Whether the king shall go out of the temple to assault and subdue his enemies, or retire hither to defend himself, do you always accompany him.

Verse 10. *To the captains did the priest give King David's spears and shields*—Offensive and

defensive weapons, both for themselves and for all their soldiers; for they had all come into the temple unarmed, to prevent suspicion. These are called *David's*, either because they were such as he had taken from his enemies, and had dedicated to God, and laid up in the temple as monuments of God's goodness to him; or because he had made a sacred armory in the temple, whence arms might be taken upon extraordinary occasions, for the defence of the temple or city of God.

Verse 11. *The guard stood from the right to the left corner of the temple*—From the south-east to the north-east side. *Along by the altar*—Of burnt-offerings, which was by the great eastern gate of the temple. The meaning is, they defended the temple on all sides.

Verse 12. *And put the crown upon him*—Having produced Joash, he put the crown on his head, which, it is likely, was kept in the sanctuary. *And gave him the testimony*—The book of the law, which he put into the king's hand to remind him of his duty at his entrance upon his kingdom, which was to read and write out that holy book, (Deut. xvii. 18,) and to govern himself and his kingdom by it; the law of God being frequently and most properly called *a testimony*, because it is a witness of God's will, and man's duty. *They made him king, and anointed him*—As was wont to be done in doubtful cases, when there was any competition or question about the crown, as now there was.

Verse 13. *She came to the people*—To inquire into the cause of this great noise; being hitherto kept in deep ignorance, because the affair was managed with so much secrecy, and in the temple; and because the people universally hated her, and wished her downfall. *Into the temple of the Lord*—That is,

A. M. 3126. B. C. 878. 14 And when she looked, behold, the king stood by a ^h pillar, as the manner was, and the princes and the trumpeters by the king, and all the people of the land rejoiced, and blew with trumpets. And Athaliah rent her clothes, and cried, Treason, treason!

15 But Jehoiada the priest commanded the captains of the hundreds, the officers of the host, and said unto them, Have her forth without the ranges: and him that followeth her kill with the sword. For the priest had said, Let her not be slain in the house of the LORD.

16 And they laid hands on her; and she went by the way by the which the horses came into the king's house: and there was she slain.

17 ¶ ⁱ And Jehoiada made a covenant between the LORD and the king and the people, that they should be the LORD's people; ^k between the king also and the people.

^h Chapter xxiii. 3; 2 Chron. xxxiv. 31.—ⁱ 1 Chron. xxiii. 16. ^k 2 Sam. v. 3.—^j Chap. x. 26.

into the courts, into which, being a queen, she was permitted to enter, though contrary to the general order, verse 8. She seems, in her fright, to have come alone, or with but few attendants.

Verse 14. *Behold, the king stood by a pillar, as the manner was*—It is generally supposed that the royal throne was erected near one of the pillars, described 1 Kings vii. 15, 21, unless we may suppose that what is here called a pillar was that brazen scaffold five cubits long, &c., which Solomon made at first on his dedicating the temple, (2 Chron. vi. 13,) and which was afterward continued for the king to appear upon on solemn occasions, and where, doubtless, there was a throne of state. See Calmet.

Verse 15. *Jehoiada commanded the officers of the host*—Of those companies of Levites, who are elsewhere called the Lord's host, and now were the king's host. *Have her forth without the ranges*—Through which they had suffered her to come. If she will not go out of them of her own accord, force her out of them. *And him that followeth her, kill with the sword*—If any of the people that shall come hither on this occasion, shall stand up for her help, let them be slain. *Let her not be slain in the house of the Lord*—That is, in the court of the temple, lest it be polluted with her blood.

Verse 16. *They laid hands on her*—The Hebrew, יָשְׁמוּ לָהּ יָדַי, *Jashimu lah jadaim*, may be properly rendered, *Then they gave her room, or left her a free passage to depart out of the temple*. Thus Houbigant, after the Chaldee. *And she went by the way, &c.*—By the great public road, by which horses and chariots went to the palace. *And there was she slain*—In an ignominious place and manner, as her mother Jezebel had been.

Verse 17. *Jehoiada made a covenant between the*

A. M. 3126. B. C. 878. 18 And all the people of the land went into the ^l house of Baal, and brake it down; his altars and his images ^m brake they in pieces thoroughly, and slew Mattan the priest of Baal before the altars. And ⁿ the priest appointed ^o officers over the house of the LORD.

19 And he took the rulers over hundreds, and the captains, and the guard, and all the people of the land; and they brought down the king from the house of the LORD, and came by the way of the gate of the guard to the king's house. And he sat on the throne of the kings.

20 And all the people of the land rejoiced, and the city was in quiet: and they slew Athaliah with the sword *beside* the king's house.

21 ^o Seven years old was Jehoash when he began to reign.

^l Deut. xii. 3; 2 Chron. xii. 17.—^m 2 Chron. xxiii. 18, &c. ⁿ Heb. offices.—^o 2 Chron. xxiv. 1.

Lord, &c.—A sacred covenant, whereby he solemnly engaged both the king and people, that they should be the Lord's people—That they should renounce and root out all idolatry, and set up and maintain God's true worship. *Between the king also and the people*—This was a civil covenant, whereby the king engaged himself to rule them justly, and in the fear of God; and the people obliged themselves to defend and obey him. Compare 2 Sam. v. 3.

Verse 18. *All the people went into the house of Baal*—They began immediately to make good their covenant in part, by destroying the worship of Baal, which had been introduced in Judah by Jehoram, (chap. viii. 18,) and was continued by Ahaziah, verse 27. *And slew the priest of Baal before the altars*—To which possibly he fled for refuge, or rather he was brought thither as a fit sacrifice to his god. *The priest appointed officers over the house of the Lord*—To see that the service was regularly performed by the proper persons, in due time, and according to the instituted manner. See the margin.

Verses 19, 20. *He took the rulers over hundreds, &c.*—Brought them out of the temple, that they might conduct the king in state to the royal palace. *By the way of the gate of the guard*—By the gate of the royal palace, where the king's guard stood. *And he sat on the throne of the kings*—Which was the accomplishment of his inauguration. *And all the people rejoiced*—Josephus says, they kept a feast of joy many days; making good Solomon's observation: *When it goes well with the righteous, the city rejoiceth, and when the wicked perish, there is shouting.*

Verse 21. *Seven years old was Jehoash, &c.*—Being so very young, he was very unfit for so weighty

a charge; but he was under the direction of so excellent a counsellor, that, while Jehoiada lived, all things went well, and the nation was prosperous and happy. But after that good man was dead, he

was seduced by some great men about him to idolatry, (2 Chron. xxiv. 17,) which shows him to have been a weak prince, who wanted judgment in things of the greatest moment.

CHAPTER XII.

Jehoash reigns well all the days of Jehoiada, 1-3. He gives orders for repairing the temple, 4-16. Diverts Hazael from Jerusalem by a present of the sacred treasures, 17, 18. He is slain by his servants, and succeeded by Amaziah.

A. M. 3126. **B. C. 878.** **I**N the seventh year of Jehu, ^a Jehoash began to reign; and forty years reigned he in Jerusalem. And his mother's name was Zibiah of Beer-sheba.

2 And Jehoash did *that which was* right in the sight of the LORD all his days wherein Jehoiada the priest instructed him.

3 But ^b the high places were not taken away: the people still sacrificed and burnt incense in the high places.

4 ¶ And Jehoash said to the priests, ^c All the money of the ¹ dedicated ² things that is brought

into the house of the LORD, *even* ^d the money of every one that passeth *the account*, ³ the money that every man is set at, and all the money that ^e cometh into any man's heart to bring into the house of the LORD,

5 Let the priests take *it* to them, every man of his acquaintance: and let them repair the breaches of the house where-soever any breach shall be found.

6 But it was *so, that* ^f in the three and twentieth year of King Jehoash ^g the priests had not repaired the breaches of the house.

^a 2 Chron. xxiv. 1.—^b 1 Kings xv. 14; xxii. 43; Chap. xiv. 4.—^c Chapter xxii. 4.—¹ Or, *holy things*.—² Heb. *holiness*.—³ Exod. xxx. 13.—⁴ Heb. *the money of the souls of his estimation*.

^d Lev. xxvii. 2.—^e Heb. *ascendeth upon the heart of a man*.—^f Exod. xxxv. 5; 1 Chron. xxix. 9.—^g Heb. *in the twentieth year and third year*.—^h 2 Chron. xxiv. 5.

NOTES ON CHAPTER XII.

Verse 2. *Jehoash did what was right, &c.*—Having, 1st, such a good director as Jehoiada was, so wise, experienced, and faithful: and, 2d, so much wisdom as to hearken to him, and be directed by him. Here we learn of what advantage it is to princes, especially while they are young, and indeed to young people in general, to have good instructors and counsellors about them. And they then act wisely for themselves, when they are willing to be counselled and ruled by such.

Verse 3. *But the high places were not taken away*—The people were so much and so strangely addicted to these private altars, (on which they sacrificed to the true God,) that the preceding kings, though men of riper years and greater power and courage than Jehoash, and firmly established on their thrones, were not able to remove them. And, therefore, it is not strange that Jehoiada could not now take them away, when the king was young, and not well settled in his kingdom, and when the people were more corrupt and disorderly through Athaliah's mal-administration.

Verse 4. *And Jehoash said to the priests*—The house of God having been neglected, and suffered to go to decay in the time of Athaliah and her son, Jehoash, in gratitude to God, who had preserved him there, resolved to have it repaired; and, in order thereto, commanded what money should be set apart for that purpose. *All the money of the dedicated things*—That had been or should hereafter be brought and dedicated to the service of God and of

the temple. As it appears from 2 Chron. xxiv. 5, that the priests went through the land to collect money, it seems the people were required to dedicate something toward these repairs. *The money of every one that passeth the account*—The words, *the account*, are not in the Hebrew, so that it is likely this clause is to be understood of the offerings which pious people cast into the boxes prepared to receive them, as they passed into the temple. *The money that every man is set at*—Namely, the money that every man, who had vowed his person to God, paid or was to pay for his redemption, by the estimation made by the priest, according to the law, Lev. xxvii. 2, 3. In the Hebrew it is *the money of souls, or persons according to his taxing*. As soon as this money was paid by any one, he was freed from the vow wherewith he had bound himself: but till it was paid, his life was not his own, but God's. *All the money that cometh into any man's heart to bring, &c.*—This was the third sort of money for the reparation of the temple; that which any man would give freely for that service.

Verse 5. *Let the priests take it to them, &c.*—Let them go abroad through all the parts of the land, as they have acquaintance and interest, and gather up the money, and bring it to Jerusalem. *Let them repair, &c., wheresoever any breach shall be found*—Either through decay, or by ill accidents; or by the malice of Athaliah, or her relations; of which see 2 Chron. xxiv. 7.

Verses 6-8. *In the three and twentieth year of Jehoash, the priests had not repaired, &c.*—They were

A. M. 3148. 7 ^a Then King Jehoash called for B. C. 856. Jehoiada the priest, and the *other* priests, and said unto them, Why repair ye not the breaches of the house? now therefore receive no *more* money of your acquaintance, but deliver it for the breaches of the house.

8 And the priests consented to receive no *more* money of the people, neither to repair the breaches of the house.

9 But Jehoiada the priest took ^b a chest, and bored a hole in the lid of it, and set it beside the altar, on the right side as one cometh into the house of the LORD: and the priests that kept the ^c door put therein all the money *that was* brought into the house of the LORD.

10 And it was *so*, when they saw that *there was* much money in the chest, that the king's ^d scribe and the high-priest came up, and they ^e put up in bags, and told the money *that was* found in the house of the LORD.

11 And they gave the money, being told, into the hands of them that did the work, that had

^a 2 Chron. xxiv. 6.—^b 2 Chron. xxiv. 8, &c.—^c Heb. *threshold*.
^d Or, *secretary*.—^e Heb. *bound up*.—^f Heb. *brought it forth*.

both dilatory and careless in collecting the money, 2 Chron. xxiv. 5; and did not bring in what they had gathered to begin the work, whereupon the king revoked his former order, and intrusted other men, as it here follows, with this work. Thus are things seldom done well that are committed to the care of many. *Now therefore receive no more money, &c.*—Jehoash ordered two things, 1st, That they should gather no more money of the people. 2d, That they should not have the care of seeing the temple repaired, but pay what had been collected into other hands. *The priests consented*—They submitted to the king's new orders, and wholly committed the business to those whom he thought fit to employ. But it does not appear that they restored the money which they had received for twenty-three years past.

Verse 9. *Jehoiada the priest took a chest*—By the king's order, 2 Chron. xxiv. 8. *And set it beside the altar*—In the court of the priests. Upon comparing the passage in Chronicles, just referred to, with this, it seems probable that it was first placed by the altar, and afterward removed thence to the gate of the court, for the people's greater satisfaction, that they might come thither, and put in their money with their own hands.

Verses 10, 11. *The king's scribe and the high-priest came up, &c.*—The king's secretary and the high-priest emptied the chest, and took an account of the money, and then put it up in bags, which, it is likely, they sealed; and then they set the chest in its place again. This they did every day, as we read 2 Chron. xxiv. 11. *They gave the money to*

the oversight of the house of the LORD: and they ^g laid it out to the carpenters and builders, that wrought upon the house of the LORD. A. M. 3148. B. C. 856.

12 And to masons, and hewers of stone, and to buy timber and hewed stone to repair the breaches of the house of the LORD, and for all that ^h was laid out for the house to repair it.

13 Howbeit, ⁱ there were not made for the house of the LORD bowls of silver, snuffers, basins, trumpets, any vessels of gold, or vessels of silver, of the money *that was* brought into the house of the LORD:

14 But they gave that to the workmen, and repaired therewith the house of the LORD.

15 Moreover, ^k they reckoned not with the men, into whose hand they delivered the money to be bestowed on workmen: for they dealt faithfully.

16 ^l The trespass-money and sin-money was not brought into the house of the LORD: ^m it was the priests'.

^g Heb. *went forth*.—^h 2 Chron. xxiv. 14.—ⁱ Chapter xxii. 7.
^j Lev. v. 15, 18.—^k Lev. vii. 7; Num. xviii. 9.

them that had the oversight, &c.—These bags of money were delivered by the king and Jehoiada, (2 Chron. xxiv. 12,) not to the priests, whom the king had found tardy, and, perhaps, faulty, (converting the money to their own use,) but to some select persons, who had this peculiar business committed to them, to employ good workmen, pay them their wages, and see the temple properly repaired.

Verses 14, 15. *But they gave that to the workmen*—All the money collected was employed to pay the masons, carpenters, and such like workmen, for repairing the temple alone, till the work was finished; and then the overseers gave an account of what money remained in their hands, which was expended in purchasing such vessels as are before mentioned, for the service of the temple, 2 Chron. xxiv. 14. *Moreover, they reckoned not with the men*—They were so confident of the honesty of the overseers, that they took no account of the money which they had paid to the workmen. *For they dealt faithfully*—They perceived, by many experiments, that they were faithful. This was a rare example of fidelity in managing the public money.

Verse 16. *The trespass-money and sin-money, &c.*—“Besides the money paid to the priests for trespasses committed in holy things it is thought that persons living at a distance sent money to the priests to purchase trespass-offerings and sin-offerings, and sacrifice them in their names: and, as they commonly sent more than the sacrifices cost, the surplus became a perquisite, under the name of *trespass-money* and *sin-money*.”—Scott. This money was not employed toward the reparation of the house, because, as it

A. M. 3164. B. C. 840. 17 ¶ Then ^a Hazael king of Syria went up, and fought against Gath, and took it: and ^o Hazael set his face to go up to Jerusalem.

18 And Jehoash king of Judah ^p took all the hallowed things that Jehoshaphat, and Jehoram, and Ahaziah, his fathers, kings of Judah, had dedicated, and his own hallowed things, and all the gold *that was* found in the treasures of the house of the LORD, and in the king's house, and sent *it* to Hazael king of Syria: and he ¹¹ went away from Jerusalem.

^a Chapter viii. 12.—^o 2 Chron. xxiv. 23.—^p 1 Kings xv. 18; Chap. xviii. 15.—¹¹ Heb. *went up*.

follows, *it was the priests'*: it was given to them for their private use and maintenance.

Verses 17, 18. *Then Hazael went up*—That is, in this king's days, when, Jehoiada being dead, Jehoash revolted from God; of which see 2 Chron. xxiv. 17. *And fought against Gath*—Once a city of the Philistines, but taken by David, (1 Chron. xviii. 1,) and now a part of the kingdom of Judah. *And Hazael set his face to go to Jerusalem*—Directed his march toward that city: or, undertook to march thither in good earnest. *Jehoash took all the hallowed things, &c.*—The preservation of his kingdom, he thought, warranted his doing this; but he brought these dangers upon himself by his apostasy from God.

19 ¶ And the rest of the acts of A. M. 3164. Joash, and all that he did, *are they* B. C. 840. not written in the book of the Chronicles of the kings of Judah?

20 And ^q his servants arose, and made a conspiracy, and slew Joash in ¹² the house of Millo, which goeth down to Silla.

21 For ^r Jozachar the son of Shi- About B. C. 839. meath, and Jehozabad the son of ^r Shomer, his servants, smote him, and he died; and they buried him with his fathers in the city of David: and ^s Amaziah his son reigned in his stead.

^q Ch. xiv. 5; 2 Chr. xxiv. 25.—¹² Or, *Beth-millo*.—^r 2 Chron. xxiv. 26, *Zabad*.—¹³ Or, *Shimrith*.—^s 2 Chron. xxiv. 27.

Verse 20. *His servants made a conspiracy, and slew Jehoash*—Of which, see 2 Chron. xxiv. 25, where we are told that his murdering the prophet, Jehoiada's son, was the provocation. In this, how unrighteous soever they were, yet the Lord was righteous: and this was not the only time that he let even kings know, it was at their peril if they *touch'd his anointed*, or did his prophets any harm; and that, when he comes to make inquisition for blood, the blood of prophets will run the account very high. Thus fell Joash, who *began in the spirit*, and *ended in the flesh*. God usually sets marks of his displeasure upon apostates, even in this life; for they, of all sinners, do most *reproach the Lord*.

CHAPTER XIII.

The reign of Jehoahaz, who follows the sin of Jeroboam; is oppressed by Hazael, and relieved by prayer, 1-9. Joash his son succeeds him in the kingdom, and in his idolatry, 10-13. Elisha foretels to Joash three victories over the Syrians, and dies; Joash's lamentation, 14-19. A dead man, being cast into Elisha's sepulchre, is restored to life, 20, 21. Hazael oppresses Israel and dies. Joash beats the Syrians three times, and recovers the cities which had been taken from his father, 22-25.

A. M. 3148. B. C. 856. IN ¹ the three and twentieth year of Joash the son of Ahaziah king of Judah, Jehoahaz the son of Jehu began to reign over Israel in Samaria, and reigned seventeen years.

2 And he did *that which was* evil in the sight of the LORD, and ² followed the sins of Jeroboam

¹ Heb. *the twentieth year and third year*.—² Heb. *walked after*.

NOTES ON CHAPTER XIII.

Verse 3. *The anger of the Lord was kindled against Israel*—Who, knowing the only living and true God to be a spirit, an eternal mind, an infinitely wise and mighty, just and holy, and absolutely perfect Being, besides all their other sins and abomina-

the son of Nebat, which made Israel A. M. 3148. to sin; he departed not therefrom. B. C. 856.

3 ¶ And ^a the anger of the LORD B. C. 842. was kindled against Israel, and he delivered them into the hand of ^b Hazael king of Syria, and into the hand of Ben-hadad, the son of Hazael, all *their* days.

^a Judges ii. 14.—^b Chap. viii. 12.

tions, still continued to *change the glory* of this their *incorruptible God into the similitude of an ox*, the *truth of God into a lie*, and, like the nations around them, to worship the work of their own hands. There could not be a greater reproach than the two idolized calves were, to a people acquainted with the

A. M. 3155. 4 And Jehoahaz ^o besought the LORD, and the LORD hearkened unto him: for ^d he saw the oppression of Israel, because the king of Syria oppressed them.

5 (^e And the LORD gave Israel a saviour, so that they went out from under the hand of the Syrians: and the children of Israel dwelt in their tents, ³ as beforetime.

6 Nevertheless they departed not from the sins of the house of Jeroboam, who made Israel to sin, *but* ⁴ walked therein: ^f and there ⁵ remained the grove also in Samaria.)

7 Neither did he leave of the people to Jehoahaz but fifty horsemen, and ten chariots, and ten thousand footmen; for the king of Syria had destroyed them, ^g and had made them like the dust by thrashing.

^c Psa. lxxviii. 34.—^d Exod. iii. 7; Chap. xiv. 26.—^e Verse 25; Chap. xiv. 25, 27.—³ Heb. *as yesterday, and third day.*
^f Heb. *he walked.*—¹ Kings xvi. 33.—^g Heb. *stood.*

nature and attributes of God, and intrusted with his lively oracles, in which he had given them rules, of his own appointment, to direct them how to worship him. Strange it is, indeed, that in all the history of the ten tribes, we never find the least shock given to that idolatry, but, in every reign, still the calf was their god! and that notwithstanding the many and repeated judgments executed upon them to reclaim them from that senseless and stupid practice. Well might the anger of God be kindled against them! *And he delivered them into the hand of Hazael*—It had been the honour of Israel that they were taken under the special protection of Heaven: God himself was their defence, *the shield of their help, and the sword of their excellency.* But here again, as often before, we find them stripped of this glory, and exposed to the insults of all their neighbours. Surely never was any nation so often plucked and pillaged as Israel was: but this they brought upon themselves by their sins: and when they had provoked God to break down their hedge, the goodness of their land did but tempt their neighbours. So low was Israel brought in this reign, by the many depredations which the Syrians made upon them, that the militia of the kingdom, and all the force they could bring into the field, was but *fifty horsemen, ten chariots, and ten thousand footmen*, a despicable muster, verse 7. Are the thousands of Israel come to this? *How is the gold become dim!*

Verse 4. *The Lord hearkened unto him*—Not for his sake, for God regards not the prayers of the wicked and impenitent, but for other reasons, expressed verse 23. *For he saw the oppression of Israel*—His chosen and once beloved people. He now helps them because of his former and ancient kindness to them. *Because the king of Syria oppressed them*—To wit, very grievously, as it is expressed verse 7. So that God helped them, not because they were worthy of his help, but because of the rage of

8 ¶ Now the rest of the acts of Jehoahaz, and all that he did, and his might, *are* they not written in the book of the Chronicles of the kings of Israel?

9 And Jehoahaz slept with his fathers: and they buried him in Samaria: and ⁶ Joash his son reigned in his ⁷ stead.

10 ¶ In the thirty and seventh year of Joash king of Judah began ⁸ Jehoash the son of Jehoahaz to reign over Israel in Samaria, *and reigned* sixteen years.

11 And he did *that which was evil* in the sight of the LORD; he departed not from all the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who made Israel sin; *but* he walked therein.

12 ^b And the rest of the acts of Joash, and ⁱ all that he did, and ^k his might wherewith he

⁸ Amos i. 3.—⁶ Verse 10, *Jehoash.*—⁷ Alone.—⁸ In consort with his father, Chap. xiv. 1.—^b Chap. xiv. 15.—ⁱ Verses 14, 25.—^k Chap. xiv. 9, &c; 2 Chron. xxv. 17, &c.

their enemies, and the blasphemies which doubtless accompanied it. See Deut. xxxii. 27.

Verse 5. *The Lord gave Israel a saviour*—Either Elisha, below, (verse 14,) or rather, Jehoash, the son of this Jehoahaz, (verse 25,) and Jeroboam his son, chap. xiv. 25. Both of these were instrumental in working out great deliverances for Israel, although they were wicked men, who still kept up the idolatry of the calves. *Israel dwelt in their tents as before time*—In peace and security: not only in their strong cities, but even in their tents in the fields.

Verse 7. *Neither did he leave, &c.*—That is, the king of Syria, who so terribly oppressed the Israelites. For this verse must be considered as connected with verse 4, verses 5 and 6 being included in a parenthesis, as is done in our translation. *By the people*, of whom the king of Syria left so few, the Israelitish army, or men of war, are here meant, as the following words evince. *For the king of Syria had destroyed them*—God gave them into his hand, to make this destruction among them, killing some, and carrying others captive. *And had made them like the dust by thrashing*—Had broken, and, as it were, ground them to dust or powder, as the corn is many times broken by thrashing.

Verse 8. *And his might*—For, though he had not success, he showed much personal valour and courage. Which is observed to intimate, that the Israelites were not conquered because of the baseness and cowardice of their king; but merely from the righteous and dreadful judgments of God, who was now resolved to reckon with them for their apostasy.

Verse 10. *In the thirty and seventh year of Joash, king of Judah, &c.*—A difficulty arises in comparing this with verse 1, where it is said, Jehoahaz began to reign in the twenty-third year of Joash, king of Judah, and reigned seventeen years: from whence it follows, that this Jehoash, son of Jehoahaz, began

A. M. 3165. fought against Amaziah king of Ju- A. M. 3165.
B. C. 839. dah, are they not written in the book B. C. 839.
of the Chronicles of the kings of Israel ?

B. C. 825. 13 And Joash slept with his fathers ;
and Jeroboam sat upon his throne ;
and Joash was buried in Samaria with the
kings of Israel.

B. C. 839. 14 ¶ Now Elisha was fallen sick
of his sickness whereof he died. And
Joash the king of Israel came down unto him,
and wept over his face, and said, O my father,
my father ! ¹ the chariot of Israel, and the
horsemen thereof !

15 And Elisha said unto him, Take bow and
arrows. And he took unto him bow and arrows.

¹ Chap. ii. 12.—² Heb. *Make thine hand to ride.*

16 And he said to the king of Is- A. M. 3165.
rael, ² Put thy hand upon the bow. B. C. 839.

And he put his hand upon it : and Elisha put
his hands upon the king's hands.

17 And he said, Open the window eastward.
And he opened it. Then Elisha said, Shoot.
And he shot. ³ And he said, The arrow of the
LORD's deliverance, and the arrow of deliver-
ance from Syria : for thou shalt smite the
Syrians in ⁴ Aphek, till thou have consumed
them.

18 And he said, Take the arrows. And he
took them. And he said unto the king of Is-
rael, Smite upon the ground. And he smote
thrice, and stayed.

³ Eccclus. xlvi. 13.—⁴ 1 Kings xx. 26.

to reign, not in the thirty-seventh, but in the thirty-
ninth or fortieth year of Joash, king of Judah. This
difficulty, however, is solved by supposing, what is
very probable, that Jehoahaz had made his son Je-
hoash king, jointly with himself, two or three years
before his death. This is the more probable, because
he was perpetually in a state of war, and consequent-
ly in danger of an untimely death ; and because his
son was a man of valour, as is implied, verse 12, and
declared, 2 Chron. xxv. 17-24.

Verse 13. *And Joash slept with his fathers*—The
sacred writer does not here conclude the history of
Joash, for he afterward relates great things done by
him. But having to speak of the sickness and death
of Elisha, upon which those things depended, he
introduces that before he proceeds further to relate
his acts.

Verse 14. *Elisha was fallen sick, &c.*—Elisha
lived long ; for it was now about sixty years since he
was first called to be a prophet. It was a great mercy
to Israel, and especially to the sons of the prophets,
that he was continued so long a burning and a shin-
ing light. Elijah finished his testimony in a fourth
part of that time. For God's prophets have their
day appointed them, longer or shorter, as infinite
wisdom sees fit. The time of Elisha's flourishing,
however, was much less than the time of his living.
During all the latter part of his life, from the anoint-
ing of Jehu, which was forty-five years before Joash
began his reign, we find no mention made of him,
nor of any thing he did, till we find him here upon
his death-bed. He was, no doubt, useful to the last,
yet it seems, not so famous as he had formerly been.
The king came down, and wept over his face—
While he leaned over him to kiss him. This was an
evidence of some good in Joash, and that he had a
value for a faithful prophet. So far was he from
hating and persecuting him as a troubler of Israel,
as Ahab had hated and persecuted Elijah, that he
loved and honoured him, as one of the greatest bless-
ings of his kingdom. Thus it has sometimes hap-
pened, that those who, like Joash, would not be
obedient to the word of God, yet have been com-

pelled to hold his faithful ministers in honour, fully
convinced of their being upright and holy men of
God. *And said, O my father, my father, &c.*—
Thus he laments over him in the same words which
Elisha himself had used when he lamented the re-
moval of Elijah. Probably he had heard or read of
them, and judged them as applicable to Elisha as
they had been to his predecessor : see on chap. ii.
12. Joash seems to have intended by these words
to express Elisha's fatherly care of Israel, the great
authority he had maintained among them, that by
his counsels, and prayers, and miracles, they had
obtained great and glorious victories over their en-
emies ; and that he and his kingdom would sustain
an inestimable loss by his death.

Verses 15-17. *Take bow and arrows*—This was
to represent the wars he was to have with the Syri-
ans. *Elisha put his hands upon the king's hands*—
To signify to him, that in all his expeditions against
the Syrians, he must look up to God for direction
and strength ; must reckon his own hands insuffi-
cient for him, and must go on in dependance on the
divine aid. *Open the window eastward*—Toward
Syria, which lay north-eastward from the land of
Israel : the Syrians had also possessed themselves
of the land of the Israelites beyond Jordan, which
lay eastward from Canaan : this arrow is shot to-
ward these parts, as a token of what God intended
to do against the Syrians. *The arrow of the Lord's
deliverance*—It is God that commands deliverance,
and when he will effect it, who can hinder ? *Thou
shalt smite the Syrians in Aphek*—Where they were
now encamped, or where they were to have a general
rendezvous of their forces. *Till thou have con-
sumed them*—Those of them that are vexatious and
oppressive to thee and thy kingdom.

Verses 18, 19. *Smite upon the ground*—The former
sign portended victory : and this was to declare the
number of the victories. *He smote thrice, and stay-
ed*—Through his inattention to, or unbelief of, the
sign just given, concerning war with, victory over,
and deliverance from Syria, or through indifference
about that deliverance. *The man of God was wroth*

A. M. 3165. 19 And the man of God was wroth
B. C. 839.

with him, and said, Thou shouldest have smitten five or six times; then hadst thou smitten Syria till thou hadst consumed it: ° whereas now thou shalt smite Syria but thrice.

B. C. 838. 20 ¶ And Elisha died, and they buried him. And the bands of the Moabites invaded the land at the coming in of the year.

21 And it came to pass, as they were burying a man, that behold, they spied a band of men; and they cast the man into the sepulchre of Elisha: and when the man ¹⁰ was let down,

° Verse 25.—¹⁰ Heb. went down.—¶ Eccles. xlviii. 14.
¶ Chap. viii. 12.

with him—Whether Joash, before this interview with Elisha, was acquainted or not with the nature of those parabolic actions, whereby the prophets were accustomed to represent future events, he could not but perceive, by the comment which Elisha made upon the first arrow, which he calls *the arrow of deliverance*, that his shooting was a symbolical action, and intended to prefigure his victories over that nation; and, therefore, he might easily understand that this second action, of striking the ground with the arrow, was to portend the number of victories he was to obtain. And if, added to this, we may suppose, with the generality of interpreters, that the prophet had apprized him beforehand that such was the symbolical intent of what he now put him upon, that the oftener he smote upon the ground, the more would be the victories which his arms should obtain; and that thus, in some measure, his success in the war was put into his own power; the king's conduct was utterly inexcusable, if, diffident of the prophet's promise, and considering the great strength of the kings of Syria, more than the power of God, he stopped his hand after he had smote thrice, supposing that the prediction would never have been fulfilled, had he gone on and smote upon the earth oftener. Upon the whole, therefore, the prophet had just reason to be offended at the king for not believing God, who had done so many signal miracles in favour of the Israelites; for not believing him, who, according to his own acknowledgment, had been a constant defender of the state, and now, in his dying hours, was full of good wishes and intentions for his country. See Dodd, Le Clerc, and Patrick.

Verse 20. *Elisha died, and they buried him*—In or near Samaria. The spirit of Elijah rested on Elisha, and yet he is not conveyed to heaven in a fiery chariot as Elijah was, but goes the common way of all flesh out of the world, and is visited with the visitation of all men. If God honour some above others, who yet are not inferior to them in gifts or graces, who shall find fault? *May he not do what he will with his own?* *The bands of the Moabites invaded the land*—The mentioning

and touched the bones of Elisha, ⁹ he revived, and stood upon his feet. A. M. 3165. B. C. 839.

22 ¶ But ⁹ Hazael king of Syria oppressed Israel all the days of Jehoahaz.

23 ⁷ And the LORD was gracious unto them, and had compassion on them, and ⁸ had respect unto them, ⁶ because of his covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and would not destroy them, neither cast he them from his ¹¹ presence as yet.

24 So Hazael king of Syria died; B. C. 839. and Ben-hadad his son reigned in his stead.

¶ Chapter xiv. 27.—⁹ Exodus ii. 24.—⁶ Exod. xxxii. 13.
¹¹ Heb. face.

this, immediately on the death of Elisha, intimates, that the removal of God's faithful prophets is a pre-
sage of judgments approaching.

Verse 21. *As they were burying a man*—Carrying him to his grave; *they spied a band of men*—A party of Moabites coming toward them, but at some distance; *and they cast the man into the sepulchre of Elisha*—This sepulchre being near the place where they then were, they removed some stone, or opened some door, and hastily flung down the dead corpse into it; fearing lest, if they proceeded to the place where a grave was prepared, they should fall into the hands of the Moabites. *And when the man was let down*—His body, or the coffin in which it was put; *and touched the bones of Elisha, he revived, and stood upon his feet*—Which great miracle, wrought, not by the bones of Elisha, in which there could be no innate power to produce any such effect, but by the almighty power of God, was doubtless intended for divers important purposes; as, 1st, To do honour to that great and holy prophet; and a singular honour it was, not much inferior to that conferred on Elijah when he was translated. Elijah was honoured in his departure; Elisha after his departure. Thus God dispenses honours as he pleases. 2d, To seal and confirm his doctrine and prophecies, and thereby confute the false doctrine and worship of the Israelites. 3d, To strengthen the faith of Joash and the Israelites in the promises which he had given them of success against the Syrians. And, 4th, In the midst of all their calamities to comfort such Israelites as were Elisha's followers, with the hopes of that eternal life, whereof the reviving of this dead man was a manifest pledge, and to awaken the people to a due care about, and preparation for it. According to Calmet, this was further a symbol and prophecy of the resurrection of Jesus Christ, with this difference, and a mighty one it is, that Elisha raised a dead body without raising himself, while the Lord Jesus not only raised himself, but gives life to all those that believe in him.

Verse 23. *The Lord had compassion, and would not destroy them as yet*—The several expressions,

A. M. 3165. 25 And Jehoash the son of Jehoahaz
B. C. 839. ¹² took again out of the hand of Ben-
hadad the son of Hazael the cities, which he had

¹² Heb. returned and took.

of nearly the same import, used in this verse, call upon us to admire the triumphs of divine goodness in the deliverance of such a provoking people. He foresaw they would destroy themselves at last; but, as yet, he would reprove them, and give them space to repent. The slowness of God's processes against sinners must be construed to the advancement of his mercy, not the impeachment of his justice. *Neither cast them from his presence as yet*—From the land of Canaan, to which the peculiar presence of God, and his public and solemn worship, were now confined.

taken out of the hand of Jehoahaz his A. M. 3165.
father by war. ^a Three times did Jo- B. C. 839.
ash beat him, and recovered the cities of Israel.

^a Verses 18, 19.

Verse 25. *And Jehoash took again the cities, &c.*—This was a great kindness to the cities themselves, which were hereby rescued from the yoke of oppression, and to the whole kingdom, which was much strengthened by the reduction of those cities. *Three times did Joash beat him*—Just as oft as he had struck the ground with the arrows, and then a full stop was put to the course of his victories. Many have repented, when it was too late, of their unbelief, distrust, and the straitness of their desires.

CHAPTER XIV.

The good character of Amaziah, 1-4. He avenges his father's death, 5, 6. Overthrows the Edomites, 7. Is defeated by Joash, king of Israel, 8-14. The death and burial of Jehoash, 15, 16. Amaziah is killed by conspirators, 17-20. The beginning of Azariah's reign, 21, 22. The reign and death of Jeroboam, 23-29.

A. M. 3165. IN ^a the second year of Joash son of
B. C. 839. Jehoahaz king of Israel reigned
^b Amaziah the son of Joash king of Ju-
dah.

² He was twenty and five years old when he began to reign, and reigned twenty and nine years in Jerusalem. And his mother's name was Jehoaddan of Jerusalem.

³ And he did *that which was* right in the sight of the LORD, yet not like David his father:

^a Chap. xiii. 10.—^b 2 Chron. xxv. 1.

NOTES ON CHAPTER XIV.

Verses 1, 2. *In the second year of Joash, king of Israel*—After he began to reign alone: for he reigned two or three years with his father, of which see the note on chap. xiii. 10. This, as Dr. Lightfoot observes, was the thirty-eighth year of his father Joash, king of Judah, three years before his death. For Joash had thrown himself into such a miserable condition by his apostacy, and the murder of Zechariah, (chap. xii. 17; 2 Chron. xxiv. 25,) that he was become unfit to govern the kingdom. *He reigned twenty and nine years*—Fourteen of which he was contemporary with Joash, king of Israel, and fifteen with Jeroboam, the son of Joash, verse 17.

Verses 3, 4. *He did right in the sight of the Lord*—In many respects, attending on God's altars, and attending to his word: *yet not like David his father*—Or progenitor: not obeying in the same spirit of faith and devotion, and with the same sincerity, resolution, and perseverance. *As Joash his father did*—Who, for a time, served God aright; but afterward fell away to idolatry. Thus did Amaziah,

VOL. II.

(12)

he did according to all things as A. M. 3165.
Joash his father did. B. C. 839.

⁴ ^c Howbeit the high places were not taken away: as yet the people did sacrifice and burnt incense on the high places.

⁵ ¶ And it came to pass, as soon as the kingdom was confirmed in his hand, that he slew his servants ^d which had slain the king his father.

⁶ But the children of the murderers he slew

^c Chap. xii. 3.—^d Chap. xii. 20.

2 Chron. xxv. 14. *Howbeit, the high places, &c.*—Though he did what was right, yet the *high places were not taken away*—For it is difficult to get clear of those corruptions which by long usage have gained prescription.

Verse 5. *As soon as the kingdom was confirmed, he slew his servants, &c.*—It is implied in this, that his father's murderers continued to be men of weight and interest at court, even after they had perpetrated that crime; for Amaziah retained them in his service for some time, nor durst venture to execute justice upon them till he was well settled in his authority. Probably the act they had done was in some sort approved by the generality of the people, to whom Joash had made himself hateful by his apostacy to idolatry, and his ingratitude to the house of Jehoiada.

Verse 6. *But the children of the murderers he slew not*—In this he acted like a good man, and showed both faith and courage, in that he would obey the command of God, though it might be attended with great hazard to himself, and was not moved to cut off the children, through fear lest they

177

2

A. M. 3177. not: according unto that which is
B. C. 827. written in the book of the law of
Moses, wherein the LORD commanded, saying,
* The fathers shall not be put to death for the
children, nor the children be put to death for
the fathers; but every man shall be put to
death for his own sin.

B. C. 827. 7 ¶ ¹ He slew of Edom in ² the val-
ley of Salt ten thousand, and took
¹ Selah by war, ² and called the name of it Jok-
theel unto this day.

B. C. 826. 8 ¶ ¹ Then Amaziah sent messen-
gers to Jehoash, the son of Jehoahaz,

* Deut. xxiv. 16; Ezra xviii. 4, 20.—¹ 2 Chron. xxv. 11.
² 2 Sam. viii. 13; Psa. lx., title.—¹ Or, *the rock*.—² Josh.
v. 39, *Joseph*. Ant. IX.

should raise a faction against him, and take revenge for their fathers' death. Very different is the custom pursued in many kingdoms, in which, if any one be guilty of high treason, not only he, but his children likewise, who neither partake nor are conscious of his traitorous practices, are equally devoted to destruction.

Verse 7. *He slew of Edom*—That is, of the *Edomites*, or *the children of Seir*, as they are called 2 Chron. xxv. 1. The Edomites, after having been subject to Judah from the time of David, who subdued them, revolted in the days of Jehoram, (chap. viii. 10,) and now Amaziah endeavoured to reduce them: and having, at the command of God, abandoned the help of the Israelites, although he had purchased it with a large sum, (2 Chron. xxv. 7-10,) he and the men of Judah gained a great victory over them, and made the following slaughter. *In the valley of Salt*—Which was in the land of Edom. *And took Selah*—Or, *the rock*, as the word signifies. This city, called by other authors *Petra*, which also means a rock, was the metropolis of all that part of Arabia, termed from hence *Arabia Petraea*, or *Arabia the rocky*. *And called the name of it Joktheel*—Which word signifies, *the obedience of God*; so he named it, either, because, having taken it, he established in it, as some think, the laws and statutes of Moses; or rather, because he considered it as given him by God, as a reward of his obedience to God's message by the prophet, requiring him to dismiss all the forces which he had hired of the Israelites.

Verse 8. *Let us look one another in the face*—Let us try our valour and strength in battle. Being flushed with his late great victory over the Edomites, and incensed by the injury which the dismissed, disgusted Israelites had lately done to his country in their return, (2 Chron. xxv. 13,) he sent this challenge to the king of Israel. Perhaps he had the vanity to think he could subdue his kingdom, and reunite it to Judah. Had he challenged him merely to a personal duel, the error had remained with himself: but each of them must bring all his forces into

son of Jehu king of Israel, saying, A. M. 3179.
B. C. 826. Come, let us look one another in the
face.

9 And Jehoash the king of Israel sent to Amaziah king of Judah, saying, ¹ The thistle that was in Lebanon sent to the ² cedar that was in Lebanon, saying, Give thy daughter to my son to wife: and there passed by a wild beast that was in Lebanon, and trode down the thistle.

10 Thou hast indeed smitten Edom, and ¹ thy heart hath lifted thee up: glory of this, and tarry ² at home: for why shouldest thou

¹ 2 Chron. xxv. 17, &c.—² Judges ix. 8.—¹ 1 Kings iv. 33.
² Deut. viii. 14; 2 Chron. xxxii. 25; Ezek. xxviii. 2, 5, 17; Hab.
ii. 4.—² Heb. *at thy house*.

the field, and thousands of lives must be sacrificed on both sides to his capricious humour! Hereby he showed himself proud, presumptuous, and prodigal of blood. They that challenge are chargeable with that beginning of strife which is as the letting out of water. And they that are fond either of fighting or going to law, may perhaps have enough of it quickly, and will probably be the first that repent it.

Verse 9. *Jehoash sent to Amaziah, saying, The thistle, &c.*—By the thistle, a mean, despicable, and yet troublesome weed, he understands Amaziah, and by the cedar, himself, whom he intimates to be far stronger than he, and out of his reach. Considering the circumstances of the person addressed, who was a petty prince, flushed with a little good success, and thereupon impatient to enlarge his kingdom, no similitude could be better adapted than that of a thistle, a low, contemptible shrub, but, upon its having drawn blood of some traveller, grown proud, and affecting an equality with the cedar, a tall stately tree, the pride and ornament of the wood; till, in the midst of all its arrogance and presumption, it is unhappily trodden down by the beasts of the forest, which Jehoash intimates would be Amaziah's fate, if he continued to provoke a prince of his superior power and strength. See Calmet and Scheuchzer. *Saying, Give me thy daughter to wife*—Let us make a match, that is, let us fight; only he expresses his bloody and destructive work in a civil manner, as Amaziah had done, (verse 8,) and as Abner did, 2 Sam. ii. 14: or, Let thy kingdom and mine be united under one king, as formerly they were; and let us decide, by a pitched battle, whether thou or I shall be that king. *A wild beast trode down the thistle*—And so put an end to his treaty with the cedar: and with no less ease shall my soldiers tread down thee and thy forces.

Verse 10. *Thou hast indeed smitten Edom*—A weak, unarmed, undisciplined body of men; and therefore thou thinkest thou canst carry all before thee, and subdue the regular forces of Israel with as much ease. *Thy heart hath lifted thee up*—Here lies the root of all sin; it is in the heart; thence it

A. M. 3179. meddle to *thy* hurt, that thou should-
B. C. 825. est fall, *even* thou, and Judah with
thee?

11 But Amaziah would not hear. Therefore Jehoash king of Israel went up; and he and Amaziah king of Judah looked one another in the face at ^a Beth-shemesh, which *belongeth* to Judah.

12 And Judah ^b was put to the worse before Israel; and they fled every man to their tents.

13 And Jehoash king of Israel took Amaziah king of Judah, the son of Jehoash the son of Ahaziah, at Beth-shemesh, and came to Jerusalem, and brake down the wall of Jerusalem from ^c the gate of Ephraim unto ^d the corner-gate, four hundred cubits.

14 And he took all ^e the gold and silver, and all the vessels that were found in the house

of the LORD, and in the treasures of A. M. 3179.
the king's house, and hostages, and B. C. 825.
returned to Samaria.

15 ¶ ^f Now the rest of the acts of B. C. 825.
Jehoash which he did, and his might,
and how he fought with Amaziah king of
Judah, *are* they not written in the book of the
Chronicles of the kings of Israel?

16 And Jehoash slept with his fathers, and was buried in Samaria with the kings of Israel; and Jeroboam his son reigned in his stead.

17 ¶ ^g And Amaziah the son of Joash king of Judah lived after the death of Jehoash son of Jehoahaz king of Israel fifteen years.

18 And the rest of the acts of Amaziah, *are* they not written in the book of the Chronicles of the kings of Judah?

19 Now ^h they made a conspiracy B. C. 825.
against him in Jerusalem: and he

^a Josh. xix. 38; xxi. 16.—^b Heb. was smitten.—^c Neh. viii. 16; xiii. 39.—^d Jer. xxxi. 38; Zech. xiv. 10.

^e 1 Kings vii. 51.—^f Chap. xiii. 12.—^g 2 Chron. xxv. 25, &c.
^h 2 Chron. xxv. 27.

proceeds, and that must bear the blame. It is not providence, the event, the occasion, whatever it is, that makes men proud, or secure, or discontented, or the like; but it is their own heart that doth it. Thou art proud of the blow thou hast given to Edom, as if that had made thee formidable to all mankind. *Glory of this, and tarry at home*—Content thyself with that glory and success, and let not thy ambition betray thee to thy ruin. *For why shouldst thou meddle to thy hurt?*—As fools often do. Many would have wealth and honour enough, if they did but know when they have enough. *That thou shouldst fall, and Judah with thee*—He warns him of the consequence; that it would be fatal, not to himself only, but to his kingdom, which he ought to protect.

Verses 11, 12. *Amaziah would not hear*—Being blinded and hardened by God to his destruction, as a punishment of his abominable and ridiculous idolatry. 2 Chron. xxv. 10. *Therefore Jehoash went up*—Namely, into the kingdom of Judah, carrying the war into his enemies' country. *At Beth-shemesh, which belongeth to Judah*—Which is added to distinguish it from Beth-shemesh in Issachar, and another in Naphtali. *And Judah was put to the worse*—Their army being routed and dispersed. Josephus says that, when they were to engage, they were struck with such a terror that they did not strike a stroke, but every one made the best of his way home. Probably they were not satisfied as to the ground and manner of the quarrel, were discouraged by the king's idolatry, and smitten by God with a spirit of fear.

Verses 13, 14. *Jehoash took Amaziah king of Judah, &c.*—Amaziah's pedigree comes in here somewhat abruptly. *The son of Jehoash, the son*

of Ahaziah—Because perhaps he had gloried in the dignity of his ancestors, or now smarted for their iniquity. *And came to Jerusalem*—Which tamely opened to him; probably because he demanded entrance in Amaziah's name, and with his consent. *And brake down the wall of Jerusalem*—In reproach to them; and that he might, when he pleased, take possession of the royal city. Josephus says, that he drove his chariot in triumph through the breach. *And he took all the gold and silver, &c.*—He plundered Jerusalem, and took away all that was valuable, spoiling both the house of the Lord, and the king's house, of all their treasures. *And hostages*—To ensure their peaceable conduct. *And returned to Samaria*—He did not keep Jerusalem, nor seek to gain the possession and dominion of that kingdom; partly, because he thought he could not keep it, considering the difficulty he found in defending his own from such potent and near enemies as the Syrians were, and the great affection which all Judah bore to David's house; and partly, because God so inclined his heart, that he might make good his promise to David and his family.

Verses 19, 20. *They made a conspiracy against him*—That is, the people, and princes, and chief men among them did this; possibly those whose sons he had delivered up as hostages to Jehoash. It is likely this conspiracy was formed with the connivance, if not approbation, of the people, because the design was carried on openly, steadily, and irresistibly, as the following words show. "What provoked the people of Jerusalem, more than any other part of the nation, against their king, was the seeing their city spoiled of its best ornaments, exposed to reproach on account of the great breach made in their wall, and several of their children

A. M. 3179. fled to ^u Lachish ; but they sent after
B. C. 825. him to Lachish, and slew him there.

20 And they brought him on horses : and he was buried at Jerusalem with his fathers in the city of David.

B. C. 810. 21 ¶ And all the people of Judah took ^x Azariah, which *was* sixteen years old, and made him king instead of his father Amaziah.

22 He built ^y Elath, and restored it to Judah, after that the king slept with his fathers.

23 ¶ In the fifteenth year of Amaziah the son of Joash king of Judah, Jeroboam ^{*} the son of Joash king of Israel began to reign in Samaria, and reigned forty and one years.

^u Josh. x. 31.—^x Chap. xv. 13 ; 2 Chron. xxvi. 1, he is called *Uzziah*.—^y Chap. xvi. 6 ; 2 Chron. xxvi. 2.—^{*} Now he begins to reign alone.—^x Num. xiii. 21 ; xxxiv. 8.

carried away as hostages for their good behaviour ; all which they imputed to their king's mal-administration," and hence they entered into this conspiracy against him. *And he fled to Lachish*—A strong city in Judah, toward the country of the Philistines. How long he continued concealed or sheltered there we are not told. Some commentators have conjectured, "that he lived in a state of exile in that city for twelve years, not bearing to continue in Jerusalem after the defeat which Jehoash had given him. But our learned Usher has placed this conspiracy in the last year of Amaziah's reign ; and Capellus supposes that it was set on foot by the great men of Jerusalem, on the specious pretence of being guardians to the young prince, and taking better care of him than his father was likely to do."—Dodd. *They*—His rebellious subjects ; *sent after him to Lachish*—Sent, some think, secret murderers, but, more probably, bands of soldiers, for this rebellion was carried on with a strong hand and open force. *And they brought him on horses*—Or, with horses, namely, in a chariot ; *and he was buried at Jerusalem*—For the rage of the rebels was not extended beyond his death, nor did they deny him a burial with his ancestors.

Verse 21. *The people of Judah took Azariah*—Called *Uzziah*, chap. xv. 30, and 2 Chron. xxvi. 1. The two names signify nearly the same thing, the former meaning *the help of God*, and the latter, *the strength of God*. *And made him king*—Either in opposition to the conspirators, or to show their affection to the house of David, and signify that their quarrel was only personal against Amaziah, whom they considered as the author of all their late calamities. But, it must be observed, the people did not do this till twelve years after Amaziah's death. For Amaziah died in the fifteenth year of Jeroboam, (compare verse 23 with verse 1,) but Azariah did not begin his reign till the twenty-seventh of Jeroboam, (chap. xv. 1.) for he was but four years old at the death of his father : so that, for twelve years,

24 And he did *that which was evil* A. M. 3179. in the sight of the LORD : he departed B. C. 825.

not from all the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who made Israel to sin.

25 He restored the coast of Israel ^{*} from the entering of Hamath unto ^{*} the sea of the plain, according to the word of the LORD God of Israel, which he spake by the hand of his servant ^b Jonah, the son of Amittai, the prophet, which *was* of ^c Gath-hepher.

26 For the LORD ^d saw the affliction B. C. 822. of Israel, *that it was* very bitter : for ^e there was not any shut up, nor any left, nor any helper for Israel.

27 ^f And the LORD said not that he would

^a Deut. iii. 17.—^b Jonah i. 1 ; Matt. xii. 39, called *Jonas*.
^c Josh. xix. 13.—^d Chap. xiii. 4.—^e Deuteronomy xxxii. 36.
^f Chap. xiii. 5.

till he came to be sixteen, the government was in the hands of protectors.

Verse 22. *He built Elath*—Repaired and fortified it ; for it was built before, Deut. ii. 8. *And restored it to Judah*—From whom it had revolted with the rest of Edom, in which land it lay, upon the Red sea. *After that the king*—Namely, his father Amaziah ; *slept with his fathers*—The meaning is, that Amaziah did not perfect his conquest of Edom, but left some work there for his son to do.

Verse 25. *He restored the coast, &c., from Hamath*—Which was the northern border of the kingdom of Israel ; *unto the sea of the plain*—The Dead sea, which was once a goodly plain, and was their southern border. *Which he spake by his servant Jonah*—Or *Jonas* ; one of the lesser prophets. The only mention that we have of this prophet is in this passage, and in the account of his famous mission to Nineveh, in considering which we shall say more concerning him. What the prophecies were by which he encouraged Jeroboam to proclaim war against the king of Syria, is nowhere recorded. But as we have not every thing which the prophet did write, so several prophets did not commit any of their predictions to writing. From this place, however, we learn, that God was so gracious to the Israelites, wicked as they were, as to continue a race of prophets among them, even after Elijah and Elisha were dead. See Patrick and Dodd. Happy that land which is thus favoured ! which has a succession of prophets running parallel with a succession of princes ; that the word of the Lord may endure for ever !

Verses 26, 27. *The Lord saw the affliction of Israel, that it was very bitter*—Whereby he was moved to pity and help them, though they were an unworthy people. They that lived in those parts of their country, of which their enemies were masters, were miserably oppressed and enslaved, and could call nothing their own : the rest, we may suppose, were much empoverished by the frequent incursions which

A. M. 3182. blot out the name of Israel from un-
B. C. 822. der heaven: but he saved them by
the hand of Jeroboam the son of Joash.

28 ¶ Now the rest of the acts of Jeroboam,
and all that he did, and his might, how he
warred, and how he recovered Damascus, and

¶ 2 Sam. viii. 6; 1 Kings xi. 24; 2 Chron. viii. 3.

their enemies made upon them, to plunder them; and were continually frightened with their alarms; so that there was *none shut up or left*, but both towns and country were laid waste and stripped of their wealth, and no helper appeared. To this extremity they were reduced in many parts of the country in the beginning of Jeroboam's reign, when God, in mere pity to them, heard the cry of their affliction, (for no mention is here made of the cry of their prayers,) and wrought this deliverance for them by the hand of Jeroboam. Reader, is thy case piteous? Then take comfort from the divine pity. He has bowels of mercy, and is full of compassion! *For the Lord said not that he would blot out the name, &c.*—That is, not yet: he had not yet declared this, as afterward he did by the succeeding prophets, though not in these very words, Hos. i. 5-9. The decree was not yet gone forth for their utter destruction. If it be understood of the dispersion of the ten tribes, he did both say it and do it not long after: reprieves are not pardons. If of the utter extirpation of the name of Israel, he never said it, nor will ever do it: for that name still remains under hea-

Hamath, ^a which belonged to Judah, A. M. 3239.
for Israel, are they not written in the B. C. 765.
book of the Chronicles of the kings of Israel?

29 And Jeroboam slept with his B. C. 784.
fathers, even with the kings of Israel;
and ^b Zachariah his son reigned in his stead.

^b After an interregnum of 11 years, Chap. xv. 8.

ven in the spiritual Israel, and will to the end of time.

Verse 28. *And how he recovered Damascus and Hamath*—These were cities of Syria, but were taken from the Syrians by David and Solomon, and probably by them incorporated with, and added to, the possessions of their own tribe, to which, from that time, they belonged: but afterward they were retaken by the Syrians, and were now recovered by this Jeroboam.

Verse 29. *And Jeroboam slept with his fathers, &c.*—It was in the reign of this Jeroboam, that Hosea (who continued very long a prophet) began to prophesy, and he was the first that wrote his prophecies. At the same time Amos prophesied, and wrote his prophecy, and soon after Micah, and then Isaiah, in the days of Ahaz and Hezekiah. Thus God never left himself without witness: but, in the darkest ages of the church, raised up some to be burning and shining lights to their own age by their preaching and living; and a few by their writings to reflect light upon us, on whom the ends of the world are come.

CHAPTER XV.

The reign of Azariah, 1-7. Of Zachariah, 8-12. Of Shallum, 13-15. Of Menahem, 16-22. Of Pekahiah, 23-26. Of Pekah, 27-31. Of Jotham, 32-38.

A. M. 3246. IN the twenty and seventh year ¹ of
B. C. 758. Jeroboam king of Israel ^a began

^b Azariah the son of Amaziah king of Judah to reign.

2 Sixteen years old was he when he began to reign, and he reigned two and fifty years in

¹ This is the 27th 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 16th year of Jeroboam's monarchy.

NOTES ON CHAPTER XV.

Verse 1. *In the twenty and seventh year of Jeroboam*—After an interregnum of twelve years in the kingdom of Judah, either through the prevalency of the faction which cut off Amaziah the father, and kept the son out of his kingdom; or, rather, because Azariah was very young, it is thought only four years of age, when his father was slain, and the people were not agreed to restore him, till he was in his six-

Jerusalem. And his mother's name A. M. 3246.
was Jecholiah of Jerusalem. B. C. 758.

3 And he did *that which was* right in the sight of the LORD, according to all that his father Amaziah had done;

4 ^c Save that the high places were not re-

^a Chap. xiv. 21; 2 Chron. xxvi. 1, 4.—^b Called *Uzziah*, Verses 13, 30, &c.; 2 Chron. xxvi. 1.—^c Verse 35; Chap. xii. 3; xiv. 4.

teenth year: see on chap. xiv. 21. *Began Azariah to reign*—Solely and fully to exercise his regal power.

Verses 3, 4. *According to all that his father had done*—Like him beginning well, but not persevering. *Save that*—It should rather be read, *howbeit*, or *nevertheless*, (as in chap. xiv. 4.) *the high places were not removed*—That irregularity, in the mode and place of worship, still continued.

A. M. 3246. moved; the people sacrificed and burnt
B. C. 758. incense still on the high places.

5 ¶ And the LORD ^d smote the king, so that he was a leper unto the day of his death, and ^e dwelt in a several house. And Jotham the king's son *was* over the house, judging the people of the land.

6 And the rest of the acts of Azariah, and all that he did, *are* they not written in the book of the Chronicles of the kings of Judah?

7 So Azariah slept with his fathers; and ^f they buried him with his fathers in the city of David; and Jotham his son reigned in his stead.

B. C. 773. 8 ¶ In the thirty and eighth year of Azariah king of Judah did Zachariah the son of Jeroboam reign over Israel in Samaria ² six months.

9 And he did *that which was* evil in the sight of the LORD, as his fathers had done: he de-

^d 2 Chron. xxvi. 19-21.—^e Lev. xiii. 46.—^f 2 Chron. xxvi. 23.—^g There having been an interregnum for 11 years.—^h As prophesied, Amos vii. 9.

Verse 5. *The Lord smote the king, so that he was a leper*—The cause of this stroke is related at large, 2 Chron. xxvi. 16-21. *And dwelt in a several house*—Separated from conversation with others by virtue of the law, recorded Lev. xiii. 46, which, being the law of the King of kings, bound kings no less than subjects. The Jews, by the term *several house*, understand a house in the country; where he might have liberty to take his pleasure, but not to meddle with public affairs. *Jotham, the king's son, was over the house, &c.*—That is, he lived in the palace, and managed all the affairs of the court and of the kingdom, governing in his father's name as his vicegerent. It was in the twenty-seventh year of Azariah's reign that he was smitten with the leprosy, and he continued a leper twenty-five years, during which time Jotham administered the government, his father being incapable of it.

Verse 7. *They buried him with his fathers, &c.*—Not in the very sepulchre of the kings, because he was a leper, (2 Chron. xxvi. 23,) but in the same field, and very near to the same place, where his ancestors lay interred.

Verse 10. *Shallum the son of Jabesh*—Probably one of his chief captains; *conspired against him*—On what pretence is quite uncertain. *And smote him before the people*—Openly and impudently, which, it is likely, he presumed to do, either because he remembered that the promise of the kingdom, made to Jehu, was confined to the fourth generation, (chap. x. 30,) which he observed to be now expired; or because he perceived the people were generally disaffected to their king, and favourable to his attempt.

parted not from the sins of Jeroboam ^{A. M. 3232.}
the son of Nebat, who made Israel to ^{B. C. 772.}
sin.

10 And Shallum the son of Jabesh conspired against him, and ^e smote him before the people, and slew him, and reigned in his stead.

11 And the rest of the acts of Zachariah, behold, they *are* written in the book of the Chronicles of the kings of Israel.

12 This *was* ^h the word of the LORD which he spake unto Jehu, saying, Thy sons shall sit on the throne of Israel unto the fourth *generation*. And so it came to pass.

13 ¶ Shallum the son of Jabesh began to reign in the nine and thirtieth year of ⁱ Uzziah king of Judah; and he reigned ³ a full month in Samaria.

14 For Menahem the son of Gadi went up from ^h Tirzah, and came to Samaria, and smote

^h Chap. x. 30.—ⁱ Matthew i. 8, 9, called *Ozias*, and Verse 1, *Azariah*.—^j Hebrew, *a month of days*.—^k 1 Kings xiv. 17.

Verse 11. *The rest of the acts of Zachariah, &c.*—We read of nothing that he did; therefore the meaning is, that his behaviour during the six months in which he reigned, how he managed things, and provoked this conspiracy, are recorded elsewhere.

Verse 12. *This was the word of the Lord, Thy sons, &c.*—How unfaithful soever they proved to God, he faithfully performed the promise which he made to Jehu, whose sons, to the fourth generation, succeeded him in the throne of Israel. But this Shallum put an end to that family, and fulfilled the prophecy of Hosea, (chap. i. 4,) *I will avenge the blood of Jezreel upon the house of Jehu, and will cause to cease the kingdom of the house of Israel*. For though Jehu had a command from God to destroy the house of Ahab, yet because he did it not so much in obedience to God, and with a view to his glory, as to satisfy his own private ambition, and in a way of cruelty quite abhorrent to the divine nature, God cut his family short, as soon as he had fulfilled his promise, and avenged that blood by this man, who slew Zachariah, and the rest of his posterity, if there were any. At least, he made the kingdom to cease in his family, and, not long after, it ceased in all Israel, who were rooted out, and never restored to their own country, as Judah was.

Verses 13, 14. *He reigned a full month*—That dominion seldom lasts long that is founded in blood and falsehood. Menahem, either provoked by his crime, or animated by his example, soon served him as he had served his master: he *went up from Tirzah*—A city in the tribe of Ephraim, where Jeroboam first dwelt; and *smote Shallum*—Probably he was general of the army, which then lay encamped

A. M. 3232. Shallum the son of Jabesh in Samaria, and slew him, and reigned in his stead.

15 And the rest of the acts of Shallum, and his conspiracy which he made, behold, they are written in the book of the Chronicles of the kings of Israel.

16 ¶ Then Menahem smote ¹Tiphshah, and all that were therein, and the coasts thereof from Tirzah: because they opened not to him, therefore he smote it; and all ^mthe women therein that were with child he ripped up.

17 ¶ In the nine and thirtieth year of Azariah king of Judah began Menahem the son of Gadi to reign over Israel, and reigned ten years in Samaria.

18 And he did that which was evil in the sight of the LORD: he departed not all his days from the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who made Israel to sin.

B. C. 771. 19 ¶ And ⁿPul the king of Assyria came against the land: and Menahem gave Pul a thousand talents of silver, that his

hand might be with him to confirm the kingdom in his hand.

20 And Menahem ^eexacted the money of Israel, even of all the mighty men of wealth, of each man fifty shekels of silver, to give to the king of Assyria. So the king of Assyria turned back, and stayed not there in the land.

21 ¶ And the rest of the acts of Menahem, and all that he did, are they not written in the book of the Chronicles of the kings of Israel?

22 And Menahem slept with his fathers; and Pekahiah his son reigned in his stead.

23 ¶ In the fiftieth year of Azariah king of Judah, Pekahiah the son of Menahem began to reign over Israel in Samaria, and reigned two years.

24 And he did that which was evil in the sight of the LORD: he departed not from the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who made Israel to sin.

25 But Pekah the son of Remaliah, a captain of his, conspired against him, and smote him in Samaria, in the palace of the king's house, with Argob and Arieah, and

¹ 1 Kings iv. 24.—^m Chap. viii. 12.—ⁿ 1 Chron. v. 26; Isa. ix.

1; Hos. viii. 9.—^e Chap. xiv. 5.—^f Heb. caused to come forth.

at Tirzah, and hearing of Shallum's treason and usurpation, he hastened to Samaria to avenge it, as Omri acted, in a like case, with regard to Zimri.

Verse 16. *Then Menahem smote Tiphshah*—Either that Tiphshah mentioned 1 Kings iv. 24, or another city of the same name. *And the coasts thereof, from Tirzah*—All the people dwelling between those places. *Because they opened not to him*—Refused to open the gates of their city, and submit to him as conqueror. *All the women that were with child he ripped up*—That by this example of severity he might affright all the rest of the people into obedience. The frequent mention of this kind of cruelty, shows how inhumanly barbarous the eastern people were in those ages.

Verse 19. *Pul the king of Assyria came against the land*—This is the first time that we find any mention of the kingdom of Assyria, since the days of Nimrod, who erected a small principality there, Gen. x. 11. And they were no great people, one would suppose, when the eighty-third Psalm was written, in which they are mentioned as auxiliaries to the children of Lot, against the Israelites, together with other small nations. But now they were become very powerful. This Pul, or Phul, was the first monarch of that nation that invaded Israel, and began their transportation out of their country. Some have been of opinion, with Bishop Patrick, Poole, and others, that he was the same with Belesis, the governor of Babylon, who, together with Arbaces the Mede, slew Sardanapalus, the last of the Assyrian

monarchs, and translated the empire to the Chaldeans. But, according to Dr. Prideaux, Belesis was one generation later. It is supposed, therefore, that this Pul was the father of Sardanapalus, and the same king of Assyria who, when Jonah preached against Nineveh, gave great tokens of his humiliation and repentance. See *Prideaux's Con. A. 747*, and *Bedford's Script. Chronology*. *Menahem gave Pul a thousand talents of silver*—A very considerable present indeed, being no less than £450,000 sterling. This sum he gave, not only with a view to turn away the army of Pul from him, but also to purchase his friendship and assistance against those of his own subjects who opposed him, and to confirm the kingdom in his hand. By which it appears, that his cruelty at Tiphshah was so far from establishing him as he expected, that it weakened and endangered him, so that he was obliged to call in a foreign power to his aid.

Verse 20. *Of all the mighty men of wealth*—By exacting the money only of the rich, it is likely, he thought he should ingratiate himself with the common people, upon whom he laid no tax. Fifty shekels of silver, demanded of each man of wealth, were a sum equal to £7. 10s. of our money.

Verses 24, 25. *He did that which was evil, &c.*—He was the wicked son of a wicked father, and so perished by such a conspiracy as his father formed against Shallum. *With Argob and Arieah*—It does not appear from the text whether these persons were Pekah's partners in this treason, or Pekahiah's co-

A. M. 3245. with him fifty men of the Gileadites :
B. C. 759. and he killed him, and reigned in his room.

26 And the rest of the acts of Pekahiah, and all that he did, behold, they *are* written in the book of the Chronicles of the kings of Israel.

B. C. 759. 27 In the two and fiftieth year of Azariah king of Judah, ² Pekah the son of Remaliah began to reign over Israel in Samaria, and reigned twenty years.

28 And he did *that which was* evil in the sight of the LORD: he departed not from the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who made Israel to sin.

B. C. 740. 29 ¶ In the days of Pekah king of Israel ³ came Tiglath-pileser king of Assyria, and took ⁴ Ijon, and Abel-beth-maa-

chah, and Janoah, and Kedesh, and Hazor, and Gilead, and Galilee, all the land of Naphtali, and carried them captive to Assyria.

30 ¶ And Hoshea the son of Elah made a conspiracy against Pekah the son of Remaliah, and smote him, and slew him, and reigned in his stead, ⁵ in the twentieth year of Jotham the son of Uzziah.

31 And the rest of the acts of Pekah, and all that he did, behold, they *are* written in the book of the Chronicles of the kings of Israel.

32 ¶ In the second year of Pekah the son of Remaliah king of Israel began ⁶ Jotham the son of Uzziah king of Judah to reign.

33 Five and twenty years old was he when he began to reign, and he reigned sixteen years

² Isa. vii. 1.—³ 1 Chron. v. 26; Isa. ix. 1.—⁴ 1 Kings xv. 20.

⁵ After an anarchy for some years, Ch. xvii. 1; Hos. x. 3, 7, 15.

⁶ In the fourth year of Ahaz, in the twentieth year after Jotham had begun to reign, *Ush.*—⁷ 2 Chron. xxvii. 1.

tiers and officers now slain with him. *With fifty men of the Gileadites*—Who, it is probable, were Pekahiah's body-guard.

Verse 27. *In the two and fiftieth year of Azariah Pekah began to reign*—This is the fifth king that reigned over Israel during the reign of Azariah king of Judah. Pekah, however, reigned much longer than any of the preceding four. For though he also, like Shallum and Menahem, got the kingdom by treason and blood, he kept possession of it twenty years. So long it was before his violent dealing returned upon his own head. And he made himself more noted abroad than any of these usurpers; for even in the latter part of his time, in the reign of Ahaz, (which began in his seventeenth year,) he was a great terror to the kingdom of Judah, as we find, Isa. vii. 1. Mr. Locke justly observes, that the prophecies of Hosea, Joel, and Amos, come in here, who all prophesied about this time.

Verse 29. *In the days of Pekah came Tiglath-pileser, king of Assyria, &c.*—He is supposed by some to have been the son and successor of Sardanapalus, who restored the kingdom of Assyria, and possessed it after it had been dismembered by Bel-esis and Arbaces: but our learned Prideaux, who begins his valuable connection of the Old and New Testaments at this period, makes him to be the same with Arbaces, who, together with Belesis, headed the conspiracy against Sardanapalus, and fixed his royal seat at Nineveh, the ancient residence of the Assyrian kings, as Belesis fixed his at Babylon, and there governed his newly-erected kingdom for nineteen years. *And took Ijon, &c., and Gilead, and Galilee, and all Naphtali, and carried them captive to Assyria*—Thus Pekah lost a great part of his kingdom. And by this judgment God punished him for his attempt upon Judah and Jerusalem. For it was then foretold by Isaiah, that within two or three

years after he had made that attempt, before a child then born should be able to cry, *My father, and my mother, the riches of Samaria should be taken away before the king of Assyria*; and here we have the accomplishment of that prediction. It may be proper to observe here, that the kingdom of the ten tribes was not destroyed at one time. The first invasion of their country, and prelude to their destruction, was made by *Pul*, who took away an immense booty, and drained them of their wealth; probably also carrying captive some of the people that dwelt on the east of Jordan. The second was by this Tiglath-pileser, who carried away the inhabitants of the northern parts, with the Reubenites, Gadites, and half-tribe of Manasseh, 1 Chron. v. 26. The third and last was by Shalmaneser, who took Samaria, and carried into captivity the rest of the Israelites, chap. xvii. 1–23.

Verse 30. *Hoshea made a conspiracy against Pekah, and smote him*—It is probable that the people were provoked at him for leaving them exposed to a foreign enemy, while he invaded Judah; and that Hoshea took advantage of their discontent and disgust to seize and slay him. Thus Pekah's treason and violence returned upon himself at last. *And reigned in his stead in the twentieth year of Jotham*—The meaning is, that he began his reign in the twentieth year after the beginning of Jotham's reign; or, which is the same thing, in the fourth year of Ahaz, son of Jotham.

Verse 32. *Began Jotham the son of Uzziah to reign*—Why he should be called all along Azariah, and here, and verse 34, Uzziah, no account can be given, unless it was to show that he had two names. And it appears by the book of Chronicles, that the name *Uzziah* was as much used, when that book was written, as the other.

Verses 33, 34. *Five and twenty years old was he when he began to reign*—Namely, properly and

A. M. 3246. in Jerusalem. And his mother's name
B. C. 758. was Jerusha, the daughter of Zadok.

34 And he did *that which was right* in the sight of the LORD: he did ^a according to all that his father Uzziah had done.

35 ^r Howbeit, the high places were not removed: the people sacrificed and burned incense still in the high places. ^s He built the higher gate of the house of the LORD.

36 ¶ Now the rest of the acts of Jotham, and

^a Verse 3.—^r Verse 4.—^s 2 Chron. xxvii. 3, &c.—^t At the

alone; for he had reigned before this as his father's deputy. *And he did that which was right in the sight of the Lord*—Josephus gives him a very high character; that he was pious toward God, just toward men, and laid himself out for the public good; that whatever was amiss he took care to have it rectified; and, in short, wanted no virtue that became a good prince. And though the high places were not taken away, yet, to draw the people from them, and keep them close to God's holy place, he showed great respect to the temple, *and built*, or rebuilt rather, *the higher gate*, not indeed of the temple itself, but of one of its courts, probably that which led to the king's palace, 2 Chron. xxiii. 20. "If magistrates," says Henry, "cannot do all they would for the suppression of vice and profaneness, let them do so much the more for the support and advancement of piety and virtue, and bringing of them into reputation. If they cannot pull down the high places of sin, yet let them build and beautify the high gate of God's house."

A. M. 3262. all that he did, *are* they not written in the book of the Chronicles of the kings of Judah? B. C. 742.

37 In those days ^o the LORD began to send against Judah, ^a Rezin the king of Syria, and ^b Pekah the son of Remaliah. B. C. 742.

38 And Jotham slept with his fathers, and was buried with his fathers in the city of David his father: and Ahaz his son reigned in his stead.

end of Jotham's reign.—^a Ch. xvi. 5; Isa. vii. 1.—^b Ver. 27.

Verse 37. *In those days*—That is, toward the end of Jotham's reign; *the Lord began to send against Judah, Rezin and Pekah*—As he bid Shimei curse David, when he gave him an opportunity of doing it, without fear of punishment. Wicked men are the sword, the rod in God's hand, which he makes use of as he pleases, to serve his own righteous counsels, though they be unrighteous in their intentions. This storm was gathered in the reign of pious Jotham, but he came to his grave in peace, and it fell upon his degenerate son Ahaz, whose heart, upon notice of it, was moved, as were the *hearts of the people, as the trees of the wood are moved by the wind*, Isa. vii. 2.

Verse 38. *Jotham slept with his fathers, and was buried in the city of David*—He died in the midst of his days, being only forty-one years of age. He was too great a blessing to be continued long to such an unworthy people. His death was a judgment, especially considering the character of his son and his successor.

CHAPTER XVI.

The idolatry of Ahaz, 1-4. Being assailed by Rezin and Pekah, he hires Tiglath-pileser against them, 5-9. Causes an altar to be built in the temple, according to the form of one he had seen at Damascus, 10-16. Gives the treasures of the temple to Tiglath-pileser, 17, 18. Dies, and is succeeded by Hezekiah.

A. M. 3262. **I**N the seventeenth year of Pekah
B. C. 742. the son of Remaliah, ^a Ahaz the son of Jotham king of Judah began to reign.

2 Twenty years old was Ahaz when he be-

gan to reign, and reigned sixteen years in Jerusalem, and did not *that which was right* in the sight of the LORD his God, like David his father. A. M. 3262. B. C. 742.

^a 2 Chron.

xxviii. 1, &c.

NOTES ON CHAPTER XVI.

Verse 2. *Ahaz did not that which was right in the sight of the Lord*—Contrary to what might have been expected, considering the good education which, doubtless, Jotham, his pious father, gave him, and the excellent example he set him. *Like David his father*—Or progenitor. It was his honour that he was of the house and lineage of David, and it

was owing to God's ancient covenant with David, that he was now upon the throne: but he had none of that concern and affection for the instituted worship and service of God, for which David was so remarkable. He had no love for the temple, made no conscience of his duty to God, nor had any regard to his law, and therefore was a reproach to that honourable name and family, to which he was under

A. M. 3262. 3 But he walked in the way of the
B. C. 742. kings of Israel, yea, ^b and made his
son to pass through the fire, according to the
^c abominations of the heathen, whom the Lord
cast out from before the children of Israel.

4 And he sacrificed and burnt incense in the
high places, and ^d on the hills, and under every
green tree.

5 ¶ ^e Then Rezin king of Syria and Pekah
son of Remaliah king of Israel came up to Je-
rusalem to war: and they besieged Ahaz, but
could not overcome *him*.

^b Lev. xviii. 21; 2 Chron. xxviii. 3; Psa. cvi. 37, 38.—^c Deut.
xii. 31.—^d Deut. xii. 2; 1 Kings xiv. 23.—^e Isa. vii. 1, 4, &c.
¶ Chap. xiv. 22.

such great obligations, and which, of consequence,
was really a reproach to him, showing his wicked-
ness in a more aggravated point of view.

Verse 3. *He walked in the way of the kings of Is-
rael*—Who all worshipped the calves, and were
therefore idolaters. He was not joined in any affinity
with them, as Jehoram and Ahaziah were with the
house of Ahab, but of his own accord and voluntary
motion, and, without any instigation, he walked in
their way. The kings of Israel pleaded policy and
reasons of state for their idolatry; but Ahaz had no
such pretence: in him it was the most unreasonable
and impolitic conduct that could be. They were
his enemies, and had manifested that they were
enemies to themselves too by their idolatry; yet he
walked in their way. *And made his son to pass
through the fire*—By way of oblation, so as to be
consumed for a burnt-offering, which was the prac-
tice of heathen, and of some Israelites in imitation
of them. Thus 2 Chron. xxviii. 3, it is said, *He
burned his children in the fire*, that is, some of them,
first one, as is here mentioned, and afterward others,
as is there observed. See on Lev. xviii. 21, and
Deut. xviii. 10. *According to the abominations of
the heathen, whom the Lord cast out*—It was an in-
stance of his great folly that, in his religion, he
would be guided by and imitate those whom he saw
fallen into the ditch before his eyes; and of his great
impiety, that he would conform to those usages
which God had declared to be abominable to him.

Verse 4. *He sacrificed, &c., in the high places*—
If his father had but had zeal enough to take them
away, it might have prevented the corrupting of his
sons. They that connive at sin, know not what
dangerous snares they lay for those that come after
them.

Verses 5, 6. *But could not overcome him*—Because
God, of his own mere grace, undertook the protec-
tion of Judah, as he promised to do, and disappointed
the designs and hopes of their enemies, Isa. vii. 1-9.
At that time Rezin recovered Elath—Took it from
the Jews, who had not long been in possession of it,
having but lately recovered it, with the rest of Edom:
see on chap. xiv. 22. So that, though the confeder-
ate kings of Syria and Israel failed, through the

6 At that time Rezin king of Syria ^{A. M. 3262.}
^{B. C. 742.} recovered Elath to Syria, and drove
the Jews from ¹ Elath: and the Syrians came
to Elath, and dwelt there unto this day.

7 ¶ So Ahaz sent messengers ² to ² Tiglath-
pileser king of Assyria, saying, I *am* thy ser-
vant and thy son: come up, and save me out
of the hand of the king of Syria, and out of
the hand of the king of Israel, which rise up
against me.

8 And Ahaz ^b took the silver and ^{B. C. 740.}
gold that was found in the house of

¹ Heb. *Eloth*.—² Chap. xv. 29.—³ Heb. *Tilgath-pileser*,
1 Chron. v. 25; 2 Chron. xxviii. 20, *Tilgath-pileser*.—⁴ Chap.
xii. 18; 2 Chron. xxviii. 21.

interference of Divine Providence, in their attempts
on Jerusalem, the former made himself master of
this considerable and very commodious port on the
Red sea.

Verse 7. *So Ahaz sent messengers to Tiglath-
pileser*—Having forsaken God, he had neither cou-
rage nor strength to make head against his enemies,
and therefore made his court to the king of Assyria,
and endeavoured to prevail on him to come to his
relief. But was it because there was not a God in
Israel that he sent to the Assyrian for help? The
truth is, he could not with any confidence ask help
of God, being conscious he had abandoned his wor-
ship, and in the grossest manner violated his laws.
Observe, reader, they whose hearts condemn them
will go any whither for help, in a day of distress,
rather than to God. *Saying, I am thy servant and
thy son: come up, and save me*—I yield myself to
thee as thy vassal, to serve and obey thee, and pay
thee tribute, upon condition that thou wilt assist me
against my enemies. Had he thus humbled himself
to God, and implored his favour, he might have been
delivered upon easier terms, might have saved his
money, and needed only to have parted with his
sins. *Out of the hand of the king of Syria, &c.*—
For though they were now gone from Jerusalem,
yet he justly concluded they would return again, and,
from time to time, molest and vex him.

Verse 8. *And Ahaz took the silver, &c.*—The
treasures of the house of the Lord, and of the king's
house, had been sent some years before by Jehoash
to the king of Syria, chap. xii. 18. It seems, how-
ever, they had been well replenished again by the
piety of his successors, Amaziah, Azariah, and espe-
cially Jotham. But what authority had Ahaz to
dispose thus of the public money, and exhaust the
treasures of both church and state, to gratify his
new patron and guardian? We can only answer,
that it is common for those, who have brought them-
selves into straits by one sin, to endeavour to extri-
cate themselves by another. And those that have
alienated themselves from God, will make no diffi-
culty in alienating from him any other of his rights.
In this instance, the sin itself was its own punish-
ment; for, though the king of Assyria *harkened*

A. M. 3264. the LORD, and in the treasures of the
B. C. 740. king's house, and sent it for a present to the king of Assyria.

9 And the king of Assyria hearkened unto him: for the king of Assyria went up against ³ Damascus, and ¹ took it, and carried the people of it captive to Kir, and slew Rezin.

10 ¶ And King Ahaz went to Damascus to meet Tiglath-pileser king of Assyria, and saw an altar that was at Damascus: and King Ahaz sent to Urijah the priest the fashion of the altar, and the pattern of it, according to all the workmanship thereof.

11 And Urijah the priest built an altar according to all that King Ahaz had sent from Damascus: so Urijah the priest made it against King Ahaz came from Damascus.

12 And when the king was come from Damascus, the king saw the altar: and ¹ the

¹ Heb. *Dammeseck*.—ⁱ Foretold, Amos i. 5.—^k 2 Chron. xxvi. 16, 19.

unto Ahaz, and, for his own ends, made a descent on Damascus, and took it, thereby giving a powerful diversion to the king of Syria, and obliging him to forego his design against Jerusalem; yet Ahaz made but an ill bargain, seeing he not only robbed the temple, and expended his own treasures, but enslaved both himself and his people to the king of Assyria.

Verse 9. *And carried the people of it captive to Kir*—Not Kir of Moab, (Isa. xv. 1,) but a part of Media, which was then subject to the king of Assyria. It is remarkable, that this taking of Damascus, and carrying the inhabitants of it captive to this place, nay, and the slaying of Rezin the king, was expressly foretold by Amos some time before it happened. See the margin.

Verses 10. *And King Ahaz went to meet Tiglath-pileser*—To congratulate his victory, acknowledge his favour and help, and to beg the continuance of it. *And saw an altar that was at Damascus*—Of an excellent structure, as he supposed, upon which the Syrians used to offer to their idols, 1 Chron. xxviii. 23. *Ahaz sent to Urijah the priest the fashion of the altar*—That a pattern of it might be taken immediately. He could not stay till he should return to Jerusalem himself, but sent it before him, in all haste, with orders to Urijah, to get one made exactly according to this model, and have it ready against he came home. The pattern God showed to Moses in the mount, or to David by the Spirit, was not comparable to this pattern sent from Damascus!

Verses 11, 12. *And Urijah built an altar, &c.*—He complied with the king's command against his own conscience, and against the express command of that great God to whom the king and he both were subject. *The priest made it against Ahaz*

king approached to the altar, and A. M. 3264. offered thereon. B. C. 740.

13 And he burnt his burnt-offering and his meat-offering, and poured his drink-offering, and sprinkled the blood of his ⁴ peace-offerings upon the altar.

14 And he brought also the ¹ brazen altar, which was before the LORD, from the fore-front of the house, from between the altar and the house of the LORD, and put it on the north side of the altar.

15 And King Ahaz commanded Urijah the priest, saying, Upon the great altar burn ^m the morning burnt-offering, and the evening meat-offering, and the king's burnt sacrifice, and his meat-offering, with the burnt-offering of all the people of the land, and their meat-offering, and their drink-offerings; and sprinkle upon it all the blood of the burnt-offering, and all the

⁴ Heb. *which were his*.—¹ 2 Chron. iv. 1.—^m Exod. xxix. 39, 41.

came from Damascus—He made haste and delayed not to do it, to please the king, and advance himself. *The king approached to the altar, and offered thereon*—Namely, a sacrifice, and that not unto God, but unto the Syrian idols, (2 Chron. xxviii. 23, 24,) to whom that altar was appropriated. A wonderful blindness, to worship those gods, and expect help from them, who could not preserve their own country from ruin! Whether Ahaz offered this sacrifice himself, or by a priest, is not certain.

Verses 13, 14. *And he burned his burnt-offering, &c.*—For the heathen, and Ahaz, in imitation of them, offered the same sorts of offerings to their false gods which the Israelites did to the true. *He brought also the brazen altar*—Namely, the altar of burnt-offerings made by Solomon, and placed there by God's appointment; *from before the Lord*—That is, from before the Lord's house, Lev. i. 3. *From between the altar, &c.*—Urijah had placed Ahaz's altar behind that of the Lord, namely, between it and the east gate of the court of the priests: but when Ahaz came, taking this for a disparagement to his altar, he impiously and audaciously removed the altar of the Lord to the north side of the court, and set his own in the place of it. A bolder stroke this, than the very worst of the kings had hitherto given to religion.

Verse 15. *Ahaz commanded, Upon the great altar burn the morning burnt-offering, &c.*—He made a solemn injunction, that all the public sacrifices, of what sort soever they were, whether made by himself or by the people, should be constantly offered upon his altar, which he calls *the great altar*, because it was much larger, it is probable, than the altar of God. The command, probably, referred principally, if not only, to sacrifices to be offered to the true God, whose service, it seems, he had not

A. M. 3264. blood of the sacrifice: and the bra-
B. C. 740. zen altar shall be for me to inquire

by.

16 Thus did Urijah the priest, according to all that King Ahaz commanded.

B. C. 739. 17 ¶ ^a And King Ahaz cut off ^o the borders of the bases, and removed the laver from off them; and took down ^p the sea from off the brazen oxen that *were* under it, and put it upon a pavement of stones.

^a 2 Chron. xxviii. 24.—^o 1 Kings vii. 27, 28.

yet utterly forsaken, but occasionally worshipped idols with him. *The brazen altar shall be for me to inquire by*—That shall be reserved for my proper use, at which I may seek God, or *inquire* his will, by sacrifices joined with prayer, when I shall see fit. He says only, לבקר, *lebakker*, to seek, or to inquire; not to seek the Lord, or to inquire of the Lord, as the phrase is more largely expressed elsewhere: for, says Poole, “he would not vouchsafe to mention the name of the Lord, whom he had so grossly forsaken and despised.” Thus, having thrust out the altar of God from the use for which it was instituted, which was to sanctify the gifts offered upon it, he pretends to advance it above its institution, a practice common with superstitious people. But to overdo is to underdo. The altar was never designed for an *oracle*, but Ahaz will have it for that use. Some, indeed, put a different sense on Ahaz’s words, and understand him to mean, “As for the brazen altar, I will consider what to do with it, and will give orders accordingly.”

Verse 16. *Thus did Urijah the priest, &c.*—Having once begun to defile his conscience, he could not now make an honourable retreat, and therefore proceeds to execute all the king’s commands.

Verse 17. *Ahaz cut off the borders of the bases, and took down the sea from off the brazen oxen, &c.*—Probably that he might dispose of them, or of the brass of them, in some other way; perhaps that he might turn them into money, either by casting them into such pieces as were current, or by selling them as they were.

Verse 18. *The covert for the sabbath, turned he from the house of the Lord*—There is a great variety of opinions concerning this השבת, *musach hahsabbath*, or *covert of*, or *for the sabbath*, here spoken of, and why it is so called. Mr. Locke says, It was something made for the purpose of covering the people from the injuries of the weather on the sabbath days, when more were wont to assemble at the temple than the porch could contain: and Houbigant supposes it was something of the same kind.

188

18 And the covert for the sabbath that they had built in the house, and the king’s entry without, turned he from the house of the Lord for the king of Assyria.

19 ¶ Now the rest of the acts of Ahaz which he did, *are* they not written in the book of the Chronicles of the kings of Judah?

20 And Ahaz slept with his fathers, and ^a was buried with his fathers in the city of David: and Hezekiah his son reigned in his stead.

^p 1 Kings vii. 23, 25.—^a 2 Chron. xxviii. 27.

It is, indeed, generally understood to have been some building, either where the priests, after their weekly course was ended, abode until the next course came, which they did upon the sabbath day; or in which the guard of the temple kept their station; or some canopy, or other covered place, under which the king used to sit to hear God’s word, and see the sacrifices, which might be called *the covert of the sabbath*, because the chief times in which the king used it for those ends was the weekly sabbath, and other solemn days of feasting or fasting, (which all come under the name of *sabbaths*, in the Old Testament,) upon which the king used more solemnly to present himself before the Lord than at other times. “And the reason,” says Dr. Dodd, “why the king ordered this to be taken away was, because he intended to trouble himself no more with coming to the temple, and by this action to express his hatred and contempt of the sabbath, as his removing the bases, the laver, and the brazen sea, was probably with a design to deface the service of God in the temple, and thence to bring it into public disesteem.” *The king’s entry without*—The passage by which he used to go from his palace to the temple, and which had been made for the convenience of the royal family; *turned he*—Another way, and for other uses, *from the house of the Lord*—To show that he did not intend to frequent the house of the Lord any longer. *For the king of Assyria*—To oblige him, who probably had returned his visit, and found fault with this entry, as inconvenient, and a disparagement to his palace. Thus, to ingratiate himself with this heathen king, he expresses his public contempt and rejection of that religion which had been the only partition wall between the kings of Judah and other kings.

Verse 20. *And Ahaz slept with his fathers*—Resigning his life in the midst of his days, at thirty-six years of age, and leaving his kingdom to a better man, Hezekiah his son, who proved as much a friend to the temple as Ahaz had been an enemy to it.

2

CHAPTER XVII.

The reign of Hoshea, 1, 2. The king of Assyria imprisons him, and carries Israel captive, 3-6. The cause of this captivity, 7-23. The strange nations transplanted into Canaan are plagued with lions, 24-26. An Israelitish priest is sent to them, 27, 28. The mongrel religion which followed, 29-41.

A. M. 3279.
B. C. 725. **I**N the twelfth year of Ahaz king of Judah began ^aHoshea the son of Elah to reign in Samaria over Israel nine years.

2 And he did *that which was* evil in the sight of the LORD, but not as the kings of Israel that were before him.

3 ¶ Against him came up ^bShalmaneser king

^a After an interregnum, Chap. xv. 30.—^b Chap. xviii. 9.

NOTES ON CHAPTER XVII.

Verse 1. *In the twelfth year of Ahaz, began Hoshea to reign*—He usurped the kingdom in Ahaz's fourth year; but either was not owned as king by the generality of the people, or was not accepted and established in his kingdom till Ahaz's twelfth year. *Nine years*—After his confirmation and peaceable possession of his kingdom; for in all he reigned seventeen or eighteen years; twelve with Ahaz, who reigned sixteen years, and six with Hezekiah.

Verse 2. *But not as the kings of Israel that were before him*—For he neither worshipped Baal, as many of his predecessors had done, nor compelled the people to worship the calves, one of which, that of Dan, being destroyed or carried away before this time, as the Hebrew writers affirm. And whereas the kings of Israel had hitherto maintained guards upon the frontiers, to hinder their subjects from going to Jerusalem to worship, Hoshea took away those guards, and gave free liberty to all, to go and pay their adoration where the law had directed; and, therefore, when Hezekiah had invited all Israel to come to his passover, this prince permitted all that would to go: and when, upon their return from that festival, they destroyed all the monuments of idolatry that were found in the kingdom of Samaria, instead of forbidding them, in all probability he gave his consent to it; because, without some tacit encouragement, at least, they durst not have ventured to do it.—Prideaux. And yet God, whose *judgments are a great deep*, brought destruction on the kingdom of Israel in the reign of this king. The fact was, that the Israelites had now completely filled up the measure of their iniquities, and God, by bringing ruin upon them at this time, when their king was less guilty than his predecessors, designed to show that he was punishing, not only the sins of that generation, but of the foregoing ages, and reckoning with them for the iniquities of their fathers. Add to this, that if Hoshea was not so bad as the generality of their former kings, yet the people were quite as wicked as those that went before them; and it was an aggravation of their wickedness, and brought ruin on them the sooner, that their king did not set them so bad an example as the former kings

of Assyria; and Hoshea became his ^{A. M. 3279.} servant, and ^{B. C. 725.} gave him ² presents.

4 And the king of Assyria found ^{B. C. 725.} conspiracy in Hoshea: for he had sent messengers to So king of Egypt, and brought no present to the king of Assyria, as *he had done* year by year: therefore the king of Assyria shut him up, and bound him in prison.

¹ Heb. rendered, 2 Sam. viii. 2.—² Or, tribute.

had done, nor hinder their reforming. He gave them leave to abandon their idols and their sins, and to return to the worship of the true God, and obedience to his laws; but they persisted in their idolatries and other vices, which laid the blame of their sin and ruin wholly upon themselves.

Verse 3. *Against him came up Shalmaneser*—The son or successor of Tiglath-pileser. The ancient Hebrew writers made him the same with Sennacherib, who, eight years after this time, invaded the kingdom of Judah; it being very frequent, in the eastern parts, for one man to be called by several names. Josephus affirms, that he met with his name in the annals of the Tyrians, which were extant in his days. He came against him, either because he denied the tribute which he had promised to pay, or that he might make him tributary. *And Hoshea became his servant, and gave him presents*—Swore fealty to him, and engaged to pay him tribute. Thus the destruction came gradually, and they were, for some time, made tributaries, before they were made captives to the king of Assyria. And if the lesser judgment had prevailed to humble and reform them, the greater would have been prevented.

Verse 4. *The king of Assyria found conspiracy in Hoshea*—If the king and people of Israel had applied themselves to God, made their peace with him, and addressed their prayers to him, they might, and no doubt would have recovered their liberty, ease, and honour; but they withheld their tribute, and trusted to the king of Egypt to assist them in their revolt, which, if it had been attended with success, would only have been to change their oppressors: but Egypt became to them the staff of a broken reed. This provoked the king of Assyria to proceed against them with the more severity. *For he, Hoshea, sent messengers to So, king of Egypt*—By some heathen writers called *Sua*, or *Sabucus*, that, by his assistance, he might shake off the yoke of the king of Assyria, who now was, and for many years had been, the rival of the king of Egypt, 2 Kings xviii. 21; Jer. xxxvii. 5. "This So," says Mr. Locke, "seems to be Sabacon, the Ethiopian king of Egypt, of whom Herodotus relates, that, being warned in a dream, he departed of his own accord from Egypt,

A. M. 3281. 5 ¶ Then ° the king of Assyria
B. C. 723. came up throughout all the land, and
went up to Samaria, and besieged it three years.

B. C. 721. 6 ^d In the ninth year of Hoshea the
king of Assyria took Samaria, and
° carried Israel away into Assyria, ^f and placed
them in Halah and in Habor *by* the river of
Gozan, and in the cities of the Medes.

7 For *so* it was, that the children of Israel had
sinned against the LORD their God, which had
brought them up out of the land of Egypt, from

° Chap. xviii. 9.—^d Chap. xviii. 10; Hos. xiii. 16, foretold.
^e Lev. xxvii. 32, 33; Deut. xxviii. 36, 64; xxix. 27.

after he had reigned there fifteen years. It was in
the beginning of Hezekiah's reign that he invaded
Egypt, and having taken Boccharis the king thereof
prisoner, with great cruelty he burned him alive,
and then seized on his kingdom."—Dodd.

Verses 5, 6. *Then the king of Assyria came up
throughout all the land*—And made himself master
of it, treating the Israelites as traitors rather than as
fair enemies, and punishing them with the sword of
justice. *And went up to Samaria, and besieged it
three years*—During which time it held out, but
doubtless endured a great deal of misery, though
this be not particularly recorded. At length the
royal city was taken, and the king made a prisoner,
shut up, and bound. This was *in the ninth year* of
the reign of *Hoshea*, at which time *Israel was carried
away captive into Assyria*—There, we have reason
to think, after some time, they were so mingled with
the nations, that they were lost, and *the name of Is-
rael was no more in remembrance*. They that for-
got God were themselves forgotten, and they that
studied to be like the nations were buried among
them; and they that would not serve God in their
own land, were made to serve their enemies in a
strange land. Thus ended Israel as a nation, and
the prophecy of Hoshea was fulfilled: they became
Loammi, not a people, and *Lo-rihamah*, unpitied.
Now Canaan spewed them out. When we read of
their entry into Canaan under Hoshea the son of
Nun, who would have thought that such would be
their exit under Hoshea the son of Elah? Thus
Rome's glory in Augustus sunk many ages after in
Augustulus; yet we find St. James *writing to the
twelve tribes scattered abroad*, (James i. 1,) and
Paul speaks of the twelve tribes, *instantly serving
God day and night*, Acts xxvi. 7: so that, though
we never read of the return of those that were car-
ried captive, nor have any ground to believe that
they still remain a distinct body in some remote cor-
ner of the world, yet a remnant of them did escape,
and will remain, till *all Israel be saved*.

Verse 7. *For so it was, &c.*—Though the destruc-
tion of the kingdom of the ten tribes is but briefly
related in the preceding verses, it is largely com-
mented upon by the historian in those that follow;
and the reasons of it assigned, which are not taken
from the second causes, the weakness of Israel and

under the hand of Pharaoh king of A. M. 3283.
Egypt, and had feared other gods. B. C. 721.

8 And ^e walked in the statutes of the heathen
whom the LORD cast out from before the chil-
dren of Israel, and of the kings of Israel, which
they had made.

9 And the children of Israel did secretly *those*
things that *were* not right against the LORD
their God, and they built them high places
in all their cities, ^b from the tower of the watch-
men to the fenced city.

^f 1 Chron. v. 26.—^e Lev. xviii. 3; Deut. xviii. 9; Chapter
xvi. 3.—^b Chap. xviii. 8.

their impolitic management; the strength and grow-
ing greatness of the Assyrian monarchy: these
things are overlooked, and only the *first cause* is
mentioned. *It was the Lord that removed Israel
out of his sight*: whoever were the instruments, he
was the author of this calamity. *The destruction
was from the Almighty*, and the Assyrian was but
the rod of his anger, Isa. x. 5. *It was the Lord that
rejected the seed of Israel*, otherwise their enemies
could not have seized upon them. *Who gave Jacob
to the spoil, and Israel to the robbers? Did not the
Lord? Isa. xlii. 24.* We lose the benefit of national
judgments if we do not mark the hand of God in
them, and the fulfilling of the Scriptures. It must
be well observed, however, that their *way and their
doing procured all this to themselves*, and it was
their own wickedness that did correct them. This
the sacred historian shows here at large, that it might
appear God did them no wrong, and that others might
hear and fear. *The children of Israel had sinned
against the Lord, and had feared other gods*—This
they had done a long time: for, from the beginning
of Jeroboam's setting up the golden calves, to the
carrying of Israel away captive, were two hundred
and sixty-three years, to say nothing of their former
various and multiplied idolatries.

Verses 8, 9. *And walked in the statutes of the
heathen*—According to their laws and customs in
the worship of their Baals, and other of their sins.
*And of the kings of Israel, which statutes they had
made*—Had ordained concerning the worship of the
calves, and against their going up to Jerusalem to
worship. *And the children of Israel did secretly,
&c.*—This belongs, either, 1st, To their gross idola-
tries, and other abominable practices, which they
were ashamed to own before others; or, 2d, To the
worship of the calves, and so the words are other-
wise rendered, *They covered things that were not
right toward the Lord*: they covered their idola-
trous worship of the calves with fair pretences of
necessity, the two kingdoms being now divided, and
at enmity; and of their honest intention of serving
the true God, and retaining the substance of the Jew-
ish religion. *From the tower of the watchmen to
the fenced city*—In all parts and places, both in cities
and in the country; yea, in the most uninhabited
parts, where few or none dwelt besides the watch-

A. M. 3283. 10 ⁱ And they set them up ³ images
B. C. 721. and ^k groves ¹ in every high hill, and
under every green tree :

11 And there they burnt incense in all the high places, as *did* the heathen whom the LORD carried away before them ; and wrought wicked things to provoke the LORD to anger :

12 For they served idols, ^m whereof the LORD had said unto them, ⁿ Ye shall not do this thing.

13 Yet the LORD testified against Israel, and against Judah, ⁴ by all the prophets, *and by all* ^o the seers, saying, ^p Turn ye from your evil ways, and keep my commandments, *and* my statutes, according to all the law which I commanded your fathers, and which I sent to you by my servants the prophets.

¹ 1 Kings xiv. 23 ; Isa. lvii. 5.—² Heb. *statues*.—³ Exod. xxxv. 13 ; Deut. xvi. 21 ; Mic. v. 14.—⁴ Deut. xii. 2 ; Chap. x. 4.—⁵ Exod. xx. 3 ; Lev. xxvi. 1 ; Deut. v. 7.—⁶ Deut. iv. 19.—⁷ Heb. *by the hand of all*.—⁸ 1 Sam. ix. 9.—⁹ Jer. xviii. 11 ; xxv. 5 ; xxxv. 15.

men, who were left there in towers, to preserve the cattle and fruits of the earth, or to give notice of the approach of enemies.

Verse 11. *They burned incense, as did the heathen*—Namely, in high places ; and that not only to the Lord, which, though an irregularity, was practised and tolerated sometimes, even in the kingdom of Judah, but also to the idols of the heathen. *Whom the Lord carried away before them*—For the same sins ; by whose example they ought to have taken warning. *To provoke the Lord to anger*—That is, in despite and contempt of God, and his authority and command, as the next verse shows.

Verse 13. *Yet the Lord testified against Israel*—Against their false worship, and all their impieties. *By all the prophets, and by all the seers*—To whom he declared his mind by extraordinary Revelations and visions, and by whom he published it, bearing witness from heaven to their doctrine, by eminent and glorious miracles. Abarbanel, in his commentary on these books, hath noticed one or more prophecies in every king's reign, both in Israel and Judah, from the time of Saul to Zedekiah, in whose time Jerusalem was laid desolate. The ten tribes had lately had among them two most singularly eminent for their zeal, courage, fidelity, and the wonders which they wrought, in the name of God, in confirmation of their divine mission and doctrine, namely, Elijah and Elisha : the latter of whom had been instrumental in rescuing them from their enemies sundry times, when all human means had failed, and their case appeared perfectly hopeless, and who had been mercifully continued to them, a faithful witness for God, and a burning and shining light, for about sixty years. And in the days of this very king, when Israel was carried away captive, they had Hoshea, Amos, Isaiah, and Micah. And in the

14 Notwithstanding, they would not ^{A. M. 3283.} hear, but ^{B. C. 721.} ^q hardened their necks, like to the neck of their fathers, that did not believe in the LORD their God.

15 And they rejected his statutes, ^r and his covenant that he made with their fathers, and his testimonies which he testified against them ; and they followed ^s vanity, and ^t became vain, and went after the heathen that *were* round about them, *concerning* whom the LORD had charged them, that they should ^u not do like them.

16 And they left all the commandments of the LORD their God, and ^v made them molten images, *even* two calves, ^w and made a grove, and worshipped all the host of heaven, ^x and served Baal.

^q Deut. xxxi. 27 ; Prov. xxix. 1.—^r Deuteronomy xxix. 25. ^s Deut. xxxii. 21 ; 1 Kings xvi. 13 ; 1 Cor. viii. 4.—^t Psa. cxv. 8 ; Rom. i. 21.—^u Deut. xii. 30.—^v Exod. xxxii. 8 ; 1 Kings xii. 28.—^w 1 Kings xiv. 15, 23 ; xv. 13 ; xvi. 33.—^x 1 Kings xvi. 31 ; xxii. 53 ; Chap. xi. 18.

days of the last king of Judah, when that tribe was carried captive, they had Jeremiah and Ezekiel. All these had made it their care to show both the kings and people their sins, and warn them of the fatal consequences of them ; and to exhort, beseech, and urge them to turn from them, to the worship and service of the living and true God.

Verse 14. *Notwithstanding, they would not hear, but hardened their necks*—Refused to submit their necks to the yoke of God's precepts : a metaphor taken from stubborn oxen that will not bow to the yoke. *Like to the neck of their fathers*—In the wilderness ; *that did not believe in the Lord their God*—This was the original and primary cause of all their sins and sufferings, their *unbelief* ; this formerly prevented their fathers from entering Canaan, and now turned them out of it : they did not truly believe in God's power, and love, and faithfulness ; did not receive his truths, though attested by signs and wonders innumerable ; did not credit his threatenings, nor rely on his promises. The testimony of the prophets, therefore, was without effect, with respect to the nation in general, and their endeavours to reclaim them were exerted in vain. And God was compelled, humanly speaking, in vindication of his own infinite perfections, the injured rights of his moral government, and the cause of truth and righteousness, to execute the frequently-denounced vengeance, and send wrath upon them to the uttermost.

Verses 15–17. *They followed vanity*—Idols ; so called, because of their unprofitableness, impotency, and nothingness, and to show the folly and madness of idolaters. *And became vain*—By the long worship of idols they were made like them, vain, sottish, and senseless creatures. *And they left all the commandments of the Lord*—They grew worse and

A. M. 3293. 17 * And they caused their sons and B. C. 721. their daughters to pass through the fire, and ^b used divination and enchantments, and ^c sold themselves to do evil in the sight of the LORD, to provoke him to anger.

18 Therefore the LORD was very angry with Israel, and removed them out of his sight: there was none left ^d but the tribe of Judah only.

19 Also * Judah kept not the commandments of the LORD their God, but walked in the statutes of Israel which they made.

20 And the LORD rejected all the seed of Israel, and afflicted them, and ^f delivered them into the hand of spoilers, until he had cast them out of his sight.

* Lev. xviii. 21; Chap. xvi. 3; Ezek. xxiii. 37.—^b Deut. xviii. 10.—^c 1 Kings xxi. 20.—^d 1 Kings xi. 13, 32.—^e Jer. iii. 8. ^f Chap. xiii. 3; xv. 29.

worse; from a partial disobedience to some of God's laws, they fell by degrees to a total apostacy from all of them. *And worshipped all the host of heaven*—The sun, moon, and stars, as Saturn, Jupiter, Mars, Venus, &c.; against which Moses had particularly cautioned them, Deut. xiv. 19. *They caused their sons and daughters to pass through the fire*—Thus offering or consecrating them to their idols: see on chap. xvi. 3. *And used divination and enchantments*—Which were the abominable sins of the heathen. *And sold themselves to do evil in the sight of the Lord*—Wholly addicted themselves to sin, as slaves are addicted to the service of those to whom they are sold; and, by their obstinately persisting in sin, so hardened their own hearts, that at length it was become morally impossible for them to recover themselves, as one that has sold himself has put his liberty beyond recall.

Verse 18. *Therefore the Lord was very angry with Israel*—For he is a jealous God, and highly resents the giving that honour to any created or imaginary being, which is due to himself only. *And removed them out of his sight*—A very strong expression, to signify, not only his casting them out of Canaan, then the only place of his solemn worship, and gracious presence, or out of his church, but his utter rejection and total removal of this apostate people from his care and providence. *There was none left but Judah only*—And the greatest part of the tribe of Benjamin, with those of the tribes of Simeon and Levi, who adhered to them, and were incorporated with them, and therefore are fitly denominated from them.

Verse 19. *Also Judah kept not, &c., but walked in the statutes of Israel*—Followed the idolatrous devices of the ten tribes, which they did most notoriously in the reign of Ahaz. And though his son Hezekiah made a noble reformation, it lasted no longer than his time, so extremely corrupted was the nation. Judah's idolatry and wickedness are here remembered as an aggravation of the sin of the

21 For ^e he rent Israel from the A. M. 3283. house of David; and ^b they made B. C. 721. Jeroboam the son of Nebat king: and Jeroboam drove Israel from following the LORD, and made them sin a great sin.

22 For the children of Israel walked in all the sins of Jeroboam which he did; they departed not from them;

23 Until the LORD removed Israel out of his sight, ⁱ as he had said by all his servants the prophets. ^k So was Israel carried away out of their own land to Assyria unto this day.

24 ¶ ^l And the king of Assyria brought *men* ^m from Babylon, and from Cuthah, and from ⁿ Ava, and from Hamath, and from Sephar-

^e 1 Kings xi. 11, 31.—ⁱ 1 Kings xii. 20, 28.—^l 1 Kings xiv. 16.—^k Verse 6.—^m Ezra iv. 2, 10.—ⁿ Verse 30. ^o Chap. xviii. 24, *Ivah*.

Israelites, which was not only evil in itself, but mischievous to their neighbours, who by their examples were instructed in their wicked arts, and provoked to an imitation of them: see Hos. iv. 15; Matt. xviii. 7. Those that bring sin into a country or family bring a plague into it, and will have to answer for all the mischief that follows.

Verse 20. *The Lord rejected all the seed of Israel*—All the kingdom, or tribes of Israel, first one part of them, and now the rest: but this extends not to every individual person of these tribes, for many of them removed into the kingdom of Judah, and were associated with them: see 2 Chron. xi. 16.

Verse 21. *They made Jeroboam king*—Which action is here ascribed to the people, because they would not tarry till God, by his providence, had invested Jeroboam with the kingdom which he had promised him, but rashly and rebelliously rose up against the house of David, to which they were under such great obligations, and set him upon the throne without God's leave or advice. *Jeroboam drove, &c.*—He not only dissuaded, but kept them by force from God's worship at Jerusalem, the only place appointed for it. *And made them sin a great sin*—So the worship of the calves is called, in opposition to that idle conceit of the Israelites, who esteemed it a small sin, especially when they were forced to it by severe penalties; which yet he shows did not excuse it from being a sin, and a *great sin* too.

Verses 22, 23. *They departed not from them*—But willingly and resolutely followed the wicked examples and commands of their kings, though contrary to God's express commands. *Until the Lord removed Israel*—They continued to the last, obstinate and incorrigible under all the instructions and corrections which God sent to them; and therefore were justly given up by God to this dreadful captivity, which all this foregoing discourse was designed to prove.

Verse 24. *The king of Assyria brought men from*

A. M. 3226. vaim, and placed *them* in the cities of
B. C. 672. Samaria instead of the children of
Israel: and they possessed Samaria, and dwelt
in the cities thereof.

25 And so it was at the beginning of their
dwelling there, *that* they feared not the LORD:
therefore the LORD sent lions among them
which slew *some* of them.

26 Wherefore they spake to the king of As-
syria, saying, The nations which thou hast
removed, and placed in the cities of Samaria,
know not the manner of the God of the land:
therefore he hath sent lions among them, and
behold, they slay them, because they know not
the manner of the God of the land.

° Verse

Babylon—Which then was subject to the Assyrian
monarch, but a few years after revolted from him,
and set up another king, as appears from both sacred
and profane histories. *And from Cuthah, &c.*—
Several places then in his dominion. It is probable
that it was not Shalmaneser, but Esar-haddon, his son
and successor, that did this, (Ezra iv. 2,) because it
was a work of some time; and as his father had
projected, and perhaps even begun it, so he exe-
cuted and finished it, whence it is ascribed to him
rather than to his father. *And they possessed Sa-
maria, &c.*—That is, the whole country in which
the ten tribes had dwelt.

Verse 25. *And so it was that they feared not the
Lord*—They did not acknowledge nor worship the
true God in any sort. *Therefore the Lord sent lions
among them*—For their gross neglect and contempt
of God, which was contrary to the principles and
practices of the heathen, who used to worship the
gods of the nations where they lived, and gave that
honour to their false gods which here they denied
to the true. Hereby also God asserted his own sove-
reignty over that land, and made them to understand
that neither the Israelites were cast out, nor they
brought in, by their valour or strength, but by God's
providence, who, as he had cast the Israelites out
for their neglect of God's service, so both could and
would, in his due time, turn them out also, if they
were guilty of the same sins.

Verse 26. *Wherefore they spake to the king of
Assyria, &c.*—They wrote, or sent messengers to
him, to acquaint him with this grievance, setting
forth, it is likely, the loss which their infant colony
had sustained by the lions, and the continual fear
they were in of them; and that they looked upon it
as a judgment sent upon them for not worshipping
the God of the land, which they could not, because
they knew not how. The God of Israel was the
God of the whole earth, but they ignorantly call him
the God of the land, imagining him to be like one
of their local deities, who were supposed to preside
only over particular countries or provinces; and
appealing themselves to be within his reach, as

VOL. II.

(13)

27 Then the king of Assyria com- A. M. 3326.
manded, saying, Carry thither one of B. C. 678.
the priests whom ye brought from thence; and
let them go and dwell there, and let him teach
them the manner of the God of the land.

28 Then one of the priests whom they had
carried away from Samaria came and dwelt in
Beth-el, and taught them how they should fear
the LORD.

29 Howbeit every nation made gods of their
own, and put *them* in the houses of the high
places which the Samaritans had made, every
nation in their cities wherein they dwelt.

30 And the men of ° Babylon made Succoth-
benoth, and the men of Cuth made Nergal,

24.

being now in the country in which he governed, and
therefore concerned to be upon good terms with
him. Herein they shamed the Israelites, who were
not so ready to hear the voice of God's judgments
as they were, and who had not served *the God of
that land*, though he was the God of their fathers,
and their great benefactor, and though they were
well instructed in the manner of his worship. In
short, these heathen beg to be taught that which
Israelites hated to be taught!

Verse 27. *Then the king of Assyria commanded,
Carry thither one of the priests*—That is, one of the
chief priests, with others under his inspection and
direction, as may be gathered from the following
words, where it is said of the same person or per-
sons, *Let them go, &c.*, and then, *Let him teach,
&c.*—Nor is it probable that one priest could suffice
for the instruction of the inhabitants of so many and
distant districts.

Verse 28. *Then one of the priests whom they had
carried away came, &c.*—A prophet would have
done them more good, especially as it appears this
was but one of the priests of the calves, who there-
fore chose to dwell at Beth-el. *And taught them
how they should fear the Lord*—That is, the man-
ner of God's worship as it had been practised in Is-
rael: for as to any thing further, whether respecting
their duty to God or man, though he might possibly
teach them to know more than they knew before,
and to do better than they did, it is not likely he
should teach them to know the truth, or to do well,
unless he had taught his own people better.

Verse 29. *Howbeit, every nation made gods of
their own*—Or, *worshipped*, as the Hebrew word
here used sometimes means; of which see Exod.
xxxii. 35. That is, they worshipped the gods which
they had served in the places from whence they
came. *And put them in the high places which the
Samaritans*—That is, which the former inhabitants
of the city and kingdom had made.

Verse 30. *The men of Babylon made Succoth-be-
noth, &c.*—In this and the following verse are the
names of the gods or goddesses which each nation

193

2

A. M. 3326. and the men of Hamath made Ashima,
B. C. 678.

31 ^p And the Avites made Nibhaz and Tartak, and the Sepharvites ^q burnt their children in fire to Adrammelech and Anammelech, the gods of Sepharvaim.

32 So they feared the LORD, ^r and made unto themselves of the lowest of them priests of the high places, which sacrificed for them in the houses of the high places.

33 ^s They feared the LORD, and served their own gods, after the manner of the nations ^t whom they carried away from thence.

34 Unto this day they do after the former manners: they fear not the LORD, neither do they after their statutes, or after their ordinances, or after the law and commandment

^p Ezra iv. 9.—^q Lev. xviii. 21; Deut. xii. 31.—^r 1 Kings xii. 31.—^s Zephaniah i. 5.—^t Or, who carried them away from thence.

of these new-comers to Samaria and its vicinity set up. The learned are not agreed as to the signification of several of these names, nor is it worth while to spend time in endeavouring to determine it. The reader whose curiosity leads him to wish for information on the subject, may consult Selden, Vossius, and Jurieu. Concerning two or three of them we may observe as follows: The first name signifies, *The tabernacles of the daughters, or young women*, and, if it be the name of an idol, it was doubtless the same with the imaginary goddess termed *Venus* by the Greeks and Romans. The Jewish rabbins tell us, she was worshipped under the emblem of a hen and chickens. There is reason to believe, that in these *succoth*, or *tents*, young women exposed themselves to prostitution in honour of the Babylonish goddess *Melitta*. *Nergal*, worshipped by the *Cuthites*, or Persians, was probably *the fire, or the sun*, being derived from נ, *ner, light*, and גל, *galal, to revolve*. The Jewish doctors say his idol was represented in the shape of a cock. *Adrammelech* and *Anammelech* were only different names for Moloch, as is evident from their burning their children to these idols in the fire. See the *Universal History* and *Calmet*. Alas! how vain were these idolaters in their imaginations! It is justly observed by Henry, that our very ignorance concerning these idols teaches us the accomplishment of God's word by Jeremiah, (chap. x. 11,) that these false gods should all perish. They are all buried in oblivion, while the name of the true God shall continue for ever!

Verse 32. *So they feared the Lord*—Worshipped him externally in that way which the Israelites had used: having and serving gods of their own besides. *And made unto themselves of the lowest of them priests, &c.*—See note on 1 Kings xii. 31. *Which sacrificed in the high places*—

which the LORD commanded the children of Jacob, ^u whom he named Israel;

35 With whom the LORD had made a covenant, and charged them, saying, ^v Ye shall not fear other gods, nor ^w bow yourselves to them, nor serve them, nor sacrifice to them:

36 But the LORD, who brought you up out of the land of Egypt with great power and ^x a stretched-out arm, ^y him shall ye fear, and him shall ye worship, and to him shall ye do sacrifice.

37 And the statutes, and the ordinances, and the law, and the commandment which he wrote for you, ^z ye shall observe to do for evermore; and ye shall not fear other gods.

38 And the covenant that I have made with

^u Gen. xxxii. 28; xxxv. 10; 1 Kings xi. 31.—^v Judg. vi. 10. ^w Exod. xx. 5.—^x Exodus vi. 6.—^y Deut. x. 20.—^z Deut. v. 32.

Unto the true God; for as to the worship of their own gods, they needed no instruction, and would not permit a person of another religion to minister therein.

Verse 34. *Unto this day, &c.*—That is, till the time when this book was written, and long after, about three hundred years in all, till the time of Alexander the Great, when Manasseh, brother to Jaddus the high-priest of the Jews, having married the daughter of Sanballat, governor of the Samaritans, went over to them, and, obtaining leave of Alexander to build a temple on mount Gerizim, drew over many of the Jews to him, and prevailed with the Samaritans to cast away their idols, and to worship the God of Israel only. Yet their worship was mixed with so much superstition, that our Lord tells them they knew not what they worshipped. *They do after the former manners*—As the Israelites, before their captivity, (verse 33,) gave these nations an ill example, in serving the Lord and Baal together; so these nations both worshipped the God of Israel, and those other gods. But, adds the historian, *they feared not the Lord*—Their pretended fear of him, and serving him together with their idols, was not worthy of the name of piety, or the fear of the Lord: nor would God accept such a mongrel religion and false worship as they offered to him. *Neither do they after their statutes*—God's law delivered to the Israelites, and to them as their inheritance, Psalm cxix. 111. This is alleged as an evidence that they did not fear the Lord, whatsoever they pretended, because they lived in the constant breach of his statutes. *Which the Lord commanded the children of Jacob, whom he named Israel*—A name signifying Jacob's special interest in God, and power with him, which was given to him, not only for himself, but for his posterity also, whom God frequently honoured with that name. And by

A. M. 3278. you ^b ye shall not forget; neither shall
B. C. 726. ye fear other gods.

39 But the LORD your God ye shall fear; and he shall deliver you out of the hand of all your enemies.

40 Howbeit they did not hearken, but

^b Deut. iv. 23.

this great favour he aggravates the sin, both of the Israelites, and of those nations planted in their land, who professed to learn their way of worshipping God, and to imitate it.

Verse 41. *So these nations feared the Lord, &c.*

they did after their former manner. A. M. 3278.
B. C. 726.

41 ^o So these nations feared the LORD, and served their graven images, both their children, and their children's children: as did their fathers, so do they unto this day.

^c Verses 32, 33.

—Namely, the nations that came in the place of the Israelites. They followed their example, and acted as they had done, endeavouring to unite things perfectly irreconcilable, the worship of the true God and the worship of idols.

CHAPTER XVIII.

Hezekiah reforms his kingdom, 1-8. Prospers in all his undertakings, even at the time the ten tribes are led captive, 7-12. Yet is invaded, and his country put under contribution by Sennacherib, 13-16. Jerusalem is besieged, 17. The virulent speech of Rab-shakeh, 18-25. He incites the people to revolt, 26-37.

A. M. 3281. NOW it came to pass in the third
B. C. 723. year of Hoshea son of Elah king of Israel, *that* ^a Hezekiah the son of Ahaz king of Judah began to reign.

2 Twenty and five years old was he when he began to reign; and he reigned twenty and nine years in Jerusalem. His mother's name also *was* ^b Abi, the daughter of Zachariah.

^a 2 Chron. xxviii. 27; xxix. 1; he is called *Ezekias*, Matt. i. 9.
^b 2 Chron. xxix. 1, *Abijah*.

NOTES ON CHAPTER XVIII.

Verses 1, 2. *In the third year of Hoshea, Hezekiah began to reign*—Namely, in the third of those nine years, mentioned chap. xvii. 1; of which see the note there, and below, verse 10. *Twenty and five years old was he when he began to reign*—To this it is objected, that Ahaz his father lived only thirty-six years, and therefore, according to this account, begat Hezekiah when he was but eleven years old, which seems incredible. Various explanations of this difficulty have been given; but the most probable are, either, 1st, That some error in regard to the numerals has crept into the text, and that Hezekiah was not so old when he began to reign: or, 2d, That the sixteen years which Ahaz reigned are to be computed, not from the first beginning of his reign, when he reigned with his father, (as it is probable he did,) which was at the twentieth year of his age, but from the beginning of his reigning alone, in which case Ahaz would be as many years of age more than thirty-six when he died, as he had reigned with his father, before he came into the sole possession of the kingdom.

Verse 4. *He removed the high places*—Which none of his predecessors had had the courage to attempt.

3 And he did *that which was right* A. M. 3281.
in the sight of the LORD, according B. C. 723.
to all that David his father did.

4 ¶ ^o He removed the high places, and brake the ¹ images, and cut down the groves, and brake in pieces the ^d brazen serpent that Moses had made: for unto those days the children of Israel did burn incense to it: and he called it ² Nehushtan.

^c 2 Chron. xxxi. 1.—¹ Hebrew, *statues*.—^d Numbers xxi. 9.
² That is, a piece of brass.

But, it is likely, the dreadful judgments of God, executed upon the ten tribes, and the carrying them away captive for their superstition and idolatry, had been the means of mightily awakening both him and all the people, for the present, (while these calamities were fresh before their eyes,) to observe the law of God very strictly. "It was a great demonstration," says Dr. Dodd, "of Hezekiah's sincere piety and zeal toward God, that he began so soon to reform the corruption of religion, and did not stay till he had established himself in his throne. He might think, however," and certainly very justly, "that the surest way to establish himself, was to establish the true worship of God; though he could not but foresee that he ran a great hazard in attempting the abolition of idolatry, which had been confirmed by so many years prescription," 2 Chron. xxix. 3-11. *And brake in pieces the brazen serpent, which Moses had made*—Though this serpent was made by Moses at God's command, and was of singular use to the Israelites, and a special type of Christ; yet, the primary use of it having long since ceased, and being now abused to the purposes of superstition and idolatry, it was deservedly broken to pieces. And from this example we may infer,

A. M. 3281. 5 He ^a trusted in the LORD God of B. C. 723. Israel; ^f so that after him was none like him among all the kings of Judah, nor any that were before him.

6 For he ^g clave to the LORD, and departed not ^h from following him, but kept his com-

^a Chap. xix. 10; Job xiii. 15; Psa. xiii. 5.—^f Chap. xxiii. 25. ^g Deut. x. 20; Josh. xxiii. 8.—^h Heb. *from after him*.

that all things which are made the occasions of superstition and idolatry, ought to be taken away. For unto those days the children of Israel did burn incense to it—This cannot be intended to signify, that all along, from the days of Moses, this brazen serpent was used as an object of religious worship. For certainly neither David, nor Solomon in the former part of his reign, would have suffered any such thing; nor can we suppose but that Asa and Jehoshaphat, when they rooted out idolatry, would also have extirpated this, if they had perceived any species of it in their days. The commencement of this superstition, therefore, must have been of later date, and probably since the time that Ahab's family, being allied to the royal family in Judah by marriage, introduced all kinds of idolatry. As this brazen serpent had been kept from the days of Moses, merely in memory of a miracle wrought by Jehovah, just as the pot of manna and Aaron's rod that budded also were, it is likely that their burning incense or perfumes before it was at first designed in honour of the true God; but then, in the process of their superstition, they probably either worshipped the God of Israel, or, what is worse, some heathen god, under that image; imitating therein the practice of some of the neighbouring nations, as the Babylonians, Phenicians, Egyptians, who all worshipped one or more of their gods under the form of a serpent. Upon this account Hezekiah wisely chose rather to lose this memorial of God's wonderful mercy to the Israelites, than to suffer it any longer to be abused to idolatry, and therefore destroyed it. It deserves to be remarked here, that notwithstanding it is so expressly recorded that Hezekiah brake it in pieces, yet the Roman Catholics pretend to show it entire in the church of St. Ambrose in Milan. And he called it *Nekushtan*—Or rather, *Nechushtan*, as it is in the Hebrew, that is, *brass*; as if he had said, How much soever this serpent might be formerly regarded and used by God, as a sign of his mercy and power, yet now it is nothing but a piece of mere brass, which can do you neither good nor hurt, and therefore is no fit object of your worship.

Verses 5, 6. *He trusted in the Lord God of Israel*—In abolishing idolatry, there was danger, as has been intimated, of disobliging his subjects, and provoking them to rebel; but he trusted in the Lord to bear him out, and defend him in what he did. When he came to the crown, he found his kingdom encompassed with enemies; but he did not apply to foreign and heathenish powers for aid or succour, as his father Ahaz had done, but trusted in the God of

mandments, which the LORD com- A. M. 3281
manded Moses. B. C. 723.

7 And the LORD ^b was with him: B C. 725.
and he ^c prospered whithersoever he
went forth: and he ^d rebelled against the king
of Assyria, and served him not.

^b 2 Chron. xv. 2.—^c 1 Sam. xviii. 5, 14; Psa. lx. 12.—^d Chap. xvi. 7.

Israel to be the keeper of Israel, and to establish him in his kingdom. So that after him was none like him, &c.—If it be objected that the same is said of Josiah, (chap. xxiii. 25,) it may be observed, that each of them excelled the other in several qualities or actions; Hezekiah in this, that he set upon the work of reformation with great expedition, even in the first year of his reign, (2 Chron. xxix. 3,) which Josiah did not, and with no less resolution undertook to do that which none of his predecessors durst do, even to remove the high places; wherein Josiah only followed his example, chap. xxii. 1-3. Nor any that were before him—That is, who had been kings only of Judah: for David and Solomon were kings of all Israel. For he clave to the Lord, and departed not from following him—In the general course of his life, and especially in the matters of God's worship. Several of his predecessors that began well, did not persevere; but he, like Caleb, followed the Lord fully, and not only abolished all idolatrous usages, but observed God's commandments, and in every thing made conscience of doing his duty.

Verse 7. *The Lord was with him, and he prospered, &c.*—He adhered to God and his service, and therefore God was with him; and, having the special presence of God with him, he had wonderful success in all his enterprises, in his wars, his buildings, and especially his reformation; which good work was carried on with less difficulty than he could have expected. Thus we have in him an instructive and encouraging example, teaching us that they who do God's work with an eye to his glory, and with confidence in his strength, may expect to prosper in it: for great is the truth, and will prevail. And he rebelled against the king of Assyria—That is, he threw off that yoke of subjection to him to which his father had basely submitted, and reassumed that full and independent sovereignty which God had settled in the house of David. This, though here called *rebelling against him*, was really no more than asserting the just rights of his crown. For his case differed much from that of Zedekiah, who is blamed for rebellion against the king of Babylon. Zedekiah had engaged himself by a solemn oath and covenant, which we do not read that Ahaz had done, much less had Hezekiah. Zedekiah had broke the covenant which himself had made; and God had actually given the dominion of the land and people to the king of Babylon, and commanded both Zedekiah and his subjects to submit to him. But God had not given any such dominion to the king of Assyria, nor had he

A. M. 3291. 8 ¹ He smote the Philistines, *even* unto
B. C. 723. ⁴ Gaza, and the borders thereof, ² from
the tower of the watchmen to the fenced city.

B. C. 723. 9 ¶ And ² it came to pass in the
fourth year of King Hezekiah, which
was the seventh year of Hoshea son of Elah
king of Israel, that Shalmaneser king of Assyria
came up against Samaria, and besieged it.

B. C. 721. 10 And at the end of three years
they took it: *even* in the sixth year
of Hezekiah, (that is, ² the ninth year of Ho-
shea king of Israel.) Samaria was taken.

11 ² And the king of Assyria did carry away
Israel unto Assyria, and put them ³ in Halah
and in Habor *by* the river of Gozan, and in the
cities of the Medes:

12 ² Because they obeyed not the voice of
the LORD their God, but transgressed his co-
venant, *and* all that Moses the servant of the
LORD commanded, and would not hear *them*,
nor do *them*.

¹ 1 Chron. iv. 41; Isa. xiv. 29.—² Heb. *Azzah*.—³ Chap.
xvii. 19.—⁴ Chap. xvii. 3.—⁵ Chap. xvii. 6.—⁶ Chap. xvii.
6.—⁷ 1 Chron. v. 26.

commanded either Hezekiah or his people to be
subject to him. And as to the word *rebel* here used,
it means no more than to depart from that subjec-
tion which had been performed to another, which
sometimes may be justly done, and certainly might
in this case. Indeed, that Hezekiah did not sin in
revolting from the king of Assyria seems evident,
because God owned and assisted him in it, and did
not at all reprove him for it in that message which
he sent to him by Isaiah, nor afterward, though he
did particularly reprove him for his vain-glory and
ostentation, 2 Chron. xxxii. 25, 26.

Verse 8. *He smote the Philistines even unto Gaza*
—And recovered from them what his father had
lost, and more, 2 Chron. xxviii. 18. *From the tower*
of the watchmen to the fenced city—That is, all the
country over, both the country villages and fortified
towns. When he had purged out the corruptions
which his father had brought in, he might expect to
recover the possessions which his father had lost.
These his victories over the Philistines had been
foretold by Isaiah, chap. xiv. 28.

Verse 13. *Sennacherib king of Assyria*—Who
succeeded Shalmaneser, probably his son. He was
encouraged to make this attempt against Judah by
his predecessor's success against Israel, whose hon-
ours he wished to emulate, and whose victories he
would push forward. This invasion of Judah was
a great calamity to that kingdom, by which God
tried the faith of Hezekiah, and chastised the people,
who are called a *hypocritical nation*, (Isa. x. 6,) because they did not heartily concur with Hezekiah
in effecting a reformation, nor willingly part with
their idols; much less did they give up all their

13 ¶ Now ² in the fourteenth year A. M. 3291.
of King Hezekiah did ³ Sennacherib B. C. 713
king of Assyria come up against all the fenced
cities of Judah, and took them.

14 And Hezekiah king of Judah sent to the
king of Assyria to Lachish, saying, I have of-
fended; return from me: that which thou
puttest on me I will bear. And the king of
Assyria appointed unto Hezekiah king of Judah
three hundred talents of silver and thirty ta-
lents of gold.

15 And Hezekiah ² gave *him* all the silver
that was found in the house of the LORD, and
in the treasures of the king's house.

16 At that time did Hezekiah cut off *the gold*
from the doors of the temple of the LORD, and
from the pillars which Hezekiah king of Ju-
dah had overlaid, and gave ³ it to the king of
Assyria.

17 ¶ And the king of Assyria sent ² About
Tartan and Rabsaris and Rab-shakeh B. C. 710.

¹ Chap. xvii. 7; Dan. ix. 6, 10.—² 2 Chron. xxxii. 1, &c.;
Isa. xxxvii. 1, &c.; Ecclesiastes xlvi. 18.—³ Heb. *Sanherib*.
⁴ Chap. xvi. 8.—⁵ Heb. *them*.

sins, and turn to God in true repentance. *Against*
the fenced cities of Judah, and took them—That is,
most of them: for that they were not all taken ap-
pears from chap. xix. 8. When he had made him-
self master of the frontier towns and garrisons, most
of the others fell into his hands of course. By this
success he was lifted up to his own greater and
more shameful destruction, and an eminent occasion
was afforded for the manifestation of God's power
and glory in that miraculous deliverance which he
designed to effect for his people.

Verse 14. *Hezekiah sent to the king of Assyria,*
saying, I have offended—Namely, against thee, in
revolting, and denying the usual tribute. I have
given thee occasion to make war against me, of
which I now repent, and am ready to make the
satisfaction that shall be demanded. "Where," says
Henry, "was Hezekiah's courage? Where his con-
fidence in God? Why did he not advise with
Isaiah, before he sent this sneaking message?"
Three hundred talents of silver, and thirty talents
of gold—About two hundred and fifty thousand
pounds sterling, a vast sum, not however to be paid
annually, but as a present ransom. To raise this
sum he was forced, not only to empty the public
treasures, (verse 15,) but to take the gold plates off
from the doors of the temple, and from the pillars,
being driven, as he judged, by hard necessity to
make this use of these sacred things, to prevent the
enemy from burning the city and temple. No doubt
Hezekiah designed to restore this treasure in full, as
soon as he should be able.

Verse 17. *The king of Assyria sent Tartan*—
Having received the money, upon which he agreed

A. M. 3294. from Lachish to King Hezekiah with
B. C. 710.

a ⁷ great host against Jerusalem: and they went up, and came to Jerusalem: and when they were come up, they came and stood by the conduit of the upper pool, ⁸ which is in the highway of the fuller's field.

18 And when they had called to the king, there came out to them Eliakim the son of Hilkiah, which *was* over the household, and Shebna the ⁹ scribe, and Joah the son of Asaph the recorder.

19 And Rab-shakeh said unto them, Speak ye now to Hezekiah, Thus saith the great king, the king of Assyria, ¹⁰ What confidence is this wherein thou trustest?

20 Thou ¹¹ sayest, (but *they are but* ¹⁰ vain words,) ¹¹ I have counsel and strength for the war. Now on whom dost thou trust, that thou rebellest against me?

21 ¹² Now behold, thou ¹² trustest upon the

⁷ Heb. heavy.—⁸ Isa. vii. 3.—⁹ Or, secretary.—¹⁰ 2 Chronicles xxxii. 10, &c.—¹¹ Or, talkest.—¹² Hebrew, word of the lips.

to depart from Hezekiah and his land, he breaks his faith with him; thereby justifying his revolt, and preparing the way for his own destruction. *They came and stood, &c.*—They took up their headquarters, as we now speak, by the conduit or canal, into which water was derived from the upper fish-pond or pool, which was in the highway to the field where the fullers, after they had washed their clothes in that pool, were wont to spread them. This was a most unjust behaviour of the king of Assyria, since Hezekiah had paid the fine he had imposed on him.

Verse 18. *When they had called to the king*—That is, had sent a message to him to come and treat with them; *there went out to him Eliakim, &c.*—Of whom see Isa. xxii. 15, 20.

Verses 19, 20. *Thus saith the great king, What confidence is this, &c.*—What is it thou canst trust in to defend thee from my great power? *Thou sayest*—Either to thy people, to encourage them, or rather, within thy own heart. *But, (or, surely,) they are vain words*—Unprofitable, idle talk, without any effect: or they come not from thy heart; thou speakest this against thy knowledge. *I have counsel and strength for the war*—Counsel to contrive, strength, or courage, to execute; which two things are of greatest necessity and use in war. But the original words may be rendered, *Thou speakest surely words of the lips*; that is, thou encouragest thyself and thy people with words, *but counsel and strength are for war*—Are necessary for thy defence; neither of which thou hast within thyself, but must seek them from others, and where wilt thou find them? *On whom, as it follows, dost thou trust?*

Verse 21. *Thou trustest upon this bruised reed*—

staff of this bruised reed, *even upon* A. M. 3294.
B. C. 710.

Egypt, on which if a man lean, it will go into his hand, and pierce it; so *is* Pharaoh king of Egypt unto all that trust on him.

22 But if ye say unto me, We trust in the LORD our God: *is* not that he ¹³ whose high places and whose altars Hezekiah hath taken away, and hath said to Judah and Jerusalem, Ye shall worship before this altar in Jerusalem?

23 Now therefore I pray thee, give ¹³ pledges to my lord the king of Assyria, and I will deliver thee two thousand horses, if thou be able on thy part to set riders upon them.

24 How then wilt thou turn away the face of one captain of the least of my master's servants, and put thy trust on Egypt for chariots and for horsemen?

25 Am I now come up without the LORD against this place to destroy it? The LORD

¹¹ Or, but counsel and strength are for the war.—¹² Ezek. xxxi. 6, 7.—¹³ Hebrew, trustest thee.—¹⁴ Verse 4; 2 Chron. xxxi. 1; xxxii. 12.—¹⁵ Or, hostages.

Sennacherib probably thought that Hezekiah depended on Egypt for help, and therefore represents the power of that kingdom to be as weak as the canes or reeds that grew on the banks of the Nile, (to which he seems to allude,) on which, if a man leaned, they brake, and the splinters ran into his hand. Such is Pharaoh, says he; a man gets no help, but mischief, by relying on him. Whoever trusts in man, leans on a broken reed; but God is the Rock of ages.

Verse 22. *But if ye say, We trust in the Lord*—His weak arguing here proceeds from his ignorance of that God in whom Hezekiah trusted, and of his law. *Is not that he whose high places, &c., Hezekiah hath taken away?*—Thereby robbing him of that worship and service which he had in those places. Thus he speaks boldly of those things which he understood not, calling that a crime which was a great virtue, and judging of the great God by their false and petty gods, and of God's worship according to the vain fancies of the heathen, who measured piety by the multitude of altars.

Verses 23, 24. *Now, therefore, give pledges to my lord the king*—That is, give hostages to ensure thy future obedience and subjection. *And I will deliver thee two thousand horses, &c.*—There is so little likelihood of thy being able to withstand the power of my master, who has thousands of chariots and horses, that I challenge thee to produce two thousand skilful horsemen that know how to manage horses, and I will give thee two thousand horses for them. *How then wilt thou turn away the face of one captain, &c.*—How wilt thou force him to turn his back to thee, and flee away from thee?

Verse 25. *Am I now come up without the Lord?*

A. M. 3294. B. C. 710. said to me, Go up against this land, and destroy it.

26 Then said Eliakim the son of Hilkiah, and Shebna, and Joah, unto Rab-shakeh, Speak, I pray thee, to thy servants in the Syrian language; for we understand it: and talk not with us in the Jews' language in the ears of the people that are on the wall.

27 But Rab-shakeh said unto them, Hath my master sent me to thy master, and to thee, to speak these words? *hath he not sent me to the men which sit on the wall, that they may eat their own dung, and drink¹⁴ their own piss with you?*

28 Then Rab-shakeh stood and cried with a loud voice in the Jews' language, and spake, saying, Hear the word of the great king, the king of Assyria:

29 Thus saith the king, *Let not Hezekiah deceive you: for he shall not be able to deliver you out of his hand:

30 Neither let Hezekiah make you trust in the LORD, saying, The LORD will surely deliver us, and this city shall not be delivered

¹⁴ Heb. *the water of their feet.*—² Chron. xxxii. 15.—¹⁵ Or, *Seek my favour.*—¹⁶ Heb. *make with me a blessing,* Gen. xxxii. 20, xxxiii. 11; Prov. xviii. 16.

—Without his consent and commission? *The Lord hath said unto me, Go up against this land*—They were vain, boasting words, without any foundation for them. He neither owned God's word, nor regarded his providence; but he forged this to strike a terror into Hezekiah and the people.

Verse 26. *Speak, I pray thee, to thy servants in the Syrian language*—It is probable Eliakim perceived the people to be terrified with his big words, and therefore requested him, in the name of the other commissioners sent to treat with him, to speak no longer in the Jews' language, but in his own: for he was sent, not to treat with the people, but with them, who understood the Syrian tongue very well. *In the ears of the people that are upon the wall*—Upon which these officers stood; not being willing to put themselves into the power of such a barbarous and perfidious enemy by going out of the city.

Verses 27–29. *Hath he not sent me to the men, &c.*—To tell them to what extremity and misery he will force them. *Then Rab-shakeh cried with a loud voice in the Jews' language*—That he might affright the people into a compliance with his proposal, which he perceived that Eliakim and his brethren endeavoured to prevent. *Thus saith the king, &c.*—Here he proclaims again, with the greatest assurance, the power of his king, and the weakness of Hezekiah; representing from thence, how they were deluded with empty promises if he persuaded them he should be able to defend them.

into the hand of the king of Assyria. A. M. 3294. B. C. 710.

31 Hearken not unto Hezekiah: for thus saith the king of Assyria, ¹⁵Make ¹⁶*an agreement* with me by a present, and come out to me, and *then* eat ye every man of his own vine, and every one of his fig-tree, and drink ye every one the waters of his ¹⁷cistern:

32 Until I come and take you away to a land like your own land, ^ba land of corn and wine, a land of bread and vineyards, a land of oil-olive and of honey, that ye may live, and not die: and hearken not unto Hezekiah, when he ¹⁸persuadeth you, saying, The LORD will deliver us.

33 ^cHath any of the gods of the nations delivered at all his land out of the hand of the king of Assyria?

34 ^dWhere *are* the gods of Hamath, and of Arpad? where *are* the gods of Sepharvaim, Henah, and ^eIvah? have they delivered Samaria out of my hand?

35 Who *are* they among all the gods of the countries that have delivered their country out

¹⁷ Or, *pit.*—^b Deut. viii. 7.—¹⁸ Or, *deceiveth.*—^c Chap. xix. 12; ² Chron. xxxii. 14; Isa. x. 10, 11.—^d Chap. xix. 13. ^e Chap. xvii. 24, *Ava.*

Verses 30, 31. *Neither let Hezekiah make you trust in the Lord*—This was high presumption indeed, to endeavour to persuade them not to place their confidence in God, as if his master were stronger than God. *Make an agreement with me by a present*—To redeem yourselves from all the calamities of a close siege, and from that death and destruction which will certainly follow on them: or, according to the marginal reading, *make with me a blessing*, that is, a blessed peace, whereby you may be delivered out of your distressed and miserable condition, and may receive from me the blessings of protection and provision, which your king cannot afford you. *Then eat ye every man of his own vine*—Upon these terms I will give you no disturbance; but quietly suffer each of you to enjoy his own possessions.

Verse 32. *Until I take you away to a land like your own*—That is, a fruitful and pleasant land. Because he could not conceal from them his intentions of transplanting them into another land, having already discovered these intentions in his dealing with the Israelites and other nations; he assures them they should be no losers by it, and should only change their place, but not their condition and comforts, which they should enjoy in that land no less than in their own.

Verses 34, 35. *Where are the gods of Hamath and of Arpad?*—These were cities or countries which the kings of Assyria had conquered, as were

A. M. 3294. of my hand, ^f that the LORD should
B. C. 710. deliver Jerusalem out of my hand?

36 But the people held their peace, and answered him not a word: for the king's commandment was, saying, Answer him not.

^f Dan. iii. 15.

the other places here mentioned. And therefore Rab-shakeh argued that the gods of Assyria were more powerful than the gods of any other nation. *Who are they, among all the gods of the countries, &c.*—He desires them to produce an instance of one god that had been able to save his country, when his master invaded it. And by this he endeavours to persuade them, that it would be their wisdom to deliver up their city to him, insomuch as their God would not be able to preserve it, unless he could do more than any other god had done; which he concluded was unlikely.

Verse 36. *But the people held their peace*—That

37 Then came Eliakim the son of A. M. 3294.
Hilkiah, which *was* over the house- B. C. 710.
hold, and Shebna the scribe, and Joah the son of Asaph the recorder, to Hezekiah ^g with *their* clothes rent, and told him the words of Rab-shakeh.

^g Isa. xxxiii. 7.

is, both these three men, and the people that were with them upon the wall, especially the people to whom he had chiefly spoken, and from whom he expected an answer. *For the king's command was, Answer him not*—This was wisely ordered, lest by their words they should betray their fears, or provoke their enemies to greater injuries or blasphemies, or give them some advantage or direction for their further proceedings; as also that by this instance of obedience and calmness, the king of Assyria might see the resolution of the people to cleave unto their king, and the vanity of his attempts to seduce them to a defection from him.

CHAPTER XIX.

Hezekiah sends to Isaiah to desire his prayers, 1-5; and receives from him an answer of peace, 6, 7. Sennacherib sends a threatening letter to Hezekiah, 8-13; who recommends his case to God, 14-19. God, by Isaiah, sends him a comfortable message, 20-34. The army of the Assyrians is destroyed, 35-37.

A. M. 3294. **AND** ^a it came to pass, when King
B. C. 710. Hezekiah heard *it*, that he rent his clothes, and covered himself with sackcloth, and went into the house of the LORD.

2 And he sent Eliakim, which *was* over the household, and Shebna the scribe, and the elders of the priests, covered with sackcloth, to ^b Isaiah the prophet the son of Amoz.

3 And they said unto him, Thus saith Hezekiah, This day is a day of trouble, and of

^a Isa. xxxvii. 1, &c.—^b Luke iii. 4, called *Esaias*.—^c Or, *provocation*.

NOTES ON CHAPTER XIX.

Verse 1. *When Hezekiah heard it, he rent his clothes*—Good men were wont to do so, when they heard of any reproach cast on God's name; and great men must not think it any disparagement to them to sympathize with the injured honour of the great God.

Verse 3. *This is a day of rebuke and blasphemy*—From the Assyrian, who reviles and reproaches us. *For the children, &c.*—We are like a poor travelling woman in great extremity, having no strength left to help herself, and to bring forth her infant into the world. We have attempted to deliver ourselves from the Assyrian yoke, and car-

rebuke, and ¹ blasphemy: for the children are come to the birth, and *there* ^{A. M. 3294.} ^{B. C. 710.} *is* not strength to bring forth.

4 ^o It may be the LORD thy God will hear all the words of Rab-shakeh, ^d whom the king of Assyria his master hath sent to reproach the living God; and will ^e reprove the words which the LORD thy God hath heard: wherefore lift up *thy* prayer for the remnant that are ² left.

^c 2 Sam. xvi. 12.—^d Chap. xviii. 35.—^e Psa. l. 21.—^f Heb. *found*.

ried on that work to some maturity, and, as we thought, brought it to the birth; but now we have no might to finish. We have begun a happy reformation, and are hindered by this insolent Assyrian from bringing it to perfection.

Verse 4. *It may be, &c.*—He speaks doubtfully, because he knew not whether God would not deliver them all up into the hands of the Assyrians, as he knew he and his people deserved. *That the Lord thy God*—To whom thou art dear and precious, and who will regard thy petitions: *will hear all the words of Rab-shakeh*—Will show by his actions that he hath heard them with just indignation. Hezekiah does not say *our* God, because God seemed

A. M. 3294. 5 So the servants of King Hezekiah
B. C. 710. came to Isaiah.

6 ¶ And Isaiah said unto them, Thus shall ye say to your master, Thus saith the LORD, Be not afraid of the words which thou hast heard, with which the ^s servants of the king of Assyria have blasphemed me.

7 Behold, I will send ^h a blast upon him, and he shall hear a rumour, and shall return to his own land; and I will cause him to fall by the sword in his own land.

8 ¶ So Rab-shakeh returned, and found the king of Assyria warring against Libnah: for he had heard that he was departed ⁱ from Lachish.

B. C. 710. 9 And ^k when he heard say of Tirhakah king of Ethiopia, Behold, he is come out to fight against thee: he sent messengers again unto Hezekiah, saying,

^f Isa. xxxvii. 6, &c. — ^g Chap. xviii. 17. — ^h Verses 35, 36; Jer. li. 1. — ⁱ Chap. xviii. 14. — ^k 1 Sam. xxiii. 27.

to have forsaken and rejected them; and they, by their sins, had forfeited all their interest in him. *And will reprove the words*—Or rather, *will reprove him for the words*, as the Syriac, Arabic, and Chaldee render it. *Wherefore lift up thy prayer for the remnant*—For Judah, which is but a remnant, now the ten tribes are gone: for Jerusalem, which is but a remnant, now the defenced cities of Judah are taken.

Verse 7. *I will send a blast upon him*—Hebrew, a wind, a storm or tempest, by which name God's judgments are often called: that is, a violent, sudden, and terrible stroke; namely, that miraculous destruction of his army, recorded verse 35.

Verse 8. *Rab-shakeh returned*—To the king, to give him an account of what had been done, and to receive further orders; leaving behind him the army under the other commanders, mentioned chap. xviii. 17. For it seems most probable, from the other threatening message here following, that the siege was not raised. *He was departed from Lachish*—Not being able to take it.

Verse 9. *He heard say of Tirhakah, king of Ethiopia, &c.*—Probably of Ethiopia beyond Egypt. For Josephus affirms that the Egyptians (against whom, according to Herodotus and Berosus, this Sennacherib warred) and Ethiopians were confederates in this expedition. It is most likely he was the same with the Sabaco of Herodotus. See *Universal Hist.*, vol. 4, p. 321. *He sent messengers again unto Hezekiah*—It is probable the king of Assyria thought by this message to terrify Hezekiah and the people to compliance, which it was now the more necessary for him to do, as the invasion of Tirhakah rendered it less proper for him to attempt so long a siege as that of Jerusalem was likely to prove.

10 Thus shall ye speak to Hezekiah king of Judah, saying, Let not thy God ^l in whom thou trustest deceive thee, saying, Jerusalem shall not be delivered into the hand of the king of Assyria.

11 Behold, thou hast heard what the kings of Assyria have done to all lands, by destroying them utterly: and shalt thou be delivered?

12 ^m Have the gods of the nations delivered them which my fathers have destroyed; as Gozan, and Haran, and Rezeph, and the children of ⁿ Eden which were in Thelasar?

13 ^o Where is the king of Hamath, and the king of Arpad, and the king of the city of Sepharvaim, of Hena, and Ivah?

14 ¶ And Hezekiah received the letter of the hand of the messengers, and read it: and Hezekiah went up into the house of the LORD, and spread it before the LORD.

^l Chapter xviii. 5. — ^m Chapter xviii. 33. — ⁿ Ezek. xxvii. 23. — ^o Chap. xviii. 34. — ^p Isa. xxxvii. 14, &c.

Verses 10, 11. *Thus shall ye speak to Hezekiah*—That is, these things shall ye communicate; for they did not signify them by word of mouth, but in writing. *Let not thy God, in whom thou trustest, deceive thee*—Rab-shakeh had said to the people, *Let not Hezekiah deceive you*. Sennacherib writes to Hezekiah, *Let not thy God deceive thee*. Those who have the God of Jacob for their help, and whose hope is in the Lord their God, need not fear being deceived by him, as the heathen were by their pretended gods. It is probable Sennacherib had heard that Hezekiah professed to have an assurance from the Lord, that the king of Assyria should not prevail against him. *Behold thou hast heard, &c.*—This letter is of the same import with the former message, presuming that the God of Israel was like the gods of other countries, and had no more power to preserve his worshippers than they had to preserve theirs.

Verse 13. *Where is the king of Hamath, &c.*—He may mean the gods of these places, calling them their kings, because the people looked upon them as their protectors and governors, which kings are or should be to their subjects: or rather, he means their kings, properly so called. And so, as before he compared their gods with the God of Jerusalem, so now he compares their kings with King Hezekiah; and by both comparisons intends to persuade Hezekiah and his people that neither he, their king, nor their God, was able to save them out of his hand.

Verse 14. *Hezekiah went up into the house of the Lord*—Into the outward court of the temple, for further he might not go, and at the entrance of the court of the priests, he looked toward the sanctuary, where God was peculiarly present, and spread the letter before him; which he did, not to acquaint God

A. M. 3294. 15 And Hezekiah prayed before the
B. C. 710.

LORD, and said, O LORD God of Israel,
which dwellest *between* the cherubims, thou art the God, *even* thou alone, of all the kingdoms of the earth; thou hast made heaven and earth.

16 LORD, bow down thine ear, and hear: open, LORD, thine eyes, and see: and hear the words of Sennacherib, which hath sent him to reproach the living God.

17 Of a truth, LORD, the kings of Assyria have destroyed the nations and their lands,

18 And have cast their gods into the fire: for they *were* no gods, but the work of men's hands, wood and stone: therefore they have destroyed them.

¹ Sam. iv. 4; Psa. lxxx. 1.—² 1 Kings xviii. 39; Isa. xlv. 6; Jer. x. 10, 12.—³ Psalm xxxi. 2.—⁴ 2 Chronicles vi. 40. Verse 4.—⁵ Heb. given.

with its contents, but as a token that he appealed to him concerning them, and referred himself and his cause to his righteous judgment, expecting him to answer for himself, and manifest that power which the king of Assyria had so daringly blasphemed. He meant also hereby to affect his own mind, strengthen his own faith, and quicken his desires in prayer, to a greater degree of fervency.

Verse 15. *Hezekiah prayed and said, O Lord God of Israel, &c.*—He calls him the God of Israel, because Israel was his peculiar people; and the God that dwelt between the cherubim, because there was the peculiar residence of his glory on earth; but he gives glory to him as the God of the whole earth, and not, as Sennacherib fancied, the God of Israel only. Let them say what they will, thou art sovereign Lord, the God of gods, even thou alone; universal Lord of all the kingdoms of the earth; and rightful Lord; for thou hast made heaven and earth—Being Creator of all, by an incontestable title thou art owner and ruler of all.

Verses 16–18. *Which hath sent him*—That is, the messenger who brought this railing letter; or rather Rab-shakeh, who is easily understood to be referred to from the contents of the former chapter, although he would not do him the honour to name him. *Of a truth, Lord, the kings of Assyria have destroyed the nations, &c.*—He acknowledges their triumphs over the gods of the heathen, but distinguishes between them and the God of Israel. *And have cast their gods into the fire: for they were no gods*—They were unable to help either themselves or their worshippers, and therefore it is no wonder that the Assyrians have destroyed them. And, in destroying them, though they knew it not, they really served the justice and jealousy of the God of Israel, who has determined to annihilate all the gods of the heathen. But they were deceived in thinking they could therefore be too hard for him, who was so far from being one of the gods whom men's hands had made, that he himself made all things.

19 Now therefore, O LORD our God, I beseech thee, save thou us out of his hand, that all the kingdoms of the earth may know that thou art the LORD God, even thou only.

20 ¶ Then Isaiah the son of Amoz sent to Hezekiah, saying, Thus saith the LORD God of Israel, That which thou hast prayed to me against Sennacherib king of Assyria I have heard.

21 This is the word that the LORD hath spoken concerning him; The virgin the daughter of Zion hath despised thee, and laughed thee to scorn; the daughter of Jerusalem hath shaken her head at thee.

¹ Psa. cxv. 4; Jer. x. 3.—² Psa. lxxxiii. 18.—³ Isa. xxxvii. 21, &c.—⁴ Psa. lxxv. 2.—⁵ Lam. ii. 13.—⁶ Job. xvi. 4; Psa. xxii. 7; Lam. ii. 15.

Verse 19. *Now therefore, save us out of his hand*—For if we be conquered, as other lands have been, they will say that thou art conquered, as the gods of those lands were; but, Lord, distinguish thyself by distinguishing us; and let all the world know, and be made to confess, that thou art the Lord, the self-existent God, even thou only, and that all pretenders to divinity are vanity and a lie. Let it be observed here, that the best pleas in prayer are those which are taken from God's honour, and the concerns thereof; and therefore the Lord's prayer begins with, *Hallowed be thy name*, and concludes with, *Thine is the glory*.

Verse 20. *Then Isaiah, the son of Amoz, sent to Hezekiah*—Isaiah was informed, by the spirit of prophecy, that Hezekiah had represented his case to God in the temple, and he was commissioned to assure him his petition was granted.

Verse 21. *The daughter of Zion*—That is, Jerusalem; which is called the *daughter of Zion*, say some, because the hill of Zion, as being the strongest and safest part, was first inhabited, and by the increase of inhabitants, Jerusalem arising around, as it were, sprang from it, and might therefore properly enough be termed its daughter. But it is more probable that the *people of Zion*, or of *Jerusalem*, (Zion, an eminent part of the city, being put for the whole,) are here termed its daughter, cities and countries being often called *mothers*, and their inhabitants *daughters*. Thus we read of the *daughter of Babylon*, the *daughter of Tyre*, &c., Psa. cxxxv. 7, 8, and xlv. 13. Zion or Jerusalem is termed a virgin, because she was pure in good measure from that gross idolatry wherewith other people were defiled, which is called spiritual whoredom; and to signify that God would defend her from the rape which Sennacherib intended to commit upon her, with no less care than parents do their virgin daughters from those who seek to force and deflower them. The image is extremely fine, whereby the contempt of Sennacherib's threats is expressed.

A. M. 3294. B. C. 710. 22 Whom hast thou reproached and

blasphemed? and against whom hast thou exalted *thy* voice, and lifted up thine eyes on high? *even* against the ^d Holy One of Israel.

23 ^a By ^b thy messengers thou hast reproached the LORD, and hast said, 'With the multitude of my chariots I am come up to the height of the mountains, to the sides of Lebanon, and will cut down ^c the tall cedar-trees thereof, and the choice fir-trees thereof: and I will

^a Psa. lxxi. 22; Isaiah v. 24; Jer. li. 5.—^b Heb. *By the hand of*.—^c Chapter xviii. 17.—^d Psalm xx. 7.—^e Hebrew, *the tallness*, &c.—^f Or, *the forest and his fruitful field*, Isa. x. 18.

Verse 22. *And lifted up thine eyes on high*—As those do who have haughty thoughts, and look down on others with contempt and scorn. *Even against the Holy One of Israel*—Whose honour is dear to him, and who has power to vindicate it, which the gods of the heathen have not.

Verse 23. *By thy messengers thou hast reproached the Lord*—Advancing hereby thy very servants above him. *And hast said, With the multitude of my chariots, I am come up, &c.*—I have brought up my very chariots to those mountains, which were thought inaccessible by my army. *To the sides of Lebanon*—A high hill famous for cedars and fir-trees, as is signified in what follows. *And will cut down the tall cedars thereof, &c.*—This may be understood, 1st, Mystically, I will destroy the princes and nobles of Judah, sometimes compared to cedars and fir-trees, or their strongest cities. "Cities," says Dr. Dodd, "in the prophetic writings are metaphorically represented by woods or forests, especially those of Lebanon and Carmel; and the several ranks of inhabitants by the taller and lesser trees growing there. Hence we may collect the true sense of this passage, which represents the Assyrian prince as threatening to take mount Zion, together with the capital city Jerusalem, and to destroy their principal inhabitants." The following words, *the height of his border, and the forest of his Carmel*, or, as the latter clause is more properly rendered, *the grove of his fruitful field*, are generally thought figuratively to refer to the temple and city. The Chaldee paraphrast renders it, *And I will also take the house of their sanctuary, and I will subject to me their fortified cities*. If, 2d, The reader prefer understanding the words literally, the meaning is, I will cut down the trees and woods that hinder my march, and will prepare and make plain the way for all my numerous army and chariots. Nothing shall stand in my way, nor be able to obstruct or impede my march, no, not the highest and strongest places. The words contain an admirable description of the boastings of a proud monarch, puffed up with his great success. As if he had said, What place is there into which I cannot make my way? Or, what is there I cannot achieve? Even if it were to go up to the top of the steepest mountains with my chariots? My power is suffi-

enter into the lodgings of his borders, A. M. 3294. B. C. 710. *and into* ^e the forest of his Carmel.

24 I have digged and drunk strange waters, and with the sole of my feet have I dried up all the rivers of ^f besieged places.

25 ^g Hast thou not heard long ago *how* ^h I have done it, *and* of ancient times that I have formed it? now have I brought it to pass, that ⁱ thou shouldst be to lay waste fenced cities *into* ruinous heaps.

^g Or, *fenced*.—^h Or, *Hast thou not heard how I have made it long ago, and formed it of ancient times? should I now bring it to be laid waste, and fenced cities to be ruinous heaps?*—ⁱ Isaiah xlv. 7.—^b Isa. x. 5.

cient to remove all obstacles, and overcome all opposition.

Verse 24. *I have digged and drunk strange waters*—That is, says Vitringa, "I have hitherto possessed all my desires; whatever I have vehemently thirsted after, I have attained." Others understand this and the following clause more literally, thus: "I have marched through deserts, where it was expected my army would have perished with thirst; and yet even there have I digged and found water: and I have rendered rivers fordable by turning their streams from their ancient beds, and have deprived the besieged of the benefit of those waters." Vitringa, however, renders the last clause, *with the sole of my feet will I dry up all the rivers of Egypt*. The prophet is thought to allude to a custom of the Egyptians, who commonly made use of machines, which were worked by the foot, to draw water from rivers, for whatever purpose it might be wanted; and the meaning, according to Vitringa, is, that the Assyrian, by the assistance of his very numerous army, *the sole of his foot*, would dry up all the rivers of Egypt, so that they should not delay the success of his expedition. The expression is of the hyperbolic kind, and well suits this haughty monarch, whose mind was at this time full of his expedition into Judea and Egypt.—See Dr. Dodd.

Verse 25. *Hast thou not heard long ago, &c.*—Hast thou not long since learned that which some of thy philosophers could have taught thee; that there is a supreme and powerful God, by whose decree and providence all these wars and calamities are sent and ordered; whose mere instrument thou art; so that thou hast no cause for these vain boastings? This work is mine, not thine. *I have done it, &c.*—I have so disposed of things by my providence, that thou shouldst be a great and victorious prince, and that thou shouldst be so successful as thou hast hitherto been, first against the kingdom of Israel, and now against Judah. Thus God answers the boastings of this proud prince, and shows him that all his counsel and power are nothing; since these events wholly depended on a superior cause; namely, on God's sovereign decree and overruling providence, whereof he had made this Assyrian the instrument in his almighty hand.

A. M. 3294. 26 Therefore their inhabitants were
B. C. 710. ⁹ of small power, they were dismayed
and confounded; they were *as* the grass of the
field, and *as* the green herb, *as* ¹ the grass on
the house-tops, and *as* corn blasted before it be
grown up.

27 But ^k I know thy ¹⁰ abode, and thy going
out, and thy coming in, and thy rage against
me.

28 Because thy rage against me and thy tu-

⁹ He, *short of hand*.—¹ Psa. cxxix. 6.—^k Psa. cxxxix. 1, &c.
¹⁰ Or, *sitting*.—¹ Job xli. 2; Ezek. xxix. 4; xxxviii. 4; Amos

Verse 26. *Therefore their inhabitants were of small power*—The people of Israel and Judah, and of other countries which thou hast conquered, because I had armed thee with my commission and strength, and had taken away their spirit and courage, and had withdrawn my help from them to give it to thee. *They were as the grass of the field*—Which is weak, and quickly fades, and is unable to resist any hand or instrument which offers violence to it. *As corn blasted before it be grown up*—All their designs and hopes were disappointed before they could come to any perfection or success.

Verse 27. *But I know thy abode, &c.*—Though thou dost not know me, yet I thoroughly know thee, and all thy designs and actions, all thy secret contrivances in the place of *thy abode*, in thy own kingdom and court; and the execution of thy designs abroad, what thou intendest in *thy going out*, and with what farther thoughts thou *comest in*, or returnest to thy own land. *And thy rage against me*—Against Hezekiah my servant, and my people, because they will not deliver up Jerusalem to thee, and against my temple, to destroy it. Things are frequently said to be done against God which are only done against his people, his cause, and worship, because of that near relation and union which are between them.

Verse 28. *Thy rage and thy tumult is come into mine ears*—That is, thy tumultuous noise, thy clamours and blasphemies, belched forth against me by thyself, and thy servants in thy name. *I will put my hook in thy nose, and my bridle in thy lips*—The metaphor in the latter clause is plainly taken from a horse, or ass, or mule, that must be thus governed; and that in the former may allude, perhaps, to the manner in which they managed their beasts in the east, particularly the dromedaries, which are led by a cord fastened to a ring run through the nostrils of the beast. Or the allusion may be to the absolute power which a man has over a fish which is fastened by the nose to his hook. The meaning of the passage is, that God would so order and dispose matters by his providence, that the Assyrian monarch should be compelled to return back with his army, being circumscribed and led like a horse or wild beast, wherever and as God pleased. See Dodd. What a comfort it is that God has a hook in the nose, and a bridle in the jaws, of all his and our enemies!

mult is come up into mine ears, there-
fore ¹ I will put my hook in thy nose,
and my bridle in thy lips, and I will turn thee
back ^m by the way by which thou camest.

29 And this *shall be* ⁿ a sign unto thee, Ye
shall eat this year such things as grow of them-
selves, and in the second year that which
springeth of the same; and in the third year
sow ye, and reap, and plant vineyards, and eat
the fruits thereof.

iv. 2.—^m Verses 33, 36.—ⁿ 1 Sam. ii. 34; Chap. xx. 8; Isa.
vii. 11, 14; Luke ii. 12.

Verse 29. *This shall be a sign unto thee*—Of the certain accomplishment of the promises here made; that Zion shall triumph over this insulting enemy, verse 21; and that God will not only preserve the city from Sennacherib's present fury, but also will bless his people with durable prosperity, and a happy increase, verses 30, 31. For the sign here given is not so much intended to be a token of their present deliverance from Sennacherib, which would be effected before the sign took place, as of their future preservation from him and the Assyrians, and of blessings which were to continue long after it. In other passages of Scripture we have signs given in the same manner, particularly in Exod. iii. 12 and Isa. vii. 14. At the time that Isaiah spoke this, nothing seemed more improbable than that the Jews, delivered from the Assyrians, should freely use and enjoy their own land, and be supported from its productions. They had cause to fear that the Assyrians would be greatly enraged at their shameful repulse, and the destruction of their army, and would quickly recruit their forces and come against them with far greater strength and violence than before. But if not, they had reason to fear another enemy equally formidable and destructive, a grievous famine. The Assyrian army had trodden down or eaten up all their corn, and the next year, which was the fifteenth of Hezekiah, was the sabbatical year, in which their law neither allowed them to plough nor sow. How were they to be supported? God engages they shall have sufficient support: *Ye shall eat this year*—ספיח, *sapiach*, *sponte natum*, the natural produce of the ground, which the invasion of the Assyrian army in a great measure prevented you from ploughing and sowing. *And the second year, that which springeth of the same*—שדח, *sachish*, *sponte re-natum*, the name here given to the spontaneous productions of the earth the second year that it had not been sown. *And in the third year, sow ye, and reap*—You shall not sow, and another reap, as has lately been the case; but you shall enjoy the fruit of your own labour. Now this was an excellent sign, for it was miraculous, especially considering the waste and destruction which the Assyrians had made in the land, and that the Jews had been forced to retire into their strong holds, and consequently to neglect their tilling, sowing, and reaping. And these events taking place accordingly,

A. M. 3294. 30 ° And ¹¹ the remnant that is
B. C. 710. escaped of the house of Judah shall
yet again take root downward, and bear fruit
upward.

31 For out of Jerusalem shall go forth a
remnant, and ¹² they that escape out of mount
Zion: ¹³ the zeal of the LORD of hosts shall do
this.

32 Therefore thus saith the LORD concerning
the king of Assyria, He shall not come into this
city, nor shoot an arrow there, nor come before
it with a shield, nor cast a bank against it.

° 2 Chron. xxxii. 22.—¹¹ Heb. *the escaping of the house of Judah
that remaineth.*—¹² Heb. *the escaping.*

year after year, and the predictions being punctually
fulfilled, the hopes of Hezekiah and his people would
be revived and confirmed more and more, and assu-
rance would be given them that they had nothing
further to fear from the Assyrians, and that God
would yet defend, bless, and prosper his people.

Verse 30. *The remnant that is escaped shall yet
again bear fruit upward*—Shall increase and mul-
tiply greatly. It is a metaphor taken from plants.
“The prophet passes from fields to men, and from
the cultivation of land to the state of the church;
for, having just said, that, being delivered from the
Assyrians, they should cultivate their land as usual,
he adds, that it should also come to pass that the
kingdom and church, delivered from this calamity,
should flourish again, increase, and bring forth much
fruit; which we know happened under Hezekiah.”
—Dodd.

Verse 31. *For out of Judah shall go forth a rem-
nant*—That handful of Jews who were now gathered
together, and shut up in Jerusalem, should go out to
their several habitations, and, by God’s singular
blessing, increase exceedingly. *The zeal of the
Lord shall do this*—Although, when you reflect
upon yourselves, and consider either your present
fewness and weakness, or your great unworthiness,
this may seem too great a blessing for you to expect;
yet God will do it from the zeal which he hath, both
for his own name, and for the good of his undeserv-
ing people.

Verse 32. *Thus saith the Lord, He shall not come
to this city*—The king of Assyria shall be so far from
possessing himself of the city at this time, that he
shall not shoot so much as an arrow into it, much
less raise any bulwarks to besiege it. There is a
gradation in the words, says Dr. Dodd, as is usual
with Isaiah. The first declaration is, that Senna-
cherib, if he shall attempt to besiege the city, shall
never be able to succeed; *he shall not come into this
city.* The second is, that he shall not bring his army
so near the city as to come before it with shields,
wherewith to defend themselves from those on the
wall, or raise a bank against it. The third, that he
shall not even shoot an arrow into the city, which
might be done from far. It seems the army sent

33 By the way that he came, by ^{A. M. 3294}
the same shall he return, and shall ^{B. C. 710.}
not come into this city, saith the LORD.

34 For ¹ I will defend this city, to save it, for
mine own sake, and ² for my servant David’s
sake.

35 ¶ And ³ it came to pass that night, that
the angel of the LORD went out, and smote in
the camp of the Assyrians a hundred fourscore
and five thousand: and when they arose early
in the morning, behold, they were all dead
corpses.

¶ Isa. ix. 7.—¹ Chap. xx. 6.—² 1 Kings xi. 12.—³ 2 Chron.
xxxii. 21; Isa. xxxvii. 36; Eccles. xlvi. 21.

with Rab-shakeh did not form a close siege against
it, but only disposed themselves so as to block it up
at some distance; possibly waiting till the king of
Assyria had taken Libnah and Lachish, (which they
presumed he would speedily do.)

Verses 33, 34. *By the same shall he return*—
Whereas he expected to devour the kingdom of
Judah at one morsel, and then to proceed farther
and conquer Egypt, and other neighbouring coun-
tries; and to cut off nations not a few, as is said of
him concerning this very time and design, (Isa. x. 7,) he shall meet with so sad a disappointment and re-
buke here, that he shall make haste to return with
shame to his own country. *For my servant David’s
sake*—For my promise and covenant’s sake made
with David, concerning the stability and eternity of
his kingdom, 1 Kings xi. 12, 13. It must be remem-
bered, that all the promises made to David were
made to him in Christ: he and his kingdom were
types of the kingdom of Christ. It is to this, and
not to the personal merits of David, that the sacred
writer here alludes.

Verse 35. *And it came to pass that night, &c.*—
Sometimes it was long before prophecies were ac-
complished, and promises performed, but here the
word was no sooner spoken than the work was done.
The night which immediately followed the sending
of this message to Hezekiah, was the main body of
the besieging army slain. Hezekiah had not force
sufficient to sally out upon them, and attack their
camp, nor would God destroy them by sword or
bow; but he sent a destroying angel, in the dead of
night, to make an assault upon them, which their
sentinels, though ever so watchful, could neither dis-
cover nor resist: such an angel as slew the firstborn
of Egypt. Josephus says, the angel slew them by
inflicting a pestilential disease which caused death
immediately. “But his authority,” says Vitringa,
“in matters of this kind, is of no great weight. It is
my opinion,” continues he, “that in a dreadful storm,
raised by this destroying angel, these men were kil-
led by lightning; their bodies being burned within,
while their outward garments were untouched.” The
number slain was prodigious, and Rab-shakeh, prob-
ably, among them. *And when they rose early in*

A. M. 3295. 36 So Sennacherib king of Assyria
B. C. 709. departed, and went and returned, and dwelt at Nineveh.

37 And it came to pass, as he was worshipping in the house of Nisroch his god, that

¹ Gen. x. 11.—² 2 Chron. xxxii. 21.

the morning—Namely, the few that were left alive; *behold, they were all dead corpses*—Scarce a living man of their companions and fellow-soldiers remained. How great in power and might must the holy angels be, when one angel, in one night, could make so great a slaughter! And how weak are the mightiest men before the almighty God! Who ever hardened himself against him, and prospered? The pride and blasphemy of the king and his general are punished by the destruction of one hundred and eighty-five thousand men! O God, how terrible art thou in thy justice! All these lives are sacrificed to the glory of God and the safety of his people!

Verse 36. *So Sennacherib departed*—Ashamed to see himself, after all his proud boasts, thus defeated, and disabled to pursue his conquests, or even to secure what he had gained, the flower of his army being cut off; nay, and continually afraid of falling under the like stroke himself. The manner of the expression, *He departed, and went, and returned*, intimates the great disorder and distraction of mind he was in.

Verse 37. *He was worshipping in the house of Nisroch his god*—The God of Israel had done enough

³ Adrammelech and Sharezer his sons smote him with the sword: and they escaped into the land of ¹³ Armenia. And ² Esar-haddon his son reigned in his stead.

³ Verse 7.—¹³ Heb. Ararat.—² Ezra iv. 2.

to convince him that he was the only true God, yet he persists in his idolatry: justly then is his blood mingled with his sacrifices, who will not be convinced, by so dear-bought a demonstration, of his folly in worshipping idols. *His sons smote him*—Smote their own father, (whom they were bound to protect at the hazard of their own lives,) and that when they saw him engaged in the very act of his devotion! Monstrous villainy! But God was righteous in it. Justly are the sons suffered to rebel against their father that begat them, when he was in rebellion against the God that made him. They, whose children are undutiful to them, ought to consider whether they have not been so to their Father in heaven. *They escaped into the land of Armenia*—Which was a country most fit for that purpose, because it was near to that part of Assyria, and was very mountainous, and inaccessible by armies; and the people were stout and warlike, and constant enemies to the Assyrians. *And Esar-haddon his son reigned in his stead*—Who, according to Ezra, (chap. iv. 2,) sent great supplies to his new colony at Samaria; fearing, probably, lest Hezekiah should improve the last great advantage to disturb his late conquest there.

CHAPTER XX.

Hezekiah's sickness and recovery, 1-7. The sign given him, 8-11. He shows the Babylonians all his treasures, 12, 13. The Babylonish captivity foretold, 14-19. He dies, 20, 21.

A. M. 3295. **I**N ² those days was Hezekiah sick
B. C. 709. unto death. And the prophet Isaiah the son of Amoz came to him, and said unto him, Thus saith the LORD, ¹Set thy

² 2 Chron. xxxii. 24, &c.; Isa. xxxviii. 1, &c.

NOTES ON CHAPTER XX.

Verse 1. *In those days was Hezekiah sick unto death*—That is, in the same year in which the king of Assyria invaded Judea; for Hezekiah reigned in all twenty-nine years, and surviving this sickness fifteen years, it must have happened in his fourteenth year, which was the year in which Sennacherib invaded him. It appears, however, from verse 6, in which God promises to deliver him and Jerusalem out of the hand of the king of Assyria, that it took place before that deliverance; but the sacred historian thought proper to place it after that event, that he might not interrupt the story of Sennacherib.

house in order; for thou shalt die, and not live,

2 Then he turned his face to the wall, and prayed unto the LORD, saying,

¹ Heb. Give charge concerning thy house, 2 Sam. xvii. 23.

Thus saith the Lord, Set thy house in order, &c.—Make thy will, and settle the affairs of thy family and kingdom. This he the rather presses upon him, because the state of his kingdom peculiarly required it, for it is plain Hezekiah had not, as yet, any son; Manasseh, his heir and successor, not being born till three years after this time; compare verse 6 with chap. xxi. 1. *Thou shalt die, and not live*—Thy disease is mortal in its kind, and will be so in effect, if God do not by a miracle prevent it. Such threatenings, though expressed absolutely, have often secret conditions.

Verse 2. *Then he turned his face to the wall*—As

A. M. 3295. 3 I beseech thee, O LORD, ^bremember now how I have ^cwalked before thee in truth and with a perfect heart, and have done *that which is good* in thy sight. And Hezekiah wept ²sore.

4 And it came to pass, afore Isaiah was gone out into the middle ³court, that the word of the LORD came to him, saying,

5 Turn again, and tell Hezekiah ^dthe captain of my people, Thus saith the LORD, the God of David thy father, ^eI have heard thy prayer, I have seen ^fthy tears: behold, I will heal thee: on the third day thou shalt go up unto the house of the LORD.

6 And I will add unto thy days fifteen years;

^b Neh. xiii. 22.—^c Gen. xvii. 1; 1 Kings iii. 6.—² Heb. *was a great weeping.*—³ Or, *city.*—^d 1 Samuel ix. 16; x. 1. ^e Chap. xix. 20; Psa. lxx. 2.

he lay in his bed. He could not retire to his closet; but he retired as well as he could; he turned from the company to converse with God. When we cannot be so private as we would in our devotions, nor perform them with the usual outward expressions of reverence and solemnity, yet we must not, therefore, omit them, but compose and address ourselves to them as well as we can.

Verse 3. *Remember how I have walked before thee in truth*—Sincerely, with an honest mind. I am not conscious to myself of any exorbitances, for which thou art wont to shorten men's days. *And Hezekiah wept sore*—Under the law, long life and uninterrupted health were promised as the rewards of obedience, and premature death was denounced as a punishment; see Exod. xx. 12; Deut. v. 33; and xxx. 16. When we reflect on this, we need not be surprised at the sorrow which this good king expressed at his approaching dissolution. He looked upon it as a punishment, and consequently as a mark of the divine displeasure. Other reasons too might strongly operate upon a good mind. The suddenness of this terrible and unexpected denunciation; the unsettled state both of his public and domestic affairs; and the natural dread of death inherent in the human mind, which might in this case possibly be augmented from a sense of his own defects, and from a thorough persuasion that God was displeased at him, by cutting him off in such a manner, in the very flower of his age, and when his kingdom and family particularly required his best assistance. However, be the reasons what they might, it behoves us certainly to judge with great candour of a prince, whose character is so good as that of Hezekiah: and, perhaps, blessed as we are, with a clearer knowledge of a future state than Hezekiah enjoyed, there are but few who can look upon death, awful as it is even to the best, without some degree of very serious concern.—Dodd.

Verses 4, 5. *Afore Isaiah was gone out into the*

and I will deliver thee and this city ^{A. M. 3295.} out of the hand of the king of As- ^{B. C. 709.} syria; and ^eI will defend this city for mine own sake, and for my servant David's sake.

7 And ^bIsaiah said, Take a lump of figs. And they took and laid *it* on the bile, and he recovered.

8 ¶ And Hezekiah said unto Isaiah, ⁱWhat *shall be* the sign that the LORD will heal me, and that I shall go up into the house of the LORD the third day?

9 And Isaiah said, ^hThis sign shalt thou have of the LORD, that the LORD will do the thing that he hath spoken: shall the shadow go forward ten degrees, or go back ten degrees?

^f Psa. xxxix. 12; lvi. 8.—^g Chap. xix. 34.—^h Isa. xxxviii. 21.—ⁱ Judges vi. 17, 37, 39; Isaiah vii. 11, 14; xxxviii. 22. ² Isaiah xxxviii. 7, 8.

middle court—Namely, of the king's palace. This is mentioned to show God's great readiness to hear the prayers of his children. *Thus saith the God of thy father David*—I am mindful of my promise made to David and his house, and will make it good in thy person. *I have heard thy prayer, I have seen thy tears*—Prayer addressed to God with fervency and affection, is in a special manner pleasing to him; and when offered in faith, and for things which he, in his word, hath encouraged or authorized us to ask, shall be heard and answered. *I will heal thee*—Diseases are God's servants; as they go where he sends them, so they come when he remands them, Matt. viii. 8, 9. *On the third day thou shalt go up to the house of the Lord*—To give him solemn praise for his mercy. That he was able to go up so soon as the third day, showed the cure to be miraculous.

Verse 6. *I will add to thy days fifteen years*—Beyond what thou dost now expect, and beyond the time thou wouldst live if I left thee to the force of thy disease. We have not an instance of any other who was told beforehand just how long he should live. God has wisely kept us at uncertainties, that we may be always ready.

Verse 7. *Take a lump of figs*—Though the deliverance was certainly promised, yet means must be used, and those suitable. The figs would help to ripen the bile, and bring it to a head, that the matter of the disease might be discharged that way. This means, however, would have been altogether insufficient of itself to effect so sudden and complete a cure, without the co-operation of the divine power, to which the king's restoration to health is chiefly to be ascribed.

Verse 8. *Hezekiah said to Isaiah*—Or rather, *had said*; for it is evident this was said before his recovery, though his recovery be mentioned before it. *What shall be the sign that the Lord will heal me?*—He asks a sign, not because he distrusted the divine promise, but for the strengthening of his faith,

A. M. 3295. 10 And Hezekiah answered, It is
B. C. 709. a light thing for the shadow to go
down ten degrees: nay, but let the shadow
return backward ten degrees.

B. C. 712. 11 And Isaiah the prophet cried unto
the LORD: and ¹ he brought the sha-
dow ten degrees backward, by which it had
gone down in the ⁴ dial of Ahaz.

12 ¶ ² At that time ⁵ Berodach-baladan, the

¹ Joshua x. 12, 14; Isa. xxxviii. 8; Eccles. xlviii. 23.—⁴ Heb. degrees.—² Isa. xxxix. 1, &c.

which otherwise might have been shaken by the greatness of his danger, and by the contradiction between this and the prophet's former message.

Verse 10. *It is a light thing for the sun to go down*—Namely, in an instant: for that motion of the sun is natural as to the kind of it, though miraculous for the swiftness of it; but the motion backward would be both ways miraculous.

Verse 11. *Isaiah the prophet cried unto the Lord*—Being moved by God's Spirit, first to offer him this sign, and then to pray for it. *And he brought the shadow ten degrees backward*—"The dial in use among the Jews," says Dr. Dodd, "was a kind of stairs; the time of the day was distinguished, not by lines, but by steps, here called *degrees*; and the shade of the sun moved forward a new degree every half hour. The Jewish doctors and the ancient Christian fathers were of opinion, that the sun actually went backward. They endeavour to support this opinion by showing that Merodach-baladan was incited, by the view of this miracle, to send his messengers to Hezekiah, see 2 Chron. xxxii. 31; and, as a further confirmation, they add, that it is really taken notice of by Herodotus, in his *Euterpe*, chap. 142, where he expressly asserts, that the Egyptians had observed strange alterations in the motions of the sun, it having arisen four times out of its usual course. Though this observation should be allowed to be true, yet from hence we are under no necessity to admit that the sun itself, or the earth, was retrograde, that is to say, that either of them went backward; all that the Scriptures require of us is, to admit the fact of the *shadow's* going backward; and this may be accounted for without supposing any uncommon motion, either in the sun or in the earth. Nothing more was required to effect this phenomenon, than a reflection of the sun's rays, and this might have been caused by an alteration in the density of the atmosphere. To this it may be added, that the original mentions nothing of the sun, but only of its beams or shadow; and how its beams might be inflected by a change made in the atmosphere, may easily be conceived by any person conversant in natural philosophy. This endeavour to account for the phenomenon, by no means lessens the miracle; for we assign the alteration of the atmosphere to the immediate and extraordinary operation of Providence, and every extraordinary interposition of Providence is essentially and pro-

son of Baladan, king of Babylon, A. M. 3292.
B. C. 712. sent letters and a present unto Heze-
kiah: for he had heard that Hezekiah had
been sick.

13 And ³ Hezekiah hearkened unto them, and
showed them all the house of his ⁶ precious
things, the silver, and the gold, and the spices,
and the precious ointment, and *all* the house
of his ⁷ armour,⁸ and all that was found in his

³ Or, *Merodach-baladan*.—² 2 Chron. xxxii. 27, 31.—⁶ Or, *epicery*.—⁷ Or, *jewels*.—⁸ Heb. *vessels*.

perly a miracle. Let it further be observed, we by no means offer this solution in exclusion of others; and if any one thinks that the miracle can be better accounted for in any other way, we shall very readily subscribe to that opinion. *Liberum de eo judicium lectori committo*, says Vitringa." See note on Josh. x. 12, 13.

Verse 12. *Berodach-baladan*—He seems to have been the king of Assyria's viceroy in Babylon; and, upon the terrible slaughter in the Assyrian host, and the death of Sennacherib, and the differences among his sons, to have usurped absolute sovereignty over Babylon: and either himself or his son destroyed the Assyrian monarchy, and translated the empire to Babylon. *Sent letters and a present to Hezekiah*—Congratulating him on his happy restoration to health, and assuring him of his esteem and friendship. According to 2 Chron. xxxii. 31, one end he had in view in doing this was, that *he might inquire of, or concerning, the wonder done in the land*, namely, the shadow going back on the dial of Ahaz. And it is probable another was, that he might obtain assistance from Hezekiah against the king of Assyria, their common enemy.

Verse 13. *Hezekiah hearkened unto them, &c.*—He was so pleased, or rather, transported with joy, at the honour the king of Babylon had done him, that he not only gave his ambassadors a gracious audience, and granted them a league and amity, but ordered his officers to show them all the rarities and precious things which he had in his treasures, with *his spices, costly ointments, and the house of his armour*—For though his country had been lamentably harassed and plundered by the king of Assyria, and he had endeavoured to appease him with large sums of money and other gifts; yet he had reserved much gold and silver, and many curiosities and valuable things, which he and his fathers had gathered in Jerusalem. Besides, no doubt, he had got considerable spoils out of the Assyrian camp. Also many presents had been sent him since the stroke from heaven on Sennacherib's army, and his own miraculous recovery from sickness, and the astonishing sign which God had previously given him of it. *There was nothing in his house, nor in all his dominion, which Hezekiah showed them not*—In this he was influenced by pride of heart and vain ostentation, (2 Chron. xxxii. 25, 26,) being lifted up, it seems, by the great honour God had done him, in

A. M. 3292. treasures : there was nothing in his house, nor in all his dominion, that Hezekiah showed them not.

14 ¶ Then came Isaiah the prophet unto King Hezekiah, and said unto him, What said these men ? and from whence came they unto thee ? And Hezekiah said, They are come from a far country, *even* from Babylon.

15 And he said, What have they seen in thy house ? And Hezekiah answered, ° All the things that are in my house have they seen : there is nothing among my treasures that I have not showed them.

16 And Isaiah said unto Hezekiah, Hear the word of the LORD.

17 Behold, the days come, that all that is in thy house, and that which thy fathers have laid up in store unto this day, p shall be carried into

° Verse 13.—→ Chap. xxiv. 13; xxv. 13; Jer. xxvii. 21; lii. 17.—¹ Chapter xxiv. 12; 2 Chron. xxxiii. 11.—² Fulfilled, Dan. i. 3.

working such glorious miracles for his sake, and by the great respect rendered to him by divers princes, and now by this great Babylonian monarch. So hard a matter it is even for a good man to be high and humble. Although no particular mention is made of Hezekiah's showing these strangers the temple, yet, as it was by far the most sumptuous and splendid building in Jerusalem, and the greatest curiosity in his dominions, there can be no doubt but it was shown them, as far as it was permitted to heathen, who were not proselytes to the Jewish religion, to see it; but whether he took any pains to make them acquainted with the great Being who was worshipped there, and who, by his almighty power, had wrought the miracles which had excited their attention, or with his laws, and the ordinances of his service, may well be doubted. Although, certainly, he had a very fair opportunity of doing this, and of demonstrating to them the unreasonableness and folly of idolatry in all its branches, and especially of their worship of the sun, which the late miracle had shown to be no more than the creature and servant of the God of Israel.

Verses 14, 15. *Hezekiah said, They are come from a far country*—A vain-glorious expression, intimating the great honour which he had from all parts, far and near. *Even from Babylon*—That potent monarchy; which he mentions to magnify his own honour and happiness. *What have they seen in thy house?*—He asks, not because he was ignorant of it, but in order that, from Hezekiah's answer, he might take occasion of delivering God's message to him.

Verse 16. *Isaiah said, Hear the word of the Lord*—Hear what his judgment is of this, and how wide his thoughts are from thy thoughts! Thou wast transported when the messengers of the king of

Babylon : nothing shall be left, saith the LORD.

18 And of thy sons that shall issue from thee, which thou shalt beget, q shall they take away; r and they shall be eunuchs in the palace of the king of Babylon.

19 Then said Hezekiah unto Isaiah, r Good is the word of the LORD which thou hast spoken. And he said, 10 *Is it not good*, if peace and truth be in my days ?

20 ¶ s And the rest of the acts of Hezekiah, and all his might, and how he t made a pool, and a conduit, and u brought water into the city, are they not written in the book of the Chronicles of the kings of Judah ?

21 And s Hezekiah slept with his fathers : and Manasseh his son reigned in his stead.

r 1 Sam. iii. 18; Job i. 21; Psalm xxxix. 9.—10 Or, *Shall there not be peace and truth.*—11 2 Chron. xxxii. 32.—12 Neh. iii. 1.—13 2 Chron. xxxii. 30.—14 2 Chron. xxxii. 33.

Babylon arrived; to thy eye it appeared the most favourable conjuncture that could have happened to thee; thou madest a parade of all thy riches, and of thy armoury, to induce them to enter into an alliance with thee against the king of Assyria. Thou thoughtest if thou couldest secure their friendship and alliance, thou wouldest be safe; even safer than in putting thy trust in the Lord God of Israel. But hear the word of the Lord; see the foolishness of thy thoughts: This very nation, in whom thou thinkest to find security, is the nation that shall take away all these treasures, and carry away thy sons into captivity.

Verse 17. *Behold, the days come, &c.*—So small was the power of the Babylonians at this time, in respect of their mighty neighbour, the king of Assyria, whom the Jews stood in perpetual fear of, that nothing could seem more improbable than that the Babylonians should carry away the inhabitants of Jerusalem captive. But the divine providence ruleth over all, and sees from the beginning to the end; and, accordingly, in about a hundred and twenty-five years after, the event proved that the word of the Lord stands fast for ever, and that what he speaks shall surely come to pass. Thus short-sighted is human policy! Thus does our ruin often arise from that in which we most place our confidence!

Verse 18. *And of thy sons, &c.*—Thy grand-children, who are often called sons. *They shall be eunuchs, &c.*—They shall be servants to that heathen monarch, whereby both their bodies will be subject to slavery, and their souls exposed to the peril of idolatry, and all sorts of wickedness. This was a very sore judgment, and by it God would teach the world the great evil of sin; yea, even of those sins which are generally esteemed but small or venial.

Verse 19. *Good is the word of the Lord*—I heartily submit to this sentence, as being most just and mer-

ciful. All true penitents, when they are under divine rebukes, call them not only just, but good: not only submit to, but accept of the punishment of their iniquity. So Hezekiah did, and by this it appeared he was indeed humbled for the pride of his heart. Undoubtedly it was most grievous to him to hear of the calamities that should befall his children; but,

notwithstanding, with a truly penitent and pious mind, he pronounced the sentence good, as coming from that Being who not only does nothing but what is right, but nothing but what is tempered with mercy and goodness, even when he punishes; and therefore a resigned submission to his will is highly reasonable and proper, and our absolute duty.

CHAPTER XXI.

The wicked reign of Manasseh, 1-9. Judgment denounced against him and Jerusalem, 10-16. His death, 17, 18. The wicked reign of Amon, 19-22. He is slain, and succeeded by Josiah, 23-26.

A. M. 3306. B. C. 698. **MANASSEH** ^a was twelve years old when he began to reign, and reigned fifty and five years in Jerusalem. And his mother's name was Hephzi-bah.

2 And he did *that which was evil* in the sight of the LORD, ^b after the abominations of the heathen, whom the LORD cast out before the children of Israel.

3 For he built up again the high places ^c which Hezekiah his father had destroyed; and he reared up altars for Baal, and made a grove, ^d as did Ahab king of Israel; and

^e worshipped all the host of heaven, ^f and served them. A. M. 3306. B. C. 698.

4 And ^g he built altars in the house of the LORD, of which the LORD said, ^h In Jerusalem will I put my name.

5 And he built altars for all the host of heaven in the two courts of the house of the LORD.

6 ⁱ And he made his son pass through the fire, and observed ^j times, and used enchantments, and dealt with familiar spirits and wizards: he wrought much wickedness in the

^a 2 Chron. xxxiii. 1, &c. — ^b Chap. xvi. 3. — ^c Chap. xviii. 4. — ^d 1 Kings xvi. 32. — ^e Deut. iv. 19; xvii. 3; Chap. xvii. 16. — ^f Jer. xxxii. 34.

^g 2 Sam. vii. 13; 1 Kings viii. 29; ix. 3. — ^h Lev. xviii. 21; xx. 2; Chap. xvi. 3; xvii. 17. — ⁱ Lev. xix. 26, 31; Chap. xvii. 17; Deut. xviii. 10.

NOTES ON CHAPTER XXI.

Verse 1. *Manasseh reigned fifty and five years*—In which time the years, wherein he was a captive in Babylon, are comprehended. He must, according to his age mentioned here, have been born three years after Hezekiah was miraculously restored, and had his life lengthened.

Verse 2. *He did evil in the sight of the Lord*—Through his own vicious inclinations, and the instigation of the wicked princes of Judah, who in Hezekiah's time were secret enemies to the reformation which he was endeavouring to effect; and now, when the restraint which they had been under was removed by his death, broke forth into open hostility against it, and corrupted the king's tender years with their wicked counsels. *After the abominations of the heathen*—It had been his father's first care to root all idolatry out of his kingdom, and to restore the service of the temple to its pristine order and splendour. But this his graceless son, on the contrary, made it his study to banish religion and morality out of the country, to revive the old idolatry, and to introduce new and unheard-of idols and ceremonies; besides witchcraft, sorceries, and every wicked custom that was used among the heathen far and near. Baal became now the favourite object of his worship: Moloch and the valley of Hinnom

were now more frequented than ever; the impious king encouraging his impious subjects to sacrifice their children there, as Ahaz had done before. He did not, however, pass unpunished for these offences: but for the particulars of his punishment, which are not mentioned in this book, the reader must be referred to 2 Chron. xxxiii. 11, &c. See Dodd.

Verses 3-5. *He built up again the high places*—Trampling upon the dust of his worthy father, and affronting his memory. *And worshipped all the host of heaven*—The sun, moon, and stars, which the Gentiles had transformed into gods. *He built altars*—To the gods of the neighbouring nations, and to the host of heaven; *in the house of the Lord*—Not only in Jerusalem, where the Lord had recorded his name, but even in the courts of the temple itself, both in that where the priests and Levites performed their services, and in that wherein the people worshipped. Thus, when the faithful worshippers of God came to the place he had appointed, to do their duty to him, to their great grief and terror, they found the altars of other gods ready to receive their offerings.

Verse 6. *He made his son pass through the fire*—By which he dedicated him to Moloch, in contempt of the seal of circumcision by which he had been

A. M. 3306. sight of the LORD, to provoke him
B. C. 698. to anger.

7 And he set a graven image of the grove that he had made in the house, of which the LORD said to David, and to Solomon his son, "In this house, and in Jerusalem, which I have chosen out of all tribes of Israel, will I put my name for ever :

8 "Neither will I make the feet of Israel move any more out of the land which I gave their fathers ; only if they will observe to do according to all that I have commanded them, and according to all the law that my servant Moses commanded them.

9 But they hearkened not : and Manasseh " seduced them to do more evil than did the nations whom the LORD destroyed before the children of Israel.

10 ¶ And the LORD spake by his servants the prophets, saying,

" 2 Samuel vii. 13 ; 1 Kings viii. 29 ; ix. 3 ; Chap. xxiii. 27 ; Psa. cxxxii. 13 ; Jer. xxxii. 34. — 1 2 Sam. vii. 10. — Prov. xxix. 12. — Chap. xxiii. 26, 27 ; xxiv. 3 ; Jer. xv. 4.

dedicated to God: see notes on Lev. xviii. 21, 22. And observed times—Lucky or unlucky days, according to the superstitious practice of the heathen.

Verse 7. *He set an image of the grove, &c.*—The image of that Baal which was worshipped in the grove, or of some other of his idols. The word Asherah, here rendered grove, is nearly the same with Ashtaroth, or Astarte, the imaginary female deities, which were worshipped along with Baalim. This image seems to have been set up in the very temple itself, probably in the holy place; as if designed purposely to affront the Lord to his face, and set him at defiance: "desecrating," says Henry, "what had been consecrated to God, and, in effect, turning him out of his own house, and putting the rebels in possession of it."

Verses 9, 10. *Manasseh seduced them to do more evil than the nations, &c.*—Partly, because they were not contented with those idols which the Canaanites worshipped, but either invented, or borrowed from other nations, many new idols; and partly, because as their light was far more clear, their obligations to God infinitely higher, and their helps against idolatry much stronger than the Canaanites had; so that their sins, though the same in kind, were unspeakably worse in respect of these dreadful aggravations. *The Lord spake by his servants the prophets*—Abarbinel says, that Hosea, Joel, Nahum, and Habakkuk, all prophesied in his days: and some think Obadiah also, and Isaiah.

Verses 11, 12. *Manasseh hath done wickedly, above what the Amorites did*—The Canaanitish nations; all so called from one eminent part of them, Gen. xv. 16. *And hath made Judah to sin with his idols*—By his example, encouragement, counsel,

11 " Because Manasseh king of Judah hath done these abominations, " and hath done wickedly above all that the Amorites did, which were before him, and " hath made Judah also to sin with his idols :

12 Therefore thus saith the LORD God of Israel, Behold, I am bringing such evil upon Jerusalem and Judah, that whosoever heareth of it, both " his ears shall tingle.

13 And I will stretch over Jerusalem " the line of Samaria, and the plummet of the house of Ahab: and I will wipe Jerusalem as a man wipeth a dish, " wiping it, and turning it upside down.

14 And I will forsake the remnant of mine inheritance, and deliver them into the hand of their enemies; and they shall become a prey and a spoil to all their enemies;

15 Because they have done that which was

" 1 Kings xxi. 26. — Verse 9. — " 1 Samuel iii. 11 ; Jer. xix. 3. — " Isa. xxxiv. 11 ; Lam. ii. 8 ; Amos vii. 7. — " Heb. he wipeth and turneth it upon the face thereof.

authority, and command. *Therefore I am bringing evil upon Jerusalem*—It will come, and it is at no great distance. *Whosoever heareth of it, both his ears shall tingle*—The report of it shall fill men's minds with terror and amazement.

Verse 13. *I will stretch over Jerusalem the line of Samaria*—She shall have the same measure and lot; that is, the same judgments which Samaria has had. *For the line* is often put for one's lot or portion, because men's portions or possessions used to be measured by lines. Or it is a metaphor taken from workmen, who mark out by lines what parts of a building they would have thrown down, and what they would have to stand. *I will wipe Jerusalem as a man wipeth a dish, &c.*—As men do with a dish that hath been used, first wholly empty it of all that is in it, then thoroughly cleanse and wipe it, and lastly turn it upside down, that nothing may remain in it; so will I deal with Jerusalem, thoroughly empty and purge it from all its wicked inhabitants. Yet the comparison intimates, that this should be in order to the purifying, not the final destruction of Jerusalem. The dish shall not be broken in pieces, or wholly cast away, but only wiped.

Verses 14, 15. *I will forsake the remnant of mine inheritance*—The kingdom of Judah, the only remainder of all the tribes of Israel, which I once chose for my inheritance; but now, notwithstanding that I conferred on them that privilege, I will utterly reject and forsake them. *They have provoked me since the day, &c.*—This sore judgment, though it was chiefly inflicted for the sins of Manasseh and his generation, yet had a respect unto all their former sins.

A. M. 3306. evil in my sight, and have provoked
B. C. 698. me to anger, since the day their fathers came forth out of Egypt, even unto this day.

16 * Moreover, Manasseh shed innocent blood very much, till he had filled Jerusalem ² from one end to another; besides his sin wherewith he made Judah to sin, in doing *that which was evil in the sight of the LORD.*

17 ¶ Now ¹ the rest of the acts of Manasseh, and all that he did, and his sin that he sinned, *are they not written in the book of the Chronicles of the kings of Judah?*

B. C. 643. 18 And ² Manasseh slept with his fathers, and was buried in the garden of his own house, in the garden of Uzza: and Amon his son reigned in his stead.

19 ¶ ² Amon was twenty and two years old when he began to reign, and he reigned two years in Jerusalem. And his mother's name was Meshullemeth, the daughter of Haruz of Jotbah.

* Chap. xxiv. 4.—² Heb. *from mouth to mouth.*—¹ 2 Chron. xxxiii. 11-19.—² 2 Chron. xxxiii. 20.

Verse 16. *Moreover, Manasseh shed innocent blood*—The blood of those prophets, and other righteous men, who either reprov'd his sinful practices, or refused to comply with his wicked commands. The tradition of the Jews is, that he caus'd Isaiah, in particular, to be *sawn asunder*, and that by a *wooden saw*, to which the author of the epistle to the Hebrews is thought to allude, chap. xi. 37. *Besides his sin, wherewith he made Judah to sin*—That is, his idolatry, which is elsewhere call'd evil and corruption, and here sin, by way of eminency; which is the more remarkable, because it is here compar'd with horrid cruelty, and implied to be worse than it, and more abominable in God's sight, because it more directly and immediately struck at the glory and the purity of the Divine Majesty, by respect unto which all sins are to be measured.

Verse 18. *Was buried in the garden of his own house*—Not in the sepulchre of the kings; probably by his own choice and command, as a lasting testimony of his sincere repentance, and abhorrence of himself for his former crimes.

Verse 21. *He (Amon) walked in the way, &c.*—He reviv'd that idolatry which Manasseh, in the latter end of his reign, had put down. Those who set bad examples, if they repent themselves, cannot be sure that they whom their example

20 And he did *that which was evil* A. M. 3361. in the sight of the LORD, ² as his father Manasseh did. B. C. 643.

21 And he walked in all the way that his father walked in, and served the idols that his father served, and worshipp'd them:

22 And he ² forsook the LORD God of his fathers, and walked not in the way of the LORD.

23 ¶ ² And the servants of Amon B. C. 641. conspired against him, and slew the king in his own house.

24 And the people of the land slew all them that had conspired against King Amon; and the people of the land made Josiah his son king in his stead.

25 ¶ Now the rest of the acts of Amon which he did, *are they not written in the book of the Chronicles of the kings of Judah?*

26 And he was buried in his sepulchre in the garden of Uzza: and ^b Josiah his son reigned in his stead.

* 2 Chron. xxxiii. 21-23.—² Verse 2, &c.—¹ 1 Kings xi. 33. ^a 2 Chron. xxxiii. 24, 25.—^b Matt. i. 10, call'd *Josias*.

has drawn into sin will repent; it is often otherwise.

Verse 23. *The servants of Amon conspired against him*—He having rebelled against God, his own servants rose up against him, and slew him when he had reigned only two years; and his own house, that should have been his castle of defence, was the place of his execution. He had profan'd God's house with his idols, and now God suffer'd his own house to be polluted with his blood. How unrighteous soever they were that did it, God was righteous who suffer'd it to be done.

Verse 24. *The people slew all that had conspired against King Amon*—Thus they clear'd themselves from having any hand in the crime, and did what was incumbent on them, to deter others from the like villanous practices. *And the people made Josiah his son king*—It is probable the conspirators had design'd to put him by, but the people stood by him, and settl'd him on the throne, encouraged, it may be, by the indications he gave, even in his early days, of a good disposition. Now they made a happy change from one of the worst to one of the best of all the kings of Judah. Once more, said God, they shall be tried with a reformation: if that succeed, well; if not, then, after that I will cut them down.

CHAPTER XXII.

The general character of Josiah, 1, 2. He repairs the temple, 3-7. The high-priest brings him the original book of the law, 8-10. He sends to consult Huldah the prophetess, 11-14. The destruction of Jerusalem foretold, 15-20.

A. M. 3363. B. C. 641. **JOSIAH** ^a was eight years old when he began to reign, and he reigned thirty and one years in Jerusalem. And his mother's name was Jedidah, the daughter of Adaiah of ^b Boscath.

2 And he did that which was right in the sight of the LORD, and walked in all the way of David his father, and ^c turned not aside to the right hand or to the left.

B. C. 624. 3 ¶ ^d And it came to pass in the eighteenth year of King Josiah, that the king sent Shaphan the son of Azaliah, the son of Meshullam, the scribe, to the house of the LORD, saying,

4 Go up to Hilkiah the high-priest, that he may sum the silver which is ^e brought into the house

^a 2 Chr. xxxiv. 1.—^b Josh. xv. 39.—^c Deut. v. 32.—^d 2 Chr. xxxiv. 8, &c.—^e Ch. xii. 4.—^f Ch. xii. 9; Psa. lxxxiv. 10.

NOTES ON CHAPTER XXII.

Verses 1, 2. *Josiah was eight years old when he began to reign*—Being young, he had not received any bad impressions from the example of his father and grandfather, but soon saw their errors, and God gave him grace to take warning by them. *He saw his father's sins, and considered, and did not the like*, Ezek. xviii. 14. *He did that which was right in the sight of the Lord*—See the power of divine grace! Although he was born of a wicked father, had neither had a good education given him, nor a good example set him, but many about him, who, no doubt, advised him to tread in his father's steps, and few that gave him any good counsel; yet the grace of God makes him an eminent saint, cuts him off from the wild olive, grafts him into the good olive, and renders him fruitful to God's glory, and the profit of myriads. He walked in a good way, and *turned not aside*, as some of his predecessors had done who began well, *to the right hand or to the left*. There are errors on both hands, but God kept him in the right way: he fell not either into superstition or profaneness.

Verses 3, 4. *In the eighteenth year of King Josiah*—Not of his life, but of his reign, as it is expressed, 2 Chron. xxxiv. 3, 8. *The king sent Shaphan*—The secretary of state; *saying, Go up to Hilkiah, that he may sum the silver*—Take an exact account how much it is, and then dispose of it in the manner following. *Which the keepers of the door have gathered*—Who were priests or Levites, chap. viii. 9; 2 Chron. viii. 14. It seems, they took much the same way of raising the money that Joash took, chap. xii. 9. The people giving by a little at a time, the burden was not felt, and giving by voluntary contribution, it was not complained of. This mo-

of the LORD, which ^f the keepers of the ^g door have gathered of the people: A. M. 3380. B. C. 624.

5 And let them ^h deliver it into the hand of the doers of the work, that have the oversight of the house of the LORD: and let them give it to the doers of the work, which ⁱ is in the house of the LORD, to repair the breaches of the house,

6 Unto carpenters, and builders, and masons, and to buy timber and hewn stone to repair the house.

7 Howbeit, ^j there was no reckoning made with them of the money that was delivered into their hand, because they dealt faithfully.

8 ¶ And Hilkiah the high-priest said unto Shaphan the scribe, ^k I have found the book

¹ Heb. *threshold*.—^g Chap. xii. 11, 12, 14.—^h Chap. xii. 15. ⁱ Deut. xxxi. 24, &c.; 2 Chron. xxxiv. 14, &c.

ney, so collected, he ordered Hilkiah to lay out for the repairs of the temple, verses 5, 6. And now the workmen, as in the days of Joash, acquitted themselves so well, that *there was no reckoning made with them*. This is certainly mentioned to the praise of the workmen, that they gained such a reputation for honesty, but whether to the praise of them that employed them may well be doubted. Many will think it would not have been amiss to have reckoned with them, had it been only that others might be satisfied.

Verse 8. *I have found the book of the law*—This is generally agreed to have been the archetype written by Moses, and by him ordered to be deposited with the ark in the most holy place; but which some pious high-priest had caused to be thus hid in the reign of Ahaz or Manasseh, to prevent its being destroyed with the other copies of it; for it plainly appears, by the tenor of the history, that there were few, if any others, left. But it is much disputed, whether it was the whole Pentateuch, emphatically called *הַתּוֹרָה*, *he torah*, the law, or only *Deuteronomy*, or even barely the 28th, 29th, 30th, and 31st chapters of that book. Josephus, by calling it the sacred books of Moses, seems to declare entirely for the former; as do far the greater number of Jews and Christians. If it be asked how Shaphan, reading to the king, could run over those five books so quickly as to come presently to the blessings and curses; it may be answered, that as their manner was to write upon volumes of a considerable length, which were rolled up round one or two sticks, it might so happen, that these last chapters proved to be on the outside, and that the king, impatient to know the contents of it, might desire to have them read before he had unfolded a round or two. Or

A. M. 3380. of the law in the house of the LORD.
B. C. 624.

And Hilkiah gave the book to Shaphan, and he read it.

9 And Shaphan the scribe came to the king, and brought the king word again, and said, Thy servants have ²gathered the money that was found in the house, and have delivered it into the hand of them that do the work, that have the oversight of the house of the LORD.

² Hebrew,

we may suppose, with the Jews, that Providence directed him to that very part. Something like this we find happened under the gospel, Luke iv. 17; Acts xviii. 28, &c. What appears most surprising is, that all the copies of the Scriptures, which the good King Hezekiah seems to have caused to be written and dispersed about the kingdom, (see Prov. xxv. 1,) should be so soon vanished, that neither Josiah nor the high-priest had ever seen any of them till this one was brought to light. All that can be said in this case is, that Manasseh, during the former part of his reign, had made such a havoc of them, that if there were any left, they were only in a few private hands, who preserved them with the utmost caution and secrecy. See Dodd. and *Univ. Hist.* What a providence was this, that this book of the law was still preserved! And what a providence it is that the whole book of God is preserved to us! If the Holy Scriptures had not been of God, they would not have been in being at this day. God's care of the Bible is a plain proof of his interest in it. We may observe further here, it was a great instance of God's favour, and a token for good to Josiah and his people, that the book of the law was thus seasonably brought to light, to direct and quicken that blessed reformation which Josiah had begun. It is a sign God has mercy in store for a people, when he magnifies his law among them, and makes that honourable, and furnishes them with the means of increasing in Scripture knowledge. The translating of the Scriptures into the vulgar tongues was the glory, strength, and joy of the reformation from popery. And now, (in the year 1811,) the plans laid, and, in a great degree, carried into execution, by the British and Foreign Bible Society, to translate the Scriptures into the vernacular language of every nation upon earth, and to give them to every kindred, and tongue, and people, is at once the honour and the happiness of the present age, and will form one of the most glorious eras of the British empire. It is worthy of observation also, that Josiah and his people were engaged in a good work, namely, repairing the temple, when they found the book of the law. They that do their duty according to their knowledge, shall have their knowledge increased. *To him that hath shall be given.* The book of the law was an abundant recompense for all their care and cost in repairing the temple.

Verses 10, 11. *And Shaphan read it before the*

10 And Shaphan the scribe showed the king, saying, Hilkiah the priest hath delivered me a book. And Shaphan read it before the king.

11 And it came to pass, when the king had heard the words of the book of the law, that he rent his clothes.

12 And the king commanded Hilkiah the priest, and Ahikam the son of Shaphan, and

melted.

king—That is, some part of it, for it cannot be supposed that he read all of it, especially at one time. *When the king heard the words of the book*—The dreadful comminations contained in it against them for the sins still reigning among them; *he rent his clothes*—Being very deeply affected with a sense of the greatness of their guilt, and an apprehension that dreadful judgments hung over them, and were ready to fall upon them. It appears from this, that whether this was the only authentic copy of the law in existence or not, yet the things contained in it were new, both to the king himself, and also to the high-priest. And if even they were strangers to them, how much more may we reasonably suppose the people in general were. It is true, every king was commanded to write a copy of the law with his own hand, (Deut. xvii. 18,) and the law was to be publicly read every seventh year. But, it is probable, these customs had been intermitted for a long time, and that the body of the people had no other way of coming to the knowledge of God's laws, but by word of mouth from one to another; a method which must have been attended with great imperfection and uncertainty. And accordingly we find, that even in the times of pious kings, and public reformation, the people, notwithstanding, continued in the practice of many things directly contrary to the law of Moses, such as sacrificing and burning incense on high places. And they seem to have done these things as if they did not know that they were forbidden. And certainly it must have been very difficult for them, had they been ever so desirous of it, to obtain a knowledge of all the things required of them in the law. It was no marvel that the people were so corrupt, when the book of the law was such a scarce thing, and its contents so little known among them. *Where that vision is not, the people perish.* From hence we may take occasion to reflect with gratitude on the great privileges we possess, in that we live in times when the art of printing has made it comparatively easy, in most Christian countries, at least in our own, for every one to have a copy of the divine law in his hands, to be his constant director, to be consulted on all occasions, and to be the matter of his meditation at all times. An advantage this of inestimable value, if it be made a right use of.

Verses 12, 13. *Asahiah, a servant of the king's*—Who most constantly waited upon the king's person; otherwise all of those here mentioned were the king's servants. *Go ye; inquire of the Lord for me, and*

A. M. 3380. ¹ Achbor the son of ³ Michaiah, and
B. C. 624. Shaphan the scribe, and Asahiah a
servant of the king's, saying,

13 Go ye, inquire of the LORD for me, and for the people, and for all Judah, concerning the words of this book that is found: for great is ¹ the wrath of the LORD that is kindled against us, because our fathers have not hearkened unto the words of this book, to do according unto all that which is written concerning us.

14 So Hilkiah the priest, and Ahikam, and Achbor, and Shaphan, and Asahiah, went unto Huldah the prophetess, the wife of Shalum the son of ^m Tikvah, the son of ⁴ Harhas, keeper of the ⁵ wardrobe; (now she dwelt in

¹ Abdou, 2 Chron. xxxiv. 20.—³ Or, Micah.—¹ Deuteron. xix. 27.—^m Tikvah, 2 Chron. xxxiv. 22.—⁴ Or, Harrah.
⁵ Heb. garments.

for the people, &c.—What we shall do to appease his wrath, and whether the curses here threatened must come upon us without remedy, or whether there be hope in Israel concerning the prevention of them. For great is the wrath of the Lord, because our fathers, &c.—In the glass of the divine law, he saw the sins of his people to be more numerous and more heinous than he had before seen them, and more exceeding sinful. And he saw that the wrath of God was kindled in a high degree against the whole nation, not only for the sins of the present generation, but because that from their first coming out of Egypt to this time, they had been almost in the constant habit of disregarding and violating the divine laws, and that in the most notorious and flagrant instances.

Verse 14. So Hilkiah the priest, &c., went unto Huldah the prophetess—This is the only mention we have of this prophetess; and certainly it tends much to her honour that she was consulted on this important occasion, when, it is supposed, that not only Jeremiah, but Zephaniah also, was a prophet in Judah. But Zephaniah, perhaps, might not at that time have commenced a prophet; because, although we are told he prophesied in the days of Josiah, (Zeph. i. 1.) yet we are nowhere informed in what part of Josiah's reign he entered on the prophetic office. And Jeremiah might then be absent from Jerusalem, at his house at Anathoth, or some more remote part of the kingdom; so that, considering Josiah's haste and impatience, there might be no other proper person to apply to than this prophetess. And the king and his ministers, who went to inquire, being well assured of her fidelity in delivering the counsel of God, concluded rightly, that it was much more to be regarded what message God sent, than by whom it was conveyed.—See Poole and Dodd. Now she dwelt in the college—Where the sons of the prophets, and others who devoted themselves to the

Jerusalem ⁶ in the college;) and they ^{A. M. 3390}
communed with her. ^{B. C. 624.}

15 ¶ And she said unto them, Thus saith the LORD God of Israel, Tell the man that sent you to me,

16 Thus saith the LORD, Behold, ^a I will bring evil upon this place, and upon the inhabitants thereof, even all the words of the book which the king of Judah hath read:

17 ^o Because they have forsaken me, and have burned incense unto other gods, that they might provoke me to anger with all the works of their hands; therefore my wrath shall be kindled against this place, and shall not be quenched.

18 But to ^p the king of Judah which sent you

^a Or, in the second part.—^a Deuteronomy xxix. 27; Daniel ix. 11, 12, 13, 14.—^o Deuteron. xxix. 25, 26, 27.—^p 2 Chron. xxiv. 26, &c.

study of God's word, used to meet and discourse of the things of God, and receive the instructions of their teachers.

Verses 15, 16. Tell the man that sent you—She uses no compliments. Even kings, though gods to us, are men to God, and shall be so dealt with: for with him there is no respect of persons. Thus saith the Lord, I will bring evil upon this place, &c.—She lets him know, both what judgments God had in store for Judah and Jerusalem, and what mercy was laid up for him. Even all the words—According to all the words, of the book—All the plagues threatened in Deut. xxviii., and in other places. The Scriptures must be fulfilled. They that will not be bound by the precept, shall be bound by the penalty. And God will be found no less terrible to the ungodly, than his word makes him to be. Take warning in time, O impenitent sinner! whosoever thou art.

Verse 17. Because they have forsaken me—The God of their fathers, and the only living and true God. And burned incense to other gods—Imaginary beings of their own devising, or the works of their hands—Gods which they themselves have made. To provoke me to anger—As if they designed this, and worshipped these vanities for no other end but to provoke me; for in so doing they said, in effect, there is as much reason and propriety in worshipping the stock of a tree, as in worshipping Jehovah: and to worship these works of our hands, will be of as much service to us as to worship the author and end of all things! Therefore my wrath shall be kindled against this place—And what is hell itself but the fire of God's wrath kindled against sinners? Observe the degree and duration of it. It is so kindled, that it shall not be quenched. The decree is gone forth, and it is now too late to think of preventing it; for the iniquity of Jerusalem shall not be purged by sacrifice or offering. Thus hell is unquenchable fire.

A. M. 3380. to inquire of the LORD, thus shall ye
B. C. 624. say to him, Thus saith the LORD God of Israel, *As touching* the words which thou hast heard;

19 Because thy heart was tender, and thou hast humbled thyself before the LORD, when thou heardest what I spake against this place, and against the inhabitants thereof, that they should become a desolation and a curse, and

¹ Psalm li. 17; Isaiah lvii. 15.—² 1 Kings xxi. 29.—³ Levit. xxvi. 31, 32.

Verse 19. *Because thy heart was tender*—Here are four tokens of true repentance and conversion to God in Josiah: 1st, Tenderness, or softness of heart, in opposition to that hardness which arises from unbelief of God's declarations and threatenings: he trembled at God's word: he was grieved for the dishonour done to God by the sins of the people: and he was afraid of the judgments of God, which he saw coming on Jerusalem. This is tenderness of heart; and proceeded in Josiah from his faith in God's word. 2d, Great humility: he abased himself before the divine majesty, conscious of his own sinfulness and guilt before God, and unworthiness of the goodness God had shown him. These two qualities were internal. The two others were outward tokens of this inward sense of things; namely, rending his clothes, and weeping before God, for his own and the public offences, followed by all possible endeavours to effect a reformation in the people.

Verse 20. *Behold, therefore, I will gather thee to thy fathers*—It is justly observed here by Henry, that the saints in those days had doubtless a comfortable prospect of happiness on the other side of death, otherwise the being gathered to their fathers

hast rent thy clothes, and wept before me; I also have heard thee, saith the LORD.

20 Behold, therefore, I will gather thee unto thy fathers, and thou shalt be gathered into thy grave in peace; and thine eyes shall not see all the evil which I will bring upon this place. And they brought the king word again.

¹ Jeremiah xxvi. 6; xlv. 22.—² Psalm xxxvii. 37; Isaiah lvii. 1, 2.

would not have been so often made the matter of a promise as we find it was. Josiah could not prevail to prevent the judgment itself, but God promised him he should not live to see it; which, especially considering that he died in the midst of his days, before he was forty years of age, would have been but a small reward for his eminent piety, if there had not been another world, in which he should be abundantly recompensed, Heb. xi. 16. *When the righteous is taken away from the evil to come, he enters into peace*, Isa. lviii. 1, 2. This is promised to Josiah here, *Thou shalt go to thy grave in peace*—Which refers not to the manner of his death, for he was killed in battle, but to the time of it; it was a little time before the captivity in Babylon, that great trouble, in comparison with which other troubles were as nothing: so that he might be truly said to die in peace, that did not live to share in that. He died in the love and favour of God, which secures such a peace as no circumstances of dying, no, not dying in the field of war, could alter the nature of, or break in upon. They may well be said to die in peace, who, after their dissolution here, are numbered among the children of God, and have their lot among the saints.

CHAPTER XXIII.

Josiah reads the law to all the people, 1, 2. Renews the covenant between God and them, 3. Cleanses the temple, 4. Roots out idolatry, 5-20. Keeps a solemn passover, 21-23. Clears the land of witches, 24. A general commendation of him, 25. His untimely death, 26-30. The reigns of Jehoahaz and Jehoiakim, 31-37.

A. M. 3380. AND the king sent, and they
B. C. 624. gathered unto him all the

elders of Judah and of Jerusalem.

¹ 2 Chronicles

xxiv. 29, 30, &c.

NOTES ON CHAPTER XXIII.

Verse 1. *The king sent and gathered unto him all the elders*—Although he had received a message from God, that there was no preventing the ruin of Jerusalem, and that he only should deliver his own soul; yet he does not therefore sit down in despair, and resolve to do nothing for his country, because he could not do all he would. But he will endeavour

to do his duty, and then leave the event to God. He knew, if any thing could prevent, delay, or alleviate the threatened ruin, it must be a public reformation. He therefore makes preparations for this, by summoning a general assembly of the magistrates, or representatives of the people, with the priests and prophets, the ordinary and extraordinary ministers of God: that, these all joining in it,

A. M. 3380. 2 And the king went up into the house of the LORD, and all the men of Judah and all the inhabitants of Jerusalem with him, and the priests, and the prophets, and all the people, ¹ both small and great: and he read in their ears all the words of the book of the covenant ^b which was found in the house of the LORD.

3 ¶ And the king ^c stood by a pillar, and made a covenant before the LORD, to walk after the LORD, and to keep his commandments, and his testimonies, and his statutes, with all *their* heart, and all *their* soul, to perform the words of this covenant that were written in this book. And all the people stood to the covenant.

¹ Heb. from small even unto great.—^b Chap. xxii. 8.—^c Chap. xi. 14, 17.—^d Chap. xxi. 3, 7.—^e Heb. caused to cease.

what was done might become a national act, and so be the more likely to prevent national judgments; and that so many principal persons advising and assisting in it, the whole business might be transacted with more solemnity, and such as were against it might be discouraged from making any opposition.

Verse 2. *The king went up into the house of the Lord*—For as this great meeting was called for a religious purpose, it was to be conducted in a religious manner; and whatever was done in it was to be done as in the presence of God. *And all the men of Judah*—A very great number of them; for it cannot be supposed that the court of the Lord's house could contain all the inhabitants of the land at once. *And the prophets*—Either Jeremiah, Zephaniah, Urijah, Huldah, or the sons of the prophets. *The people, both small and great*—High and low, rich and poor, young and old: for persons of all ranks, conditions, and ages, were present. *And he read in their ears, &c.*—Josiah himself; for he did not think it beneath him to be a reader, any more than Solomon did to be a preacher, and David even a door-keeper, in the house of God. All people are concerned to know the Scriptures, and all in authority to spread the knowledge of them.

Verse 3. *The king stood by a pillar*—Of which see on chap. xi. 14. *And made a covenant before the Lord*—The king himself was the first and principal covenanter, who publicly and solemnly declared his consent to this covenant, to set the elders, priests, and people an example, and to assure them not only of his protection, but of all the furtherance his power could give them in their obedience. *And all the people stood to the covenant*—They declared their consent to it, and their concurrence with the king in that act, which possibly they did by standing up, as the king himself stood when he took it. It is of good use, with all possible solemnity, to oblige ourselves to our duty: and he that bears an honest heart, does not startle at assurances.

A. M. 3390. 4 ¶ And the king commanded Hilkiah the high-priest, and the priests of the second order, and the keepers of the door, to bring forth out of the temple of the LORD all the vessels that were made for Baal, and for ^d the grove, and for all the host of heaven: and he burned them without Jerusalem in the fields of Kidron, and carried the ashes of them unto Beth-el.

5 And he ² put down ³ the idolatrous priests, whom the kings of Judah had ordained to burn incense in the high places in the cities of Judah, and in the places round about Jerusalem; them also that burned incense unto Baal, to the sun, and to the moon, and to the ⁴ planets, and to ^e all the host of heaven.

² Heb. chemarim, Hos. x. 5; Foretold, Zeph. i. 4.—³ Or, twelve signs, or, constellations.—⁴ Chap. xxi. 3.

Verse 4. *The king commanded Hilkiah and the priests of the second order*—Either those two who were next in degree to the high-priest, and in case of sickness were to manage his work; or the heads of the twenty-four courses which David had appointed. *To bring forth out of the temple*—Or to take care they should be brought forth. *All the vessels made for Baal*—So that, even in the house of the Lord, the sacred temple built by Solomon, and dedicated to the honour and worship of the God of Israel, were found vessels, and all manner of utensils, for the worship of Baal, for the grove, and all the host of heaven—It appears, therefore, that although Josiah had suppressed the worship of idols, yet the provisions made for that worship were carefully preserved by some persons in power, even in the temple itself, to be used again whenever the present restraint should be taken off: nay, even the image of the grove, probably Ashtaroth or Venus, was yet kept standing in the temple. How Josiah could suffer all this, till the eighteenth year of his reign, is difficult to say; perhaps it was done without his knowledge. He now, however, gives orders that all these instruments of idolatry should be burned, in the fields adjoining to the brook Kidron; and that the ashes of them should be carried out of his kingdom to Beth-el: in token of his abhorrence of every species of idolatry, and to pollute and disgrace that place which had been the chief seat and throne of it.

Verse 5. *He put down the idolatrous priests*—כמרים, chemarim. Their particular business, as appears from this place, was to burn incense. Hence it is thought by some, that the faithful Jews gave them this name by way of contempt, as being continually scorched by their fumigating fires. But, according to Bishop Patrick, they were so called from being clothed in black: for the Egyptians, as well as many other pagan nations, made use of black garments when they sacrificed to the infernal

A. M. 3380. 6 And he brought out the ^fgrove
B. C. 624. from the house of the LORD, without
Jerusalem, unto the brook Kidron, and burned
it at the brook Kidron, and stamped *it* small
to powder, and cast the powder thereof upon
^gthe graves of the children of the people.

7 And he brake down the houses ^hof the
sodomites that *were* by the house of the LORD,
ⁱwhere the women wove ^shangings for the
grove.

8 And he brought all the priests out of the

^f Chapter xxi. 7.—^g 2 Chron. xxxiv. 4.—^h 1 Kings xiv. 24 ;
xv. 12.—ⁱ Ezek. xvi. 16.

deities: in opposition to which the Jewish priests
were clothed with white at their sacrifices.

Verse 6. *And cast the powder thereof upon the
graves*—By the law, a ceremonial uncleanness was
contracted by the touch of a grave, so that by cast-
ing these ashes here, he declared them most impure,
and that none could touch them without making
themselves unclean thereby. The Chaldee renders
it, *He cast it into the graves*, to signify that he
would have all idolatry buried out of his sight, as a
loathsome thing. *Of the children of the people*—
The common people, whose graves were made to-
gether in some common place, which was generally
accounted very impure and contemptible, and there-
fore a fit place for this filth to be thrown into. But
the Hebrew here is more properly rendered, *Of that
people*; that is, those idolatrous people, as it is ex-
pressed 2 Chron. xxxiv. 4.

Verse 7. *He brake down the houses of the sodom-
ites*—The name sometimes given to the most infam-
ous of all prostitutes, who exposed their bodies to
be abused contrary to nature, in honour of those
filthy deities whom they worshipped. Their houses
were near the temple, and the persons themselves
were dedicated to impurity, and, that they might
commit their abominations with the greater licen-
tiousness, they had women appointed to make them
tents, wherein they were wont to retire upon these
detestable occasions.—Calmet. Thus corporal and
spiritual whoredoms went together, and the *vile af-
fections* to which they were given up were the pun-
ishment of their vain imaginations. They that dis-
honoured their God were justly left thus to dis-
honour themselves. *Where the women wove hang-
ings for the grove*—For the idols worshipped in the
grove, or rather for *Asherah*, or *Ashtaroth*, an idol
so called, as observed before, and probably the same
with the Grecian Venus. These hangings might
possibly be *curtains* to draw before the idol, to pre-
serve it from defilement, or to gain more reverence
to it: or *garments* for it, or for the priests or priest-
esses belonging to it. But the Hebrew word בתי,
bathim, here used, properly means *houses*; which,
most likely, were either little chapels or shrines
made of woven work, like those mentioned Acts
xix. 24, which were made of silver, within which

A. M. 3380. cities of Judah, and defiled the high ^{A. M. 3380.}
B. C. 624. places where the priests had burnt ^{B. C. 624.}
incense, from ^kGeba to Beer-sheba, and brake
down the high places of the gates that *were* in
the entering in of the gate of Joshua the
governor of the city, which *were* on a man's
left hand at the gate of the city.

9 ^lNevertheless, the priests of the high places
came not up to the altar of the LORD in Jeru-
salem, ^mbut they did eat of the unleavened
bread among their brethren.

^h Heb. *houses*.—^k 1 Kings xv. 22.—^l Ezekiel xlv. 10-14.
^m 1 Samuel ii. 36.

were representations of the idol; or they were *tents*,
encompassing the image, where the worshippers
committed all manner of lewdness, and that in or
near the house of the Lord, in an impudent defi-
ance of the holiness of God and his temple. Well
might the apostle call these kinds of worship *abo-
minable idolatries!* Can any wonder that wrath,
not to be quenched, was kindled against this city
and people?

Verse 8. *He brought all the priests*—Belonging
to the high places following, whether such as wor-
shipped idols, or such as worshipped God in those
forbidden places. *Out of the cities of Judah*—That
they might not continue to corrupt the people. *And
defiled the high places*—Casting dead carcasses
there, and other such like unclean things, and thus
making them receptacles of impurity, and burning
dead men's bones upon the altars that were there.
From Geba—The northern border of the kingdom
of Judah. *To Beer-sheba*—The southern border;
that is, throughout the whole country. *And brake
down the high places of the gates*—Dedicated to
their tutelary gods, whom their idolatrous kings,
after the manner of the heathen, owned for the
protectors of their city and habitations. These
places seem to have been erected at the gates, in
order that all who entered or went out of the city
might pay some kind of adoration to them. *In the
gate of Joshua, the governor of the city*—This cir-
cumstance is mentioned to show Josiah's great zeal
and impartiality in rooting out all monuments of
idolatry, without any respect unto those great per-
sons who were concerned in them.

Verse 9. *Nevertheless, the priests of the high
places*—Who had worshipped the true God there.
*Came not up to the altar of the Lord in Jerusa-
lem*—Were not suffered to come thither to exercise
their priestly office, as a just punishment for their
joining in and contributing to the corruption of
God's worship, and the transgression of so plain
and positive a law of God as that in Deut. xii. 11;
which conduct was much worse in them than in
the people, as they had more knowledge to discern
the will of God, and were under greater obligations
to observe it. *But they did eat of the unleavened
bread*—Of the meat-offerings allotted to the priests,

A. M. 3390. 10 And he defiled ^aTopheth, which
B. C. 624. is in ^othe valley of the children of
Hinnom, ^pthat no man might make his son
or his daughter to pass through the fire to
Molech.

11 And he took away the horses that the
kings of Judah had given to the sun, at the
entering in of the house of the LORD, by the
chamber of Nathan-melech the ^qchamberlain,

^a Isaiah xxx. 33; Jer. vii. 31; xix. 6, 11, 13.—^o Josh. xv. 8.
^p Lev. xviii. 21; Deut. xviii. 10; Ezek. xxiii. 37, 39.

wherein there was to be no leaven, (Lev. ii. 4-11,) and consequently of other provisions belonging to the priests, which are comprehended under this one kind. Thus the king mixed mercy with severity, and they were put into the condition of those priests who had corporal blemishes, (Lev. xxi. 17-22,) who might not offer the bread of their God, but might eat the bread of their God, both of the most holy and the holy: they were shut out from spiritual services, but allowed necessary provisions.

Verse 10. *He defiled Topheth*—By throwing different kinds of filth and dead carcasses into it, and making it the burying-place of the city. Topheth was a place very near Jerusalem, where was the image of Molech, to whom some sacrificed their children, burning them in the fire, as the reader may see in the note on Lev. xviii. 21; and to whom others, as many able interpreters think, only dedicated them, by making them pass between two fires, or by waving them, or making them jump over a fire. It is supposed to be called *Topheth*, from *toph*, a drum; because they beat drums at the burning of their children, that their shrieks might not be heard. This place, near Jerusalem, was also called the valley of the sons of Hinnom, (2 Chron. xxviii. 3.) from the yelling of the sacrificed infants. Thus Milton calls Molech:

— Horrid king, besmeard with blood
Of human sacrifice, and parents' tears,
Though for the noise of drums, and timbrels loud,
Their children's cries unheard, that pass'd through
fire
To his grim idol. *Par. Lost*, book i. l. 392.

Verse 11. *And he took away*—Hebrew וישב, *vajshbath*, he put down, or made to cease; the horses that the kings of Judah had given to the sun—That is had consecrated to the sun. It appears, by the testimony of many authors, that among several nations horses were dedicated to the sun, as hawks and some other creatures were, because of the swiftness of their motions. Thus the ancient Persians consecrated white horses and chariots to the sun, as Xenophon testifies, and with them were wont to adorn their processions. See Hyde's *Relig. Vet. Persar.* "We can see no reason, therefore," says Dr. Dodd, referring to the *Universal Hist.* and *Boch. Hieroz.* "why so many learned commentators

which was in the suburbs, and burn- A. M. 3390.
ed the chariots of the sun with fire. B. C. 624.

12 And the altars that were ^qon the top of the upper chamber of Ahaz, which the kings of Judah had made, and the altars which ^rManasseh had made in the two courts of the house of the LORD, did the king beat down, and ⁷brake them down from thence, and cast the dust of them into the brook Kidron.

^q Or, eunuch, or, officer.—^q Jer. xix. 13; Zeph. i. 5.—^r Chap. xxi. 5.—⁷ Or, ran from thence.

should scruple to suppose that the Jews had adopted this, among other far worse heathenish idolatries; especially considering how soon the Prophet Amos, and from him St. Stephen, charged them with having carried about the tabernacle of Molech, or the sun, and the star of their god Remphan. What convinces us further that these were real chariots, drawn by horses, and bearing some image of the sun, is, that the text expressly says, that Josiah did not burn the chariots and horses, as he would have done if they had been only carved and painted, but that he took away the horses, and burned the chariots. Bochart supposes that these horses and chariots were designed to carry the king and his great officers out at the east gate of the city every morning, to salute and adore the sun, at his coming above the horizon, according to the custom of the Persian idolaters." At the entering in of the house of the Lord—By the gate of the outward court of the temple. By the chamber of the chamberlain—Or officer, to whom the care of these horses was committed. Which was in the suburbs—Of the temple; in certain outward buildings belonging to the temple. Was it to defy or affront the Lord, that they thus brought the objects and instruments of their various idolatries as near as possible to his house, and some of them even into the courts of it?

Verse 12. *The altars on the top of the upper chamber, &c.*—"Read," says Mr. Locke, "the altars on the house-top." According to Jeremiah, chap. xxxii. 29, they were so mad upon their idols, that they were not content with their numerous public high places and altars, but made others upon their house-tops for the worship of Baal and others of their false gods. And the altars which Manasseh had made in the two courts, &c.—We learn from 2 Chron. xxxiii. 13-15, that when Manasseh repented he took away all the altars he had built in the mount of the house of the Lord, and in Jerusalem; and it is probable those in the court of the priests, and in that of the people, were then removed; but, it seems, Amon set them up again in the very place where Manasseh had erected them, and therefore they are here called his altars. And cast the dust of them into the brook Kidron—To show his detestation of them, and to abolish the very remembrance of them.

A. M. 3380. 13 And the high places that were before Jerusalem, which were on the right hand of ⁸ the mount of Corruption, which ^a Solomon the king of Israel had builded for Ashtoreth the abomination of the Zidonians, and for Chemosh the abomination of the Moabites, and for Milcom the abomination of the children of Ammon, did the king defile.

14 And he ¹ brake in pieces the ⁹ images, and cut down the groves, and filled their places with the bones of men.

15 ¶ Moreover, the altar that was at Beth-el, and the high place ^a which Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who made Israel to sin, had made, both that altar and the high place he brake down, and burned the high place, and stamped

^a That is, the mount of Olives.—¹ 1 Kings xi. 7.—¹ Exodus xxiii. 24; Deut. vii. 5, 25.—⁹ Heb. statues.

Verse 13. *The high places on the right hand of the mount of Corruption*—That is, the mount of Olives, (1 Kings xi. 7,) called the mount of Corruption, for the gross idolatry there practised. *Which Solomon had builded for Ashtoreth, &c.*—Not the same individual altars; which, doubtless, either Solomon, upon his repentance, or some other of Josiah's predecessors, had taken away, but other altars built by Manasseh or Amon, which, because erected by Solomon's example, and for the same use, and in the same place, are called by his name: this brand is left by the Holy Ghost upon his name and memory, as a just punishment of that abominable practice, and a means to deter others from the like. *The abomination of the Zidonians*—The idol, so called, because it was abominable, and made them abominable to God. *Did the king defile*—By dead men's bones and other unclean things.

Verse 14. *And filled their places*—The places of the groves; *with the bones of men*—Of the idolatrous priests, which he caused to be taken out of their graves, verse 18. As he carried the ashes of the images to the graves, to mingle them with dead men's bones, so he carried dead men's bones to the places where the images had been, that both ways idolatry might be rendered loathsome. Dead men and dead gods were indeed much alike, and fittest to go together.

Verse 15. *The altar that was at Beth-el he brake down*—Probably this city was now under the kingdom of Judah, to which it was added by Abijah long before this time. And it is probable, since the ten tribes were carried away, many cities had put themselves under the protection of Judah. The golden calf, it seems, was gone; but Josiah would leave no remains of that idolatry.

Verse 16. *As Josiah turned himself*—His care and zeal were so great that he would not trust his officers with these things, but would see them done with his own eyes. *He spied the sepulchres that*

it small to powder, and burned the ^a man of God proclaimed, who proclaimed these words. A. M. 3380. B. C. 624.

16 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 burned them upon the altar, and polluted it, according to the ² word of the LORD which the man of God proclaimed, who proclaimed these words.

17 Then he said, What title is that that I see? And the men of the city told him, *It is* ¹ the sepulchre of the man of God, which came from Judah, and proclaimed these things that thou hast done against the altar of Beth-el.

18 And he said, Let him alone; let no man move his bones. So they let his bones ¹⁰ alone,

^a 1 Kings xii. 28, 33.—² 1 Kings xiii. 2.—¹ 1 Kings xiii. 1, 30.—¹⁰ Heb. to escape.

were in the mount—It is not said whose sepulchres they were, but it is probable they were those of the idolatrous priests, (for, 2 Chron. xxxiv. 5, he is said to have burned their bones,) and of the false prophets and great men who had been instruments to promote Jeroboam's idolatry, and who were so attached to their altar at Beth-el, that they were desirous to have their bones laid near it. *And burned them, &c., according to the word which the man of God proclaimed*—Who foretold, three hundred and sixty-two years before, that these very things should be done by a king called Josiah, 1 Kings xiii. 2. God always foresees, and has sometimes foretold as certain, that which yet to us seems most contingent. Of this we have here a remarkable instance. No word of God shall fall to the ground!

Verse 17. *He said, What title is that that I see?*—It was the custom then, as it is now, to set up little pillars or stones by or upon the graves of the higher sort of men, upon which the names of the deceased persons, and some remarkable passages relating to them, were engraven. The king observing a stone or pillar of this kind more eminent than the rest, with an inscription upon it not legible, inquired whose title it was. *And the men of the city told him*—That is, some of the old inhabitants who had escaped the captivity; and not any of those new-comers, whom the king of Assyria had sent thither. For these could have given no account of the ancient history of the Israelites; neither can we suppose that the sepulchre itself, after so many years standing, could have been distinguishable, had not some pious person or other, with an intent to perpetuate the fact, taken care to preserve and repair it. See the note on 1 Kings xiii. 1.

Verse 18. *He said, Let no man move his bones*—It is pertinently observed by Joh. Wolfius, that if pious persons, in those days, had had the same opinion about relics which has long been prevalent in the Church of Rome, the king would not have ordered

A. M. 3381. with the bones of ^a the prophet that
B. C. 623. came out of Samaria.

19 ¶ And all the houses also of the high places that *were* ^a in the cities of Samaria, which the kings of Israel had made to provoke the **LORD** to anger, Josiah took away, and did to them according to all the acts that he had done in Beth-el.

20 And ^b he ¹¹ slew ^c all the priests of the high places that *were* there upon the altars, and ^d burned men's bones upon them, and returned to Jerusalem.

21 ¶ And the king commanded all the people, saying, ^e Keep the passover unto the **LORD** your God, ^f as it is written in the book of this covenant.

22 Surely ^g there was not holden such a passover from the days of the judges that judged

Israel, nor in all the days of the kings A. M. 3381.
of Israel, nor of the kings of Judah; B. C. 623.

23 But in the eighteenth year of King Josiah, *wherein* this passover was holden to the **LORD** in Jerusalem.

24 ¶ Moreover, ^h the *workers with familiar-spirits*, and the wizards, and the ¹² images, and the idols, and all the abominations that were spied in the land of Judah and in Jerusalem, did Josiah put away, that he might perform the words of ⁱ the law which were written in the book that Hilkiah the priest found in the house of the **LORD**.

25 ^k And like unto him was there no king before him, that turned to the **LORD** with all his heart, and with all his soul, and with all his might, according to all the law of Moses; neither after him arose there *any* like him.

^a 1 Kings xiii. 31.—^b 2 Chron. xxxiv. 6, 7.—^c 1 Kings xiii. 2.
¹¹ Or, *sacrificed*.—^d Exod. xxii. 20; 1 Kings xviii. 40; Chap. xi. 18.—^e 2 Chronicles xxxiv. 5.—^f 2 Chronicles xxxv. 1.

^g Exodus xii. 3; Leviticus xxiii. 5; Num. ix. 2; Deut. xvi. 2.
^h 2 Chron. xxxv. 18; His 18th Year ending.—ⁱ Chap. xxi. 6.
¹² Or, *teraphim*, Gen. xxxi. 19.—^k Lev. xix. 31; xx. 27; Deut. xviii. 11.—^l Chap. xviii. 5.

his bones to remain quiet and undisturbed, but would have put them into golden boxes, and carried them to Jerusalem, to be there regarded with religious, if not idolatrous veneration by the people.

Verse 20. *He slew all the priests of the high places*—By this relation it appears, that after the departure of the king of Assyria, divers of the Israelites, who had retired to other parts, and kept themselves out of the conqueror's hands, returned together with their priests to their own land, and to their old trade, worshipping idols; to whom, peradventure, they ascribed this their deliverance from that judgment which Jehovah had brought upon them. *And burned men's bones upon them*—According to that famous prophecy, 1 Kings xiii. 1, 2.

Verses 21. *The king commanded, saying, Keep the passover, &c.*—Having abolished false worship, he now endeavours to set up the true worship of the true God. Thus he differed greatly from Jehu, who, when he had destroyed the worship of Baal, took no heed to walk in the commandments and ordinances of God. Josiah considered that we must not only *cease to do evil*, but also *learn to do well*, and that the way to keep out all abominable customs is to keep up all instituted ordinances. He therefore commanded all the people to keep the passover, which was not only a memorial of their deliverance out of Egypt, but a token of their being dedicated to him: who brought them out, and of their communion with him. *As it is written in this book of the covenant*—This book which he had found, wherein is contained the covenant made between God and Israel, and the terms of it.

Verse 22. *Surely there was not holden such a passover, &c.*—Celebrated with such solemn care, and great preparation, and numerous sacrifices, and

universal joy of all good men; which was much the greater, because of their remembrance of the former wicked and miserable times under Manasseh and Amon; and the good hopes they now had of the happy establishment of their nation, and the true religion; and of the prevention of God's judgments denounced against them. *From the days of the judges*—Or, of Samuel, the last of the judges; as it is expressed 2 Chron. xxxv. 18. None of the kings had taken such care to prepare themselves, the priests, and people, and so accurately to observe all the rites, and diligently to purge out all uncleanness, and to renew their covenant with God. And undoubtedly God was pleased to recompense their zeal in destroying idolatry, with uncommon tokens of his presence and favour. All this concurred to make it such a passover as had not been even in the days of Hezekiah. For in his passover many communicated who were not cleansed according to the purification of the sanctuary, and the Levites were permitted to do the work of the priests.

Verse 24. *Workers with familiar spirits, and wizards*—Of which see notes on Deut. xviii. 10, 11; Lev. xix. 31; and xx. 27. *And the images*—Hebrew, the *teraphim*, images which were very ancient among idolaters. *And idols*—Other kinds of images. *And all the abominations that were spied*—All the instruments and monuments of idolatry that were discovered, were destroyed as God had commanded; not only such as were in the place of worship, but such as their priests or zealots had removed, and endeavoured to hide.

Verse 25. *Like unto him was there no king before him*—For his diligent study in God's law, and his exact care, and unwearied industry, and fervent zeal, in rooting out idolaters, and all kinds and appearances

A. M. 3394. 26 ¶ Notwithstanding, the LORD
B. C. 610. turned not from the fierceness of his great wrath, wherewith his anger was kindled against Judah, ¹because of all the ¹³provocations that Manasseh had provoked him withal.

27 And the LORD said, I will remove Judah also out of my sight, as ^mI have removed Israel, and will cast off this city Jerusalem which I have chosen, and the house of which I said, ⁿMy name shall be there.

28 ¶ Now the rest of the acts of Josiah, and all that he did, *are* they not written in the book of the Chronicles of the kings of Judah?

¹ Chapter xxi. 11, 12; xxiv. 3, 4; Jer. xv. 4.—¹³ Heb. *angers*.
^m Chapter xvii. 18, 20; xviii. 11; xxi. 13.—ⁿ 1 Kings viii. 29; ix. 3; Chap. xxi. 4, 7.

of idolatry, not only in Judah, but in Israel also; and in the establishment of the true religion in all his dominions, and in the conforming of his own life, and his people's too, (as far as he could,) to the holy law of God: though Hezekiah might excel him in some particulars.

Verse 26. *Notwithstanding, the Lord turned not, &c.*—Because, though the king was most hearty in his repentance, and acceptable to God, and therefore the judgment was delayed for his time; yet the people were in general corrupt, and secretly averse from Josiah's pious reformation, as appears from the complaints of the prophets, especially Jeremiah and Zephaniah, against them; and by the following history, wherein we see, that as soon as ever Josiah was gone, his children, and the princes, and the people, suddenly and greedily returned to their former abominations. *Because of all the provocations, &c.*—The sins of Manasseh, and of the men of his generation, who concurred with him in his idolatrous and cruel practices, are justly punished in this generation: because of God's sovereign right of punishing sinners when he sees fit; because of that public declaration of God, that he would visit the iniquity of the fathers upon the children; and principally, because these men had never sincerely repented of their own nor of their fathers' sins.

Verse 27. *I will cast off this city, and the house of which I said, My name shall be there*—God promised upon conditions, in sundry places expressed, that his name should be there. These conditions they broke, and therefore God justly made them to know his breach of promise.

Verse 29. *In his days Pharaoh-nechoh, king of Egypt, went up, &c.*—According to Herodotus, Nechoh was the proper name of this monarch, Pharaoh being the general name of all their kings, as has been before observed in these notes. He tells us he was the son and successor of Psammeticus, king of Egypt, and a man of a bold and enterprising spirit; that he made an attempt to join the Nile and the Red sea, by drawing a canal from the one to the other; that,

29 ¶ ° In his days Pharaoh-nechoh A. M. 3394.
king of Egypt went up against the B. C. 610. king of Assyria to the river Euphrates: and King Josiah went against him; and he slew him at ^pMegiddo, when he ^qhad seen him.

30 ^r And his servants carried him in a chariot dead from Megiddo, and brought him to Jerusalem, and buried him in his own sepulchre. And ^sthe people of the land took Jehoahaz the son of Josiah, and anointed him, and made him king in his father's stead.

31 ¶ ¹⁴ Jehoahaz was twenty and three years old when he began to reign; and he reigned three months in Jerusalem. And his mother's

^o 2 Chron. xxxv. 20.—^p Zech. xii. 11.—^q Chapter xiv. 8.
^r 2 Chron. xxxv. 24.—^s 2 Chron. xxxvi. 1.—¹⁴ Called *Shaltum*, 1 Chron. iii. 15; Jer. xxii. 11.

though he failed in this design, yet, by sending a fleet from the Red sea, through the straits of Babel-mandel, he discovered the coast of Africa, and in this expedition to the Euphrates, intended to destroy the united force of the Babylonians and Medes, and thereby to obtain the whole monarchy of Asia. See *Prideaux's Connect.*, and *Calmel's Dict.* *Went up against the king of Assyria*—The king of Babylon, who, having formerly rebelled against the Assyrian, had now conquered him, as appears by the course of the sacred, and the concurrence of profane history; and therefore is here and elsewhere called the Assyrian, and the king of Assyria, because now he was the head of that empire. *To the river Euphrates*—Against Carchemish by Euphrates, as it is expressed 2 Chron. xxxv. 20, which the Assyrian had taken from Pharaoh's confederates, who therefore sends forces against the Assyrian, that he might both help them and secure himself. *Josiah went against him*—Either to defend his own country from Pharaoh's incursions, or to assist the king of Babylon, with whom he seems to have been in league. *And he slew him at Megiddo*—Gave him his death-wound there, though he died not till he came to Jerusalem. *When he had seen him*—When he fought with him, or in the first onset. Megiddo was a city in the half-tribe of Manasseh, not far from the Mediterranean sea. It does not appear that Josiah had any clear call to engage in this war; possibly he received his death-wound as a punishment of his rashness. Mr. Locke, however, observes, that from the time of the carrying away of Manasseh, the kings of Judah were under the protection of the Babylonians; and that Josiah, being most piously observant of his faith, would not grant a passage to this enemy of the king of Babylon, and therefore went against him.

Verse 30. *His servants carried him in a chariot dead from Megiddo*—That is, mortally wounded, as in the former verse; and, as we commonly say of a sick man, past hopes of recovery, that he is a dead man. Instead of *dead*, Houbigant reads *dying*.

A. M. 3394. name was 'Hamutal, the daughter
B. C. 610. of Jeremiah of Libnah.

32 And he did *that which was evil* in the sight of the LORD, according to all that his fathers had done.

33 And Pharaoh-nechoh put him in bands *at Riblah in the land of Hamath, ¹⁵ that he might not reign in Jerusalem; and ¹⁶ put the land to a tribute of a hundred talents of silver, and a talent of gold.

34 And * Pharaoh-nechoh made Eliakim the son of Josiah king in the room of Josiah his father, and † turned his name to † Jehoiakim, and took Jehoahaz away: * and he came to Egypt, and died there.

¹ Chapter xxiv. 18.—² Chap. xxv. 6; Jer. lii. 27.—¹⁵ Or, because he reigned.—¹⁶ Heb. set a mulct upon the land, 2 Chron. xxxvi. 3.—[†] 2 Chron. xxxvi. 4.

*The people took Jehoahaz, and made him king—*Who was younger than Jehoiakim, yet preferred by the people before the elder brother; either because Jehoiakim refused the kingdom for fear of Pharaoh, whom he knew he should hereby provoke; or, because Jehoahaz was the more stout and warlike prince: whence he is called a lion, Ezek. xix. 3. *And anointed him—*Which ceremony was used because this was a troublesome time, and he was not the right heir to the crown, and therefore needed this solemn rite of confirmation, which Solomon had in the same circumstances.

*Verse 32. He did evil, according to all that his fathers had done—*That is, his grand-parents, Manasseh and Amon. He restored that idolatry which his father had destroyed. Jerusalem saw not a good day after Josiah was laid in his grave; but one trouble came after another, till, within two and twenty years, it was destroyed.

*Verse 33. Pharaoh-nechoh put him in bands—*Either because he presumed to take the kingdom without his consent; or, because he renewed the war against Egypt. *At Riblah—*An eminent city in Syria, where Pharaoh now was, that he might finish or make good his conquests, and whither Jehoahaz was carried to receive his sentence. *That he might not reign—*Or, because he had reigned, that is, taken the kingdom without right, and without his leave. *And put the land to a tribute—*Namely, an annual tribute, whereby they should acknowledge him to be their superior, and for which he would be their protector when they needed his help.

*Verse 34. Pharaoh-nechoh made Eliakim king—*Whom he probably perceived to be of a more mild and peaceable disposition. *And turned his name to Jehoiakim—*It was usual for conquerors to change the names of the persons they vanquished in war, in

35 ¶ And Jehoiakim gave ^b the silver and the gold to Pharaoh; but ^{A. M. 3394. B. C. 610.} he taxed the land to give the money according to the commandment of Pharaoh: he exacted the silver and the gold of the people of the land, of every one according to his taxation, to give *it* unto Pharaoh-nechoh.

36 ¶ ^a Jehoiakim was twenty and ^{B. C. 610.} five years old when he began to reign; and he reigned eleven years in Jerusalem. And his mother's name was Zebudah, the daughter of Pedaiah of Rumah.

37 And he did *that which was evil* in the sight of the LORD, according to all that his fathers had done.

[†] Chapter xxiv. 17; Dan. i. 7.—^{*} Matt. i. 11, called *Jakim*.
^a Jer. xxii. 11; Ezekiel xix. 3.—^b Verse 33.—^c 2 Chron. xxxix. 5.

testimony of their absolute power over them. Thus we find the king of Babylon changing the name Mattaniah into Zedekiah, when he constituted him king of Judah, chap. xxiv. 17. Archbishop Usher further remarks, that the king of Egypt gave Eliakim the name of Jehoiakim, which signifies, God hath made, or shall make it to prosper; thereby to testify, that he ascribed his victory over the Babylonians to Jehovah, the God of Israel, who had excited him, as he pretended, (2 Chron. xxxv. 21,) to undertake the expedition. *And took Jehoahaz away—*That he might give no disturbance to his brother, and also probably as a punishment for him. *And he came to Egypt, and died there—*According to the prophecy of Jeremiah, whom God sent to call this new king and the people to repentance. See Jer. xxii. 1-3, 10, 12.

*Verse 37. He did that which was evil, &c.—*By idolatry, the oppression of his people, and the persecution of the prophets and other good men. For he killed the Prophet Urijah, and was at the charge to fetch him out of Egypt, whither he fled to save his life, Jer. xxvi. 20, 21, &c. And if it had not been for Ahikam, the son of Shaphan, who had been a great man in his father Josiah's courts, he would have served Jeremiah in the same manner, verse 24. And from hence it is evident, that the reformation of the people, in general, was not sincere in the time of Josiah, but that they dissembled in obedience to the king's command; otherwise it cannot be supposed that this young king would have immediately set at naught, and gone directly contrary to, all his father had done: but, Josiah being dead, it is likely the people threw off their mask, and showed how vehemently they were inclined to idolatry, and this young king was thereby soon induced to join with them in it.

CHAPTER XXIV.

Judah severely punished, 1-4. Jehoiakim dies, 5, 6. Nebuchadnezzar's conquests, 7. The wicked reign of Jehoiachin, 8, 9. Nebuchadnezzar takes Jerusalem, and carries the people captive, 10-16. The wicked reign of Zedekiah, 17-20.

A. M. 3404. B. C. 600. **I**N ^a his days Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came up, and Jehoiakim became his servant three years; then he turned and rebelled against him.

2 ^b And the LORD sent against him bands of the Chaldees, and bands of the Syrians, and bands of the Moabites, and bands of the children of Ammon, and sent them against Judah to destroy it, ^c according to the word of the LORD, which he spake ¹ by his servants the prophets.

3 Surely at the commandment of the LORD came *this* upon Judah, to remove *them* out of

his sight, ^d for the sins of Manasseh, A. M. 3404. according to all that he did; B. C. 600.

4 ^e And also for the innocent blood that he shed, (for he filled Jerusalem with innocent blood,) which the LORD would not pardon.

5 ¶ Now the rest of the acts of Jehoiakim, and all that he did, *are* they not written in the book of the Chronicles of the kings of Judah?

6 ^f So Jehoiakim slept with his fathers: and Jehoiachin his son reigned B. C. 599. in his stead.

7 ¶ And ^g the king of Egypt came not again:

^a 2 Chron. xxxvi. 6; Jer. xxv. 1, 9; Dan. i. 1.—^b Ezekiel xix. 8; Jer. xxv. 9; xxxii. 28.—^c Chap. xx. 17; xxi. 12, 14; xxxiii. 27.

^d Hebrew, *by the hand of*.—^e Chapter xxi. 2, 11; xxxiii. 26. ^f Chapter xxi. 16.—^g 2 Chronicles xxxvi. 6, 8; Jer. xxii. 18 xxxvii. 30.—^h Jer. xxxvii. 5, 7.

NOTES ON CHAPTER XXIV.

Verse 1. *In his days*—That is, in Jehoiakim's reign; and, according to Dan. i. 1, compared with Jer. xxv. 1, in the end of the third, or the beginning of the fourth year of it; *came up Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon*—Son of Nebopolassar, who, having subdued Assyria, soon made himself absolute monarch of all that part of the world. He probably left Babylon in the third year of Jehoiakim, and reduced him in his fourth year. According to Jer. xlvi. 2, he smote the army of Pharaoh-nechoh near the river Euphrates. He then attacked Jehoiakim, as the friend and ally of Pharaoh, and having taken him prisoner, "put him in chains to carry him to Babylon." But as Jehoiakim submitted, and agreed to become tributary to him, Nebuchadnezzar released him. He carried away, however, some of the gold and silver vessels of the temple, and some of the most considerable persons of the kingdom, among whom were Daniel and his companions, Dan. i. 1-7. *And Jehoiakim became his servant three years*—That is, was subject to him, and paid him tribute. *Then he turned and rebelled against him*—Being instigated so to do by the king of Egypt, who promised him his utmost assistance if he would shake off the yoke of the king of Babylon, and threatened he would declare him an enemy, and make war upon him, if he would not.

Verse 2. *The Lord sent against him bands of the Chaldees*—Including, probably, Syrians, Moabites, and Ammonites, who were all now subject to the king of Babylon, and many of them engaged as soldiers in his service. Doubtless they were ordered by Nebuchadnezzar to attack and chastise Jehoiakim and the revolted Jews; yet no mention is here made of their commission from the king of Babylon, but only of that from the King of kings: *the Lord sent them*. And again, (verse 3.) *Surely upon the commandment of the Lord came this upon Judah; otherwise the order of Nebuchadnezzar could not*

have brought it. Many are serving God's purposes, who are not aware of it.

Verses 3, 4. *To remove them out of his sight for the sins of Manasseh*—Properly and directly for their own sins, and remotely for the sins of Manasseh; who had so corrupted the whole body of the people, that they were become incurable, and Josiah's reformation had no lasting influence to recover them: for, immediately upon his death, they relapsed into their old idolatry, and other vices. Manasseh's personal sins, although, as he was their chief ruler, they were to be considered as national sins, and merited national punishment, yet would never have been charged on the nation, unless they had made them their own by their impenitency for them, and repetition of them. *And for the innocent blood which he shed*—Namely, of those prophets and saints, who either reprov'd, or would not comply with his idolatrous worship. *Which the Lord would not pardon*—That is, would not remit the temporal punishment of the land, though he did pardon it so as not to inflict eternal punishment upon his own person, for from that God undoubtedly exempted him upon his repentance. God is the righteous governor of the world, and the guardian of civil society, and in it order could not be preserved, if he did not interpose in his providence, and, on proper occasions, cause signal and national judgments to follow public and national crimes.

Verse 6. *So Jehoiakim slept with his fathers*—But it is not said he was buried with them. No doubt the prophecy of Jeremiah was fulfilled, that he should not be lamented as his father was, but *buried with the burial of an ass. Jehoiachin his son reigned in his stead*—Called also Jechoniah, 1 Chron. iii. 16, and in a way of contempt Coniah, Jer. xxii. 24.

Verse 7. *The king of Egypt came not again out of his own land*—In this king's days. He could not now come to protect the king of Judah, being scarce able to defend his own kingdom.

A. M. 3405. any more out of his land : for ^b the
B. C. 599. king of Babylon had taken from the
river of Egypt unto the river Euphrates all that
pertained to the king of Egypt.

8 ¶ ¹ Jehoiachin was eighteen years old
when he began to reign, and he reigned in Jeru-
salem three months. And his mother's name
was Nehushta, the daughter of Elnathan of
Jerusalem.

9 And he did *that which was evil* in the sight
of the LORD, according to all that his father had
done.

10 ¶ ¹ At that time the servants of Nebuchad-
nezzar king of Babylon came up against Jeru-
salem, and the city ² was besieged.

¹ Jer. xli. 2.—² Called *Jeconiah*, 1 Chronicles iii. 16; Jer. xiv. 1; and *Coniah*, Jer. xxii. 24, 28.—³ 2 Chron. xxxvi. 9.
⁴ Dan. i. 1.—⁵ Heb. *came into siege*.—⁶ Jer. xxiv. 1; xxix. 1;
Ezek. xvii. 12.

Verse 8. *Jehoiachin was eighteen years old when he began to reign*—In 2 Chron. xxxvi. 9, it is said that he was *eight years old* when he began to reign. But as both the Syriac and Arabic versions in that place read *eighteen*, it seems most reasonable to believe that the transcriber of the book of Chronicles made a mistake, and wrote *eight* for *eighteen*. Poole, however, and many other commentators, suppose that both places are correct, and that in his eighth year he began to reign with his father, who made him king with him, as divers other kings of Israel and Judah had acted in times of trouble; and that in his eighteenth year he reigned alone. Jehoiachin's succeeding his father in the throne of Judah may seem to disagree with the threat which the prophet denounces against his father, Jer. xxxvi. 30, *He shall have none to sit upon the throne of David*; but as Jehoiachin's reign lasted little more than three months, during which time he was absolutely subject to the Chaldeans, a reign of so short continuance, and of so small authority, may well be looked upon as nothing: see Ezek. xix. 6, &c.

Verse 10. *The servants of Nebuchadnezzar came up against Jerusalem*—Either, 1st, Because the people had made Jehoiachin king without his consent: or, 2d, Because he had some notice, or at least a suspicion, of his intentions to rebel and join with Egypt against him, as Zedekiah his successor did. But whatever was the second and immediate cause of it, the chief cause was *God's commandment*, or the direction of his providence, as was said verse 3.

Verse 12. *Jehoiachin went out to the king of Babylon*—Yielded up himself and the city into his hands; and this by the counsel of Jeremiah, and to his own good. *In the eighth year of his reign*—Of Nebuchadnezzar's reign, as appears by comparing this with chap. xxv. 8; and because Jehoiachin reigned not half a year. Had he made his peace with God, and taken the method that Hezekiah did in the like case, he needed not to have feared the king of

11 And Nebuchadnezzar king of A. M. 3405.
Babylon came against the city, and B. C. 599.
his servants did besiege it.

12 ¹ And Jehoiachin the king of Ju- B. C. 599.
dah went out to the king of Babylon, he,
and his mother, and his servants, and his princes,
and his ⁴ officers: ^m and the king of Babylon
ⁿ took him ^o in the eighth year of his reign.

13 ^p And he carried out thence all the trea-
sures of the house of the LORD, and the trea-
sures of the king's house, and ^q cut in pieces all
the vessels of gold which Solomon king of Israel
had made in the temple of the LORD, ^r as the
LORD had said.

14 And ^s he carried away all Jerusalem, and

⁴ Or, *emuchs*.—^m *Nebuchadnezzar's eighth year*, Jeremiah xxv. 1.—ⁿ Chapter xxv. 27.—^o Jeremiah lii. 28.—^p Chap. xx. 17; Isaiah xxxix. 6.—^q Daniel v. 2.—^r Jeremiah xx. 5.
^s Jeremiah xxiv. 1.

Babylon, but might have held out with courage, honour, and success. But, wanting the faith and piety of an Israelite, he had not the resolution of a man.

Verse 13. *He carried out thence all the treasures of the house of the Lord*—Nebuchadnezzar carried away the treasures and rich furniture of the temple at three different times: First, In the third year of the reign of Jehoiakim, when he first took Jerusalem, he carried a part of the vessels of the house of God into the land of Shinar, and put them in the house of his god, Dan. i. 2. These were the vessels which his son Belshazzar profaned, (Dan. v. 2,) and which Cyrus restored to the Jews, (Ezra i. 7,) to be set up in the temple again, when rebuilt: Secondly, In the reign of this Jehoiachin he took the city again, and cut in pieces a great part of the vessels of gold which Solomon had made, and which, through some means, had escaped his former plunder, and the plunder of the kings of Egypt and Israel, who had rifled the city and temple more than once; perhaps being preserved from them by the care of the priests, who hid them, or by the special providence of God, disposing their hearts to leave them. Or if these vessels had been taken away by any of these kings, they might afterward be recovered at the cost of the pious kings of Judah: Thirdly, In the eleventh year of Zedekiah he pillaged the temple once more, when he broke in pieces the pillars of brass, &c., and took away all the vessels of silver and gold that he could find, and carried them to Babylon, chap. xxv. 13. It is something strange, that among all this inventory, no mention is made of the ark of the covenant, which, of all other things, was held most sacred. But it is very probable that it was burned, together with the temple, in the last desolation; for what some say of its being hidden by the Prophet Jeremiah in a certain cave in mount Nebo, is a mere fable. See Calmet's *Comment.* and *Dissert. on the Ark.*
Verse 14. *He carried away all Jerusalem*—That

A. M. 3405. all the princes, and all the mighty
B. C. 599. men of valour, ^a even ten thousand
captives, and ^a all the craftsmen, and smiths :
none remained, save ^a the poorest sort of the
people of the land.

15 And ^r he carried away Jehoiachin to Ba-
bylon, and the king's mother, and the king's
wives, and his ^b officers, and the mighty of the
land, *those* carried he into captivity from Jeru-
salem to Babylon.

16 And ^a all the men of might, *even* seven
thousand, and craftsmen and smiths a thou-
sand, all *that were* strong *and* apt for war, even
them the king of Babylon brought captive to
Babylon.

^a Jeremiah lii. 28.—^b 1 Samuel xiii. 19, 22.—^c Chapter
xxv. 12; Jeremiah xl. 7.—^d 2 Chronicles xxxvi. 10; Esther
ii. 6; Jeremiah xxii. 24, &c.—^e Or, *eunuchs*.—^f Jeremiah
lii. 28.—^g Jeremiah xxxvii. 1.

is, the inhabitants of Jerusalem; not simply *all*, but
the best and most considerable part, as the following
words explain and restrain it. *Even ten thousand
captives*—Which are more particularly reckoned
up verse 16, where there are seven thousand
mighty men, and *a thousand smiths*; and those
mentioned verse 15 make up the other two thou-
sand. *Craftsmen and smiths*—Who might furnish
them with new arms, and thereby give him fresh
trouble.

Verse 17. *And changed his name to Zedekiah*
—That he might admonish him of (what his name
signifies) *the justice of God*, which had so severely
punished Jehoiakim for his rebellion; and would no
less certainly overtake him, if he should be guilty
of the same perfiduousness.

Verses 18, 19. *He reigned eleven years*—In the
end of which he was carried captive, Jer. i. 3. *He
did that which was evil in the sight of the Lord*—
Not regarding the reproofs, exhortations, or predic-
tions of Jeremiah, but shutting him up in prison, Jer.
xxxiii. 1, 2; 2 Chron. xxxvi. 12. And his servants,
and the people of the land, were as wicked and in-
corrigible as himself, Jer. xxxvii. 1, 2.

Verse 20. *For through the anger of the Lord, &c.*
—God was so highly displeased with this wicked
people, that he permitted Zedekiah to break his faith
with Nebuchadnezzar, and to rebel against him, for-

17 ¶ And ^a the king of Babylon A. M. 3405.
made Mattaniah, ^b his father's brother, B. C. 599.
king in his stead, and ^c changed his name to
Zedekiah.

18 ^d Zedekiah *was* twenty and one years old
when he began to reign, and he reigned eleven
years in Jerusalem. And his mother's name *was*
^e Hamutal, the daughter of Jeremiah of Libnah.

19 ^f And he did *that which was* B. C. 593.
evil in the sight of the LORD, accord-
ing to all that Jehoiakim had done.

20 For through the anger of the LORD it came
to pass in Jerusalem and Judah, until he had
cast them out from his presence, ^g that Zede-
kiah rebelled against the king of Babylon.

^b 1 Chron. iii. 15; 2 Chron. xxxvi. 10.—^c Chapter xxxiii. 34;
2 Chron. xxxvi. 4.—^d 2 Chron. xxxvi. 11; Jer. xxxvii. 1; lii. 1.
^e Chap. xxxiii. 31.—^f 2 Chron. xxxvi. 12.—^g 2 Chron. xxxvi.
13; Ezek. xvii. 15.

getting for what cause he changed his name. Unto
this revolt, it is probable, he was persuaded by the
ambassadors which the kings of Edom, Moab, Am-
mon, Tyre, and Zidon, sent unto him, to solicit him
to throw off the yoke of the king of Babylon, Jer.
xxvii. 2-4, &c.; which was the greater crime, be-
cause he had taken a solemn oath that he would be
true to him, 2 Chron. xxxvi. 13. The king of Egypt
also, it is likely, promised him help, Ezek. xvii. 15;
and Hananiah, a false prophet, assured him God
would, in two years time, break the yoke of the
king of Babylon, and bring back all the vessels of
the house of God, with Jehoiachin and all the cap-
tives: see Jer. xxviii. 1-4. Jeremiah indeed proved
that he made them trust in a lie, by predicting his
death that very year, which accordingly came to
pass, verses 15-17. But they still persisted in their
vain hopes, there being other deceivers that prophe-
sied falsely in God's name, Jeremiah xxix. 8, 9: and
they most of all deceived themselves with proud
conceits that they were the true seed of Abra-
ham, who had a right to that land, Ezekiel xxxiii.
24. The people's sins, therefore, as Poole has
justly observed, were the true cause why God gave
them wicked kings, whom he suffered to act wick-
edly, that they might bring the long-deserved and
threatened punishments upon themselves and their
people.

CHAPTER XXV.

Jerusalem is besieged, 1-4. Zedekiah taken; his sons slain; and his eyes put out, 5-7. Nebuzar-adan burns the city
and temple, breaks down the walls, and carries away the spoils with most of the people, 8-17. The chief officers are
put to death, 18-21. The very remnant of the people is scattered, 22-26. Jehoiachin is countenanced, after thirty-seven
years imprisonment, 27-30.

A. M. 3416.
B. C. 588.

AND it came to pass ^a in the ninth year of his reign, in the tenth month, in the tenth *day* of the month, *that* Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came, he, and all his host, against Jerusalem, and pitched against it; and they built forts against it round about.

2 And the city was besieged unto the eleventh year of King Zedekiah.

B. C. 588.

3 And on the ninth *day* of the ^b fourth month the famine prevailed

^a 2 Chron. xxxvi. 17; Jer. xxxiv. 2; xxxix. 1; lii. 4; Ezekiel xxiv. 1.—^b Jer. xxxix. 2; lii. 6.

NOTES ON CHAPTER XXV.

Verse 1. *Nebuchadnezzar came, and all his host, against Jerusalem*—To chastise Zedekiah for his rebellion and perjury: for, contrary to the solemn oath he had taken, he had been contriving and endeavouring to revolt from the king of Babylon, and shake off his yoke. *They built forts against it round about*—To keep all supplies of men and provisions from entering into the city, and that from thence, by such arts of war as they then had, they might batter the walls, shoot arrows, and throw darts or stones into it. Formerly Jerusalem was compassed with the favour of God as with a shield, but now their defence is departed from them, and their enemies surround them on every side. The siege lasted two years. At first the besieging army retired for fear of the king of Egypt, who came to help Zedekiah; and then Jeremiah endeavoured to get out of the city, to go into the land of Benjamin, but was hindered, seized, and imprisoned, Jer. xxxvii. 11. The Chaldeans, finding that Pharaoh was not so powerful as they at first supposed, soon returned, as Jeremiah had foretold they would, with a resolution not to quit the siege till they had made themselves masters of the place.

Verse 3. *The famine prevailed in the city*—So that for a long time they ate their bread, as Ezekiel foretold they should do, (chap. iv. 16,) *by weight and with care, and drunk their water by measure and with astonishment*, perceiving the quantity of it lessening fast every day, and having no hope of a fresh supply. Thus they were punished for their gluttony and excess, their fulness of bread, and feeding themselves without fear. At length *there was no bread for the people of the land*—For the common people, who, upon the approach of the Babylonian army, had flocked from all parts of the country, to secure themselves and their families, but only for the great men. Now they eat their own children for want of food, as had been foretold by one prophet, (Ezek. v. 10,) and is bewailed by another, Lam. iv. 3, &c. Jeremiah, in this extremity, earnestly persuaded the king to surrender, but his heart was hardened to his destruction.

Verse 4. *The city was broken up*—It was taken

2

in the city, and there was no bread ^{A. M. 3416} for the people of the land. ^{B. C. 588.}

4 ¶ And ^c the city was broken up, and all the men of war *fled* by night by the way of the gate between two walls, which *is* by the king's garden; (now the Chaldees *were* against the city round about;) and ^d the king went the way toward the plain.

5 And the army of the Chaldees pursued after the king, and overtook him in the plains of Jericho: and all his army were scattered from him.

^c Jeremiah xxxix. 2; lii. 7, &c.—^d Jeremiah xxxix. 4-7; lii. 7; Ezek. xii. 12.

by storm, the besiegers having made a breach in the wall, at which they forced their way into it. *All the men of war fled*—Being unable any longer to defend the city, they endeavoured to quit it, which many of them found means to do *by the way of the gate between the two walls*—That is, between the inward and outward walls of the city, or between the wall and the outworks, by a private way, having the advantage of the darkness of the night, and possibly of some vault under the ground. Many however, no doubt, were put to the sword, the victorious army being much exasperated by their obstinacy. To account, in some degree, for the besieged making their escape, Josephus observes, that as the city was taken about midnight, the enemies' captains, with the rest of the soldiers, went directly into the temple, which Zedekiah perceiving, took his wives, children, commanders, and friends, and they all slipped away together, by a narrow passage, toward the wilderness. But what this narrow passage was, is still a question. The Jews think there was a subterraneous passage from the palace to the plains of Jericho, and that the king and his courtiers might endeavour to make their escape that way. And we learn from Dion, that in the last siege of Jerusalem by the Romans, the Jews had covered ways, which lay under the walls of the city, to a considerable distance into the country, out of which they were wont to sally, and fall upon the Romans that were straggling from the camp: but since neither Josephus nor the sacred historian takes notice of any such subterraneous passage at this siege, it is most likely that the Chaldeans having made a breach in the wall, many of the besieged escaped through it, proceeding privately between the wall and the outworks, by a passage which the Chaldeans did not suspect. *The king went toward the plain*—Of Jericho, as it follows.

Verse 5. *The army of the Chaldees pursued after the king*—Intelligence was soon given of his flight, and which way he was gone, so that they soon overtook him. *And all his army*—His guards; *were scattered from him*—Every man shifting for his safety. Had he made his peace with God, and put himself under his protection, he would not have

227

A. M. 3416. 6 So they took the king, and brought
B. C. 588. him up to the king of Babylon ^o to
Riblah; and they ¹ gave judgment upon him.

7 And they slew the sons of Zedekiah before
his eyes, and ² put ^t out the eyes of Zedekiah,
and bound him with fetters of brass, and carried
him to Babylon.

8 ¶ And in the fifth month, ^e on the seventh
day of the month, (which *is* ^h the nineteenth

year of King Nebuchadnezzar, king A. M. 3416.
of Babylon,) ⁱ came Nebuzar-adan, B. C. 588.
³ captain of the guard, a servant of the king
of Babylon, unto Jerusalem:

9 ^h And he burnt the house of the LORD, ¹ and
the king's house, and all the houses of Jerusa-
lem, and every great *man's* house burnt he with
fire.

10 And all the army of the Chaldees, that *were*

^o Chapter xxxiii. 33; Jer. lii. 9.—¹ Heb. *spoke judgment* upon
him.—² Heb. *made blind*.—³ Jer. xxxix. 7; Ezekiel xii. 13.
^e Jer. lii. 12-14.

^h Chap. xxiv. 12; Verse 27.—¹ Jer. xxxix. 9.—² Or, *chief*
marshal.—³ 2 Chron. xxxvi. 19; Psa. lxxix. 1.—⁴ Jer. xxxix.
8; Amos ii. 5.

failed him now. It seems to have been the design
of the king, and of those with him, to escape into
Egypt through Arabia Deserta.

Verse 6. *And brought him to the king of Babylon, to Riblah*—Where Nebuchadnezzar stayed, that he might both supply the besiegers with men and military provisions, as their occasions required, and have an eye to Chaldea, to prevent or suppress any commotions which might happen there in his absence. *They gave judgment upon him*—The king's officers appointed thereunto examined his cause, and passed the following sentence against him.

Verse 7. *They slew the sons of Zedekiah before his eyes*—Though they were but children, that this spectacle, the last he was to behold, might leave a deep and durable impression of grief and horror upon his spirit. And in slaying his sons they in effect declared that the kingdom was no more, and that neither he nor any of his breed were fit to be trusted: therefore not fit to live. *And put out his eyes, and carried him to Babylon*—Thus two prophecies were fulfilled, which seemed contrary the one to the other. Jeremiah foretold, *That he should be delivered into the hands of the king of Babylon, and should speak with him mouth to mouth, and his eyes should behold his eyes, and that he should go to Babylon*, chap. xxxii. 4, and xxxiv. 3; and Ezekiel prophesied, *That he should never see Babylon, though he should die there*, chap. xii. 13. This seeming contradiction, Zedekiah the false prophet could not reconcile, and therefore concluded that both prophecies were false, and, if we may credit Josephus, Zedekiah the king stumbled at this difficulty. Both, however, were literally accomplished. The reflection which Josephus makes on this event, is worthy of the reader's attention: "This may serve to convince even the ignorant, of the power and wisdom of God; and of the constancy of his counsels through all the various ways of his operations. It may likewise show us that God's foreknowledge of things is certain; and his providence regular in the ordering of events; and besides, it holds forth a most exemplary instance of the danger of our giving way to the motions of sin and infidelity, which deprive us of the means of discerning God's judgments, even though ready to fall upon us."—*Antiq.*, lib. 10., cap. 11.

Verse 8. *And in the fifth month, &c.*—Though we

have reason to think the Chaldeans were much enraged against the city, for holding out with so much stubbornness; yet they did not, therefore, put all to fire and sword as soon as they had taken the city, which is too commonly done in such cases; but about a month after (compare verse 8 with verse 3) Nebuzar-adan was sent with orders to complete the destruction of it. This space God gave them for repentance after all the foregoing days of his patience; but in vain; their hearts were still hardened, and therefore execution was awarded to the uttermost.

Verse 9. *And he burnt the house of the Lord*—The king of Babylon, it appears, did not design to send any colonies to people Judea, and therefore ordered Jerusalem to be laid in ashes, as a nest of rebels. "At the burning of the king's house," says Henry, "and the houses of the great men, one cannot much wonder, the inhabitants had by their sins kindled the fire of God's wrath against them; but that the house of the Lord should perish in these flames, that that holy and beautiful house should be burned with fire, (Isa. lxiv. 11,) is very strange; that house which David prepared for, and which Solomon built, at such a vast expense; that house which had the eye and the heart of God perpetually upon it, (1 Kings ix. 3,) might not that have been snatched as a brand out of the burning? No, that will not be fireproof against God's judgments; this stately structure must be laid in ashes, and it is probable the ark in it; for the enemies, probably having heard how dear the Philistines paid for the abusing it, durst not seize it; nor did any of its friends take care to preserve it; for then we should have heard of it again in the second temple." The temple was burned four hundred years after the time that it was built, says Sir John Marsham; four hundred and twenty-four years three months and eight days, says Archbishop Usher; four hundred thirty years, says Abarbanel and other learned Jews; but Josephus computes the matter still higher; for he tells us that the temple was burned four hundred and seventy years six months and ten days after the building of it; one thousand and sixty years six months and ten days from the time of the Israelites coming out of the land of Egypt; one thousand nine hundred and fifty years six months and ten days from the deluge; three thousand five hundred and thirty years six

A. M. 3416. with the captain of the guard, ^m brake
B. C. 588. down the walls of Jerusalem round
about.

11 ^a Now the rest of the people *that were* left in the city, and the ⁴ fugitives that fell away to the king of Babylon, with the remnant of the multitude, did Nebuzar-adan the captain of the guard carry away.

12 But the captain of the guard ^o left of the poor of the land *to be* vine-dressers and husbandmen.

13 ¶ And ^p the ^q pillars of brass that *were* in the house of the LORD, and ^r the bases, and ^s the brazen sea that *was* in the house of the LORD, did the Chaldees break in pieces, and carried the brass of them to Babylon.

14 And ^t the pots, and the shovels, and the snuffers, and the spoons, and all the vessels of brass wherewith they ministered, took they away.

15 And the fire-pans, and the bowls, and such things as *were* of gold, in gold, and of silver, in silver, the captain of the guard took away.

^a Neh. i. 3; Jer. lii. 14.—^b Jer. xxxix. 9; lii. 15.—^c Heb. *fallen away*.—^d Chap. xxiv. 14; Jer. xxxix. 10; xl. 7; lii. 16. ^e Chap. xx. 17; Jer. xxvii. 19, 22; lii. 17, &c.—^f 1 Kings vii. 15.—^g 1 Kings vii. 27.—^h 1 Kings vii. 23.—ⁱ Exod. xxvii. 3; 1 Kings vii. 45, 50.

16 The two pillars, ⁵ one sea, and ^{A. M. 3416.} the bases which Solomon had made ^{B. C. 588.} for the house of the LORD; ^u the brass of all these vessels was without weight.

17 ^v The height of the one pillar *was* eighteen cubits, and the chapter upon it *was* brass: and the height of the chapter three cubits; and the wreathen work, and pomegranates upon the chapter round about, all of brass: and like unto these had the second pillar with wreathen work.

18 ¶ And the captain of the guard took ^w Seraiah the chief priest, and ^x Zephaniah the second priest, and the three keepers of the ^y door:

19 And out of the city he took an ^z officer that was set over the men of war, and ^b five men of them that ⁹ were in the king's presence, which were found in the city, and the ⁹ principal scribe of the host, which mustered the people of the land, and threescore men of the people of the land *that were* found in the city:

20 And Nebuzar-adan captain of the guard

^u Heb. *the one sea*.—^v 1 Kings vii. 47.—^w 1 Kings vii. 15; Jer. lii. 21.—^x Verses 52, 54, &c.—^y 1 Chron. vi. 14; Ezra vii. 1.—^z Jer. xxi. 1; xxix. 25.—^a Heb. *threshold*.—^b Or, *eschuch*.—^c Jer. lii. 25.—^d Heb. *saw the king's face*, Esth. i. 14.—^e Or, *scribe of the captain of the host*.

months and ten days from the creation; and he mentions it as a very remarkable circumstance, that the second temple was burned by the Romans in the same month and on the very same day of the month that this was set on fire by the Chaldeans, and, as some of the Jewish rabbis say, when the Levites were singing the very same passage, namely, *He shall bring upon them their own iniquity, and shall cut them off in their own wickedness: yea, the Lord our God shall cut them off*, Psa. xciv. 23. By the burning of the temple, God would show how little he cares for the external pomp of his worship, when the life and power of religion are neglected. The people trusted to the temple, as if that would protect them in their sins, (Jer. vii. 4,) but God by this let them know that when they had profaned it, they would find it but a refuge of lies.

Verses 11, 12. *Now the rest of the people that were left in the city*—Whom neither the sword nor famine had destroyed, who were eight hundred and thirty-two persons, (Jer. lii. 29,) being members and traders of that city: for it is likely that there were very many more of the country people fled thither, who were left with others of their brethren to manure the land. *And the fugitives that fell away to the king of Babylon*—That is, all that fled to him, and put themselves under his protection; *with the remnant of the multitude*—Of the inhabitants of the country. *For the captain of the guard*

left of the poor of the land—So while the rich were prisoners in a strange land, the poor had liberty and peace in their own country! Thus Providence sometimes humbles the proud, and favours them of low degree.

Verse 13. *The pillars of brass, &c., did the Chaldees break in pieces*—Because they were too cumbersome to be carried away whole. *And carried the brass of them to Babylon*—As was foretold Jer. xxvii. 21, 22.

Verses 18, 19. *The captain of the guard took Seraiah, the chief priest*—The high-priest, grandson of that Hilkiah mentioned chap. xxii. 4, and father of Jehosadak, who, it seems, was taken with his father; and when his father was slain, (verse 21,) was carried away to Babylon, as is observed 1 Chron. vi. 13, 14. *And Zephaniah the second priest*—Who was the high-priest's deputy, when he was by sickness, or any other means, prevented from the execution of his office. *And five of them that were in the king's presence*—Who constantly attended upon the king's person wheresoever he was, and were his most intimate counsellors. *And threescore men of the land that were found in the city*—These were some eminent persons, who had concealed themselves in some private place; but before Nebuzar-adan left Jerusalem, were discovered.

Verses 20, 21. *Brought them to the king of Babylon*—That he might dispose of them as he thought

A. M. 3416. took these, and brought them to the
B. C. 588. king of Babylon to Riblah :

21 And the king of Babylon smote them, and slew them at Riblah in the land of Hamath. ° So Judah was carried away out of their land.

22 ¶ ^d And as for the people that remained in the land of Judah, whom Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon had left, even over them he made Gedaliah the son of Ahikam, the son of Shaphan, ruler.

23 And when all the ° captains of the armies, they and their men, heard that the king of Babylon had made Gedaliah governor, there came to Gedaliah to Mizpah, even Ishmael the son of Nethaniah, and Johanan the son of Careah, and Seraiah the son of Tanhumeth

° Leviticus xxvi. 33 ; Deuteron. xxviii. 36, 64 ; Chap. xxiii. 27. ^d Jeremiah xl. 5.

fit, they being not vulgar persons like those whom he had ordered to be carried captive or left in the land. *The king of Babylon smote them*—Ordered them all to be put to death, when in reason they might have hoped that surely the bitterness of death was past. He probably looked upon them as persons that had been active in opposing him; but divine justice, we may suppose, viewed them as ring-leaders in that idolatry and impiety which were punished by these desolations. *So Judah was carried away out of their land*—This completed their calamity, about eight hundred and sixty years after they were put in possession of Canaan by Joshua.

Verse 22. *Over them he made Gedaliah, the son of Ahikam, ruler*—A righteous and good man, and a friend to the Prophet Jeremiah, Jer. xxvi. 24. Ahikam, his father, was a person in such credit in all the latter reigns, that he had been able to screen Jeremiah from the resentment of the king and the fury of the people; so that it is very probable the prophet, in gratitude to the father, obtained this favour for the son, from Nebuzar-adan. Or, as some think, Gedaliah, by the advice of Jeremiah, had gone over to the Chaldeans, and had approved himself so well, that on that account the king of Babylon judged it proper to intrust him with the government. Gedaliah's good conduct, together with the obligations which Jeremiah was under to his father, was probably the motive which induced the prophet to live with him in Judea rather than go to Babylon, when the Chaldean general put it to his option, not without some considerable encouragement to invite him to the latter, Jer. xxxix. 11.

Verse 23. *When all the captains of the armies*—Who escaped when Zedekiah was taken; *heard that the king of Babylon had made Gedaliah governor*—One of themselves, and that things were put into a good posture: *there came to Gedaliah to Mizpah*—A place in the land of Benjamin, famous in Samuel's

the Netophathite, and Jaazaniah the son of a Maachathite, they and their men. A. M. 3416. B. C. 588.

24 And Gedaliah sware to them, and to their men, and said unto them, Fear not to be the servants of the Chaldees: dwell in the land, and serve the king of Babylon, and it shall be well with you.

25 But ^f it came to pass in the seventh month, that Ishmael the son of Nethaniah, the son of Elishama, of the seed ¹⁰royal, came, and ten men with him, and smote Gedaliah, that he died, and the Jews and the Chaldees that were with him at Mizpah. About B. C. 588.

26 And all the people, both small and great, and the captains of the armies, arose, ° and

° Jeremiah xl. 7, 9.—^f Jer. xli. 1, 2.—¹⁰ Heb. of the kingdom ¶ Jeremiah xliii. 4, 7.

time; *Ishmael, Johanan, &c., they and their men*—To put themselves under his protection. Gedaliah, though he had not the pomp and power of a sovereign prince, yet might have been a greater blessing to them than many of their kings had been, especially having such a privy counsellor as Jeremiah, who was now with them, and interested himself in their affairs, Jer. xl. 5, 6.

Verse 24. *Gedaliah sware to them*—Assured them by his promise and oath, that if they would be patient and peaceable under the government of the king of Babylon, and would conduct themselves properly, they should be kept from the evils which they feared. This he might safely swear, because he had not only Nebuchadnezzar's promise, and interest too, but also God's promise, delivered by Jeremiah. And it might seem that a fair prospect was now again opening for them. But, alas! this hopeful settlement was soon dashed to pieces, not by the Chaldeans, but by themselves. The things of their peace were so hid from their eyes that they neither knew when they were well, nor would believe when they were told so even by God himself.

Verse 25. *Ishmael, of the seed royal, came*—Moved with envy at Gedaliah's advancement, and the happy settlement of the people under him; *and ten men with him*—That is, ten captains or officers, and under each of them many soldiers. *And smote Gedaliah, and the Jews and Chaldees, &c.*—Resolved to ruin him and them. Nebuchadnezzar would not, could not, have been a more mischievous enemy to their peace than this degenerate branch of the house of David was! We have a fuller account of this affair in the fortieth and forty-first chapters of Jeremiah, where we read that Gedaliah was admonished of this intended conspiracy against him; but, like other good men, who are commonly void of suspicion, because they have no design to hurt others, he did not believe what was told him.

Verse 26. *And all the people arose, and came to*

A. M. 3442. came to Egypt: for they were afraid
B. C. 562. of the Chaldees.

B. C. 562. 27 ¶^b And it came to pass in the seven and thirtieth year of the captivity of Jehoiachin king of Judah, in the twelfth month, on the seven and twentieth day of the month, that Evil-merodach king of Babylon, in

^b Jer. lii. 31, &c.—ⁱ Gen. xl. 13, 20.

Egypt—Contrary to the persuasion of Jeremiah, who pressed them to stay in the land, that it might not altogether lie uncultivated, (seeing they were to be settled in it again, according to the word of the Lord by the Prophet Isaiah, chap. xlii. 28, and xlv. 1,) assuring them that they should be safe if they would stay in the land of Judah, but should perish if they went into Egypt. See Jer. xlii. 9, 10, &c. But they would not hearken. Thus this populous and fertile country was laid waste and desolate, part of the people being carried captive to Babylon, part of those who were left in the land being slain with Gedaliah, and the remainder fleeing into Egypt. So that it was left to be overrun with briars and thorns, and to be inhabited by wild beasts. Only some of the neighbouring nations seem to have settled themselves in some parts of it. And from hence the Jews found much greater difficulty when they came to be restored than they would have done if some of them had continued in their country and cultivated it. *For they were afraid of the Chaldees*—The Chaldeans had reason enough to be offended at the murder of Gedaliah; but, if those that remained had humbly remonstrated to them, that it was only the act of Ishmael and his party, we may suppose they who were innocent of it, nay, who suffered greatly by it, would not have been punished for it: but, under pretence of this apprehension they all went into Egypt, where, it is probable, they mixed with the Egyptians by degrees, and were never heard of more as Israelites. Thus there was a full end made of them by their own folly and disobedience, and Egypt had the last of them, that the last verse of that chapter of threatenings might be fulfilled after all the rest, (Deut. xxviii. 68,) *The Lord shall bring thee into Egypt again*. For a more particular account of these events, see the prophecy of Jeremiah, from chap. xl. to chap. xlv.

Verses 27-30. *Evil-merodach, king of Babylon*—“Nebuchadnezzar, the father of Evil-merodach, died in the year of the world 3442, and before Christ 562, after he had reigned from the death of his father, according to the Babylonish account, forty-three years. He was certainly one of the greatest princes that had appeared in the East for many years before him; and, according to Megasthenes, as he is cited by Josephus, both for his enterprises and performances, far excelled even Hercules himself. The same historian, as he is quoted by Eusebius, informs us, that a little before his death he foretold to his subjects the coming of the Persians, and their subduing the kingdom of Babylon, which he might gather from the

the year that he began to reign, did lift up the head of Jehoiachin king of Judah out of prison;

28 And he spake¹¹ kindly to him, and set his throne above the throne of the kings that were with him in Babylon;

29 And changed his prison garments: and he

¹¹ Heb. good things with him.

Prophet Daniel, and especially from the interpretation of his dreams.”—Dodd.

In the year that he began to reign did lift up the head of Jehoiachin, &c.—He released him out of prison, where he had lain thirty-seven years, and was now fifty-five years old. *And he spake kindly to him*—Paid more respect to him than to any other of the kings his father had left in captivity, gave him princely clothing instead of his prison garments, maintained him in his own palace, and allowed him a pension for himself and his family, some way agreeable to his rank; *a daily rate for every day as long as he lived*. This was a very happy change of Jehoiachin's condition. To have honour, liberty, and plenty, after he had been so long in confinement and disgrace, and compelled to endure the straits and miseries of a prison, was like the return of the morning after a very dark and tedious night. Let none say they shall never see good again, because they have long seen little but evil: the most miserable know not what blessed turn Providence may yet give to their affairs, nor what comforts they are reserved for, according to the days wherein they have been afflicted, Psa. xc. 15. It is likely Evil-merodach thought his father made the yoke of his captives too heavy; and, therefore, with the tenderness of a man, and the honour of a prince, he made it lighter. The Jews tell us, he had himself been imprisoned by his own father, after the latter was restored from his insanity, for some maladministration at that time, and that in prison he contracted a friendship for Jehoiachin; and, therefore, as soon as he had it in his power, showed him this kindness as a sufferer, and as a fellow-sufferer. It should seem that all the kings he had in his power were favoured, but Jehoiachin above them all. Perhaps, as some have suggested, he had learned from Daniel and his fellows the principles of true religion, and was well affected to them, and upon that account favoured Jehoiachin. This undoubtedly happened by the good providence of God for the encouragement of the Jews in captivity, and the support of their faith and hope concerning their enlargement in due time. Thirty-six of the seventy years of their captivity were now past, and almost as many yet remained, when now, in this midnight of their bondage and misery, they see their king thus advanced as a comfortable earnest to them of their own release at the appointed season.

We are now come to the dreadful end of the Jewish monarchy, after it had stood four hundred and sixty-eight years from the time that David be-

A. M. 3442. did ^k eat bread continually before him
B. C. 562. all the days of his life.

30 And his allowance was a continual allow-

^k 2 Sam.

ance given him of the king, a daily ^{A. M. 3442.}
rate for every day, all the days of ^{B. C. 562.}
his life.

ix. 7.

gan to reign over it; three hundred and eighty-eight years from the revolt of the ten tribes from it; and one hundred and thirty-four years from the excision of the Israelitish commonwealth; and would have still continued under the sunshine of the divine protection, had it not been for the almost constant and horrid ingratitude of the people, and their invincible itch of imitating the idolatries and witcheries of other nations: crimes which, though abominable before God, were but too generally practised by mankind, through the amazing degeneracy of the human nature.

Having now gone through the history of the Jewish state, from its first beginning to its total captivity in a foreign land, we must acknowledge it to be a history of such remarkable particulars, as distinguish it from all other histories: a history of a state founded upon such principles, governed in such a manner, concerned in such extraordinary circumstances, distinguished by such wonderful facts, and its condition, from the beginning to the end, so corresponding to its obedience or disobedience to the principles upon which it was first founded, that it cannot be paralleled by the history of any people in the world.

THE FIRST BOOK

OF

THE CHRONICLES.

ARGUMENT.

THE ancient Hebrews made but one book of the Chronicles, which they called דברי הימים, *dibrei hajamim*, the words of the days, that is, *Diaries*, or *Journals*; and, as the Hebrew word ימים, *jamim*, also signifies *years*, these books may be called *Annals*. The LXX. entitled them παραλειπομενων, the books of things left, or overlooked, by the preceding historians, hereby signifying that this work is a kind of supplement to the other historical books of the Old Testament: and, indeed, we find many particulars in it which are omitted in the other books. It appears, by 2 Chron. xxxv. 25, that these books were written after the time of the Prophet Jeremiah; and they must also have been written after the captivity, since mention is made in the latter of them of the restoration of the Jews by Cyrus the Great, king of Persia. Compare the last verses of the second book of Chronicles with the beginning of Ezra.

It is not certain who compiled these books. They are generally, says Mr. Locke, attributed to Ezra, assisted by the Prophets Haggai and Zechariah. The learned Huetius, in his *Demonstratio Evangelica*, has given it as his opinion, that Ezra not only digested these books, but added to them the first six chapters of the book that bears his name, and which he afterward continued. And he likewise thinks that Nehemiah had some hand in this work; and that it was collected not only out of the public journals, but from the writings of the Prophets Shimeah, Iddo, Jehu, Nathan, Abijah, Isaiah, and others. The design of the author of the books of Chronicles was certainly not to write a regular history, but, as we have observed, a kind of supplement to the other books. It is remarkable, that he sometimes conceals the dishonour of God's saints. He does not mention the fact of David with Uriah, nor the idolatry of Solomon; reckons the four battles, mentioned 2 Sam. xxi., but three, 1 Chron. xx., omitting that wherein David did not come off with honour; namely, his encounter with Ishbibenob. Speaking of the difference of names, &c., found in these books, Calmet remarks, very judiciously, that it is not extraordinary that books, which have passed through so many hands, for so many ages, should have suffered some alterations in *dates* and *numbers*. In copies of books so ancient, and written in a language so little known, we may certainly wonder, rather that there are *so few* mistakes, than that there are any.

The author begins these books with a genealogy from Adam to his own time, which had not been exhibited in any book of Scripture before, but was now rendered necessary in order to preserve among their tribes and families that distinction which was in danger of being lost by their dispersion in the captivity; and to make it evident that the great Messiah sprang out of that tribe and family, from which he was to descend, according to the ancient predictions of the prophets; the fulfilling of predictions concerning him, being a confirmation of his divine mission and authority. And this genealogy now found in this book, (which was written after the Babylonish captivity,) is the only full and happy demonstration we have, that those calamities and confusions which befell the Jewish people at that time, did not end in the total loss of their family registers. But now HE is come, for whose sake these registers were preserved, the Jews have lost all their genealogies, even that of the priests, so that there is not any man in the world that can prove himself to be of the house of Aaron.

The books of Chronicles have been too much neglected by many readers, who are influenced by a false persuasion, that they contain few particulars but what had already been recorded, in the books of Samuel and the Kings. But it is very evident, as St. Jerome observes, that these books comprehend a large number of passages of great importance to the explication of the other scriptures. They seem, however, to have been especially designed for an abridgment of the history of the kingdom of Judah, as the books of the Kings were of the two kingdoms of Israel and Judah together. The succession of David's line is, in particular, the express subject of this history. This first book, on which we are now entering, contains, I. A collection of sacred genealogies, from Adam to David, with the several histories intermixed, chap. i.-ix. II. An account of the translation of the kingdom from Saul to David, and of David's reign, chap. x.-xxi. III. An account of the settlement of ecclesiastical affairs by David, of his preparations for building the temple, and his death, chap. xxii.-xxix.

CHAPTER I.

The descents from Adam to Noah and his sons, 1-4. The posterity of Japheth and Ham, 5-16. Of Shem to Abraham, 17-27. Abraham's posterity by Ishmael, 28-31. By Keturah, 32, 33. The posterity of Isaac by Esau, 34-54.

A. M. 1.
B. C. 4004.

A DAM, ^a Sheth, Enosh,
2 Kenan, Mahalaleel, Jered,

3 Henoch, Methuselah, Lamech,
4 Noah, Shem, Ham, and Japheth.

5 ¶ ^b The sons of Japheth; Gomer, and Magog, and Madai, and Javan, and Tubal, and Meshech, and Tiras.

6 And the sons of Gomer; Ashchenaz, and ¹ Riphath, and Togarmah.

7 And the sons of Javan; Elishah, and Tarshish, Kittim, and ² Dodanim.

8 ¶ ^c The sons of Ham; Cush, and Mizraim, Put, and Canaan.

9 And the sons of Cush; Seba, and Havilah, and Sabta, and Raamah, and Sabtecha. And the sons of Raamah; Sheba, and Dedan,

10 And Cush ^d begat Nimrod. He began to be mighty upon the earth.

11 And Mizraim begat Ludim, and Anamim, and Lehabim, and Naphtuhim,

12 And Pathrusim, and Casluhim, (of whom came the Philistines,) and ^e Caphthorim.

^a Gen. iv. 25; v. 3, 9.—^b Gen. x. 2, &c.—¹ *Diphath*, as it is in some copies.—² Or, *Rodanim*, according to some copies.
^c Gen. x. 6, &c.—^d Gen. x. 8, 13, &c.

NOTES ON CHAPTER I.

Verse 1. *Adam, Sheth, Enosh*—Adam was the father of Sheth, and Sheth the father of Enosh, and so on to the sons of Noah. For brevity's sake he only mentions the names, the rest being easily understood out of the former books. No mention is made of the posterity of Cain or Abel, nor of the other sons of Adam, because the sacred writer was only engaged to give a detail of the patriarchs, in a line from Adam to Noah. The history of the Bible was not designed as a history of the world, but as a history of the church, and of the deduction of the sacred promise of the seed of the woman. This was the peculiar glory of the Jewish nation, that they alone were able to trace their pedigree from the first man that God created, which no other nation pretended to, but abused themselves and their posterity with fabulous accounts of their originals; the people of Thessaly fancying that they sprang from stones, the Athenians, that they grew out of the earth.

Verse 5. *The sons of Japheth*—The historian, repeating the account of the replenishing the earth by the sons of Noah, begins with those that were strangers to the church, the sons of Japheth, who peopled Europe, of whom he says little, as the Jews had hitherto little or no dealings with them. He pro-

13 And ^f Canaan begat Zidon his ^{A. M. 1.} firstborn, and Heth, ^{B. C. 4004.}

14 The Jebusite also, and the Amorite, and the Girgashite,

15 And the Hivite, and the Archite, and the Sinite,

16 And the Arvadite, and the Zemarite, and the Hamathite.

17 ¶ The sons of ^g Shem; Elam, and Asshur, and Arphaxad, and Lud, and Aram, and Uz, and Hul, and Gether, and ^h Meshech.

18 And Arphaxad begat Shelah, and Shelah begat Eber.

19 And unto Eber were born two sons: the name of the one *was* ⁱ Peleg; because in his days the earth was divided: and his brother's name *was* Joktan.

20 And ^j Joktan begat Almodad, and Sheleph, and Hazarmaveth, and Jerah,

21 Hadoram also, and Uzal, and Diklah,

22 And Ebal, and Abimael, and Sheba,

23 And Ophir, and Havilah, and Jobab. All these *were* the sons of Joktan.

^f Deut. ii. 23.—^g Gen. x. 15, &c.—^h Gen. x. 22; xi. 10.
ⁱ Or, *Mash*, Genesis x. 23.—^j That is, *Division*, Gen. x. 25.
^k Gen. x. 26.

ceeds to those that had many of them been enemies to the church, and thence hastens to the line of Abraham, breaking off abruptly from all the other families of the sons of Noah, but that of Arphaxad, from whom Christ was to come. The great promise of the Messiah was transmitted from Adam to Seth, from him to Shem, from him to Eber, and so to the Jewish nation, who were intrusted above all nations with that sacred treasure, till the promise was performed, and the Messiah was come.

Verse 14. *The Jebusite*—The names which follow until verse 17 are not the names of particular persons, but of people, or nations. And all these descended from Canaan, though some of them were afterward extinct, or confounded with others of their brethren by cohabitation or mutual marriages, whereby they lost their names; which is the reason why they are no more mentioned, at least under these names.

Verses 17-19. *The sons of Shem*—Either the name of sons is so taken here as to include grandsons, or *the children of Aram* are understood before Uz, out of Gen. x. 23, where they are expressed. *Arphaxad begat*—Either immediately, or mediately by his son Canaan, who is expressed Luke iii. 35. *Divided*—In their languages and habitations.

A. M. 2851. 24 ¶¹ Shem, Arphaxad, Shelah,
B. C. 1853.

25 ¹ Eber, Peleg, Reu,

26 Serug, Nahor, Terah,

27 ¹ Abram: the same is Abraham.

28 The sons of Abraham; ² Isaac, and ³ Ishmael.

29 ¶ These are their generations. The ⁰ first-born of Ishmael, Nebaioth; then Kedar, and Adbeel, and Mibsam,

30 Mishma, and Dumah, Massa, ⁶ Hadad, and Tema,

31 Jetur, Naphish, and Kedemah. These are the sons of Ishmael.

32 ¶ Now ² the sons of Keturah, Abraham's concubine: she bare Zimran, and Jokshan, and Medan, and Midian, and Ishbak, and Shuah. And the sons of Jokshan; Sheba, and Dedan.

33 And the sons of Midian; Ephah, and Ephraim, and Henoch, and Abida, and Eldaah. All these are the sons of Keturah.

34 ¶ And ⁴ Abraham begat Isaac. ⁷ The sons of Isaac; Esau, and Israel.

35 ¶ The sons of ⁵ Esau; Eliphaz, Reuel, and Jeush, and Jaalam, and Korah.

36 The sons of Eliphaz; Teman, and Omar, ⁶ Zephi, and Gatam, Kenaz, and Timna, and Amalek.

37 The sons of Reuel; Nahath, Zerah, Shammah, and Mizzah.

38 ¶ And ⁴ the sons of Seir; Lotan, and Shobal, and Zibeon, and Anah, and Dishon, and Ezer, and Dishan.

39 And the sons of Lotan; Hori, and ⁷ Homam: and Timna was Lotan's sister.

¹ Gen. xi. 10; Luke iii. 31, &c.—² Gen. xi. 15.—³ Gen. xvii. 5.—⁴ Gen. xxi. 2, 3.—⁵ Gen. xvi. 11, 15.—⁶ Gen. xxv. 13-16.—⁷ Or, Hadar, Gen. xxv. 15.—⁸ Gen. xxv. 1, 2.—⁹ Gen. xxi. 2.—¹⁰ Gen. xxv. 25.—¹¹ Gen. xxxvi. 9.—¹² Or, Zepho, Gen. xxxvi. 11.—¹³ Gen. xxxvi. 20.

Verse 24. *Shem, Arphaxad, &c.*—Having given a brief and general account of the original of the world, and the people in it, he now returns to a more large and particular account of the genealogy of Shem, from whom the Jews were descended.

Verse 28. *The sons of Abraham*—All nations but the seed of Abraham are already shaken off from this genealogy. Not that we conclude, no particular persons of any other nation but this found favour with God; multitudes will be brought to heaven out of every nation, and we may hope there were many, very many people in the world, whose names were in the book of life, though they did not spring from the loins of Abraham.

40 The sons of Shobal; ⁸ Alian, A. M. 2326.
and Manabath, and Ebal, ⁹ Shephi, B. C. 1676.
and Onam. And the sons of Zibeon; Aiah, and Anah.

41 The sons of Anah; ⁹ Dishon. And the sons of Dishon; ¹⁰ Amram, and Eshban, and Ithran, and Cheran.

42 The sons of Ezer; Bilhan, and Zavan, and ¹¹ Jakan. The sons of Dishan; Uz, and Aran.

43 ¶ Now these are the ⁸ kings that reigned in the land of Edom before any king reigned over the children of Israel; Bela the son of Beor: and the name of his city was Dinhabah.

44 And when Bela was dead, Jobab the son of Zerah of Bozrah reigned in his stead.

45 And when Jobab was dead, Husham of the land of the Temanites reigned in his stead.

46 And when Husham was dead, Hadad the son of Bedad, which smote Midian in the field of Moab, reigned in his stead: and the name of his city was Avith:

47 And when Hadad was dead, Samlah of Mazrekah reigned in his stead.

48 ⁷ And when Samlah was dead, Shaul of Rehoboth by the river reigned in his stead.

49 And when Shaul was dead, Baal-hanan the son of Achbor reigned in his stead.

50 And when Baal-hanan was dead, ¹² Hadad reigned in his stead: and the name of his city was ¹³ Pai; and his wife's name was Mehetabel, the daughter of Matred, the daughter of Mezahab.

51 ¶ Hadad died also. And the ⁸ dukes of

⁷ Or, Heman, Gen. xxxvi. 22.—⁸ Or, Alban, Gen. xxxvi. 23.
⁹ Or, Shepho, Gen. xxxvi. 23.—¹⁰ Gen. xxxvi. 25.—¹¹ Or, Hemdan, Genesis xxxvi. 26.—¹² Or, Achan, Gen. xxxvi. 27.
¹³ Or, Gen. xxxvi. 31, &c.—¹⁴ Gen. xxxvi. 37.—¹⁵ Or, Hadar, Gen. xxxvi. 39.—¹⁶ Or, Pau, Gen. xxxvi. 30.—¹⁷ Gen. xxxvi. 40.

Verse 36. *And Timna*—There is another Timna, the concubine of Eliphaz, Gen. xxxvi. 12; but this was one of his sons, though called by the same name; there being some names common both to men and women in the Hebrew and in other languages.

Verse 38. *The sons of Seir*—This Seir was not Esau, nor of his posterity, but the ancient lord of this country, from whom it had its name, (see Gen. xxxvi. 20.) whose genealogy is here set down, that it might be understood from whom Eliphaz's concubine and the mother of Amalek sprung; and because of that affinity which was contracted between his and Esau's posterity. Those who were not united

A. M. 2508. Edom were; Duke Timnah, Duke
B. C. 1496. ¹⁴ Aliah, Duke Jetheth,
52 Duke Aholibamah, Duke Elah, Duke
Pinon,

¹⁴ Or,

and incorporated with them, were destroyed by
them, Deut. ii. 12.

Verse 54. *These are the dukes of Edom*—Let us,
in reading these genealogies, think of the multitudes
that have gone through the world, have successively
acted their parts in it, and retired into darkness. All

53 Duke Kenaz, Duke Teman, A. M. 2508
Duke Mibzar, B. C. 1496.
54 Duke Magdiel, Duke Iram. *These are*
the dukes of Edom.

Alvah.

these and all theirs had their day: many of them
made a mighty noise in the world, until their day
came to fall, and their place knew them no more.
The paths of death are trodden paths. How soon
are we to tread them!

CHAPTER II.

The sons of Jacob, 1, 2. Of Judah, to Jesse, 3-12. Of Jesse, 13-17. Of Caleb, the son of Hezron, 18-20. Of Hezron, 21-24. Of Jerahmeel down to Elishama, 25-41. Another branch of Caleb's posterity, 42-49. The sons of Caleb, the son of Hur, 50-55.

A. M. 2252. **THESE** are the sons of ¹ Israel;
B. C. 1752. ^a Reuben, Simeon, Levi, and Ju-

dah, Issachar, and Zebulun,
2 Dan, Joseph, and Benjamin, Naphtali, Gad,
and Asher.

3 ¶ The sons of ^b Judah; Er, and Onan, and
Shelah: *which* three were born unto him of
the daughter of ^c Shua the Canaanitess. And
^d Er, the firstborn of Judah, was evil in the
sight of the LORD; and he slew him.

4 And ^e Tamar his daughter-in-law bare him
Pharez and Zerah. All the sons of Judah *were*
five.

¹ Or, Jacob.—^a Gen. xxix. 32; xxxv. 18, 22; xlv. 8, &c.
^b Gen. xxxviii. 3; xlv. 12; Num. xxvi. 19.—^c Gen. xxxviii.
2.—^d Genesis xxxviii. 7.—^e Gen. xxxviii. 29; Matt. i. 3.
^f Gen. xlv. 12; Ruth iv. 18.

NOTES ON CHAPTER II.

Verse 3. *The sons of Judah*—He puts Judah first,
because the best part of the right of the firstborn,
namely, the dominion, was conferred on him, Gen.
xlix. 8; in consequence of which, his tribe obtained
a pre-eminence among, and a kind of superiority
over the rest, even before the time of David. And
from David's time, it is without doubt, that till the
Babylonish captivity a kingly power continued in
this tribe; Zerubbabel, also, who was their leader,
when they returned to their own land, was of the
same tribe. The chief reason, however, why the
genealogy of Judah is set down first, is because the
Messiah was to descend from him.

Verse 6. *And Dara*—If these be the same who
are mentioned as *the sons of Mahol*, (1 Kings iv. 31,)
either the same man had two names, Zerah and Ma-
hol, as was usual among the Hebrews, or one of
these was their immediate father, and the other their

5 The sons of ^f Pharez; Hezron, A. M. 2252.
and Hamul. B. C. 1752.

6 And the sons of Zerah; ^g Zimri, ^h and
Ethan, and Heman, and Calcol, and ⁱ Dara :
five of them in all.

7 And the sons of ^b Carmi; ⁴ Achar, the
troubler of Israel, who transgressed in the thing
¹ accused.

8 And the sons of Ethan; Azariah.

9 The sons also of Hezron, that were born
unto him; Jerahmeel, and ⁵ Ram, and ⁶ Che-
lubai.

10 And Ram ^h begat Amminadab; and Am-

^a Or, Zabdi, Josh. vii. 1.—^b 1 Kings iv. 31.—^c Or, Darda.
^d Chap. iv. 1.—^e Or, Achar.—^f Josh. vi. 18; vii. 1.—^g Or,
Aram, Matt. i. 3.—^h Or, Caleb, Verses 18, 42.—ⁱ Ruth iv.
19; Matt. i. 4.

grandfather. These are named, because they were
the glory of their father's house. When the Holy
Ghost would magnify the wisdom of Solomon, he
saith, *he was wiser than these four men*. That four
brothers should be so eminent, was a rare thing.

Verse 7. *The sons of Carmi*—This man is here
mentioned, because he was the son of Zimri, who
was also called Zabdi, Josh. vii. 18. *Achar, the*
troubler of Israel—He who in Josh. vii. is called
Achan, is here, by a small variation, elegantly and
significantly called *Achar*, which means *troubler* :
because he had brought Israel into great danger and
distress, by the sin he committed.

Verses 9, 10. *And Ram*—Who is mentioned in
the genealogy of our Saviour, (Matt. i. 3, 4,) and
called *Aram*. *Nashon, prince of the children of*
Judah—Namely, when, being come out of Egypt,
they pitched under their several standards, Num-
bers ii. 3.

A. M. 2533. minadab begat Nahshon, ¹ prince of
B. C. 1471. the children of Judah;

11 And Nahshon begat ⁷Salma, and Salma begat Boaz,

12 And Boaz begat Obed, and Obed begat Jesse.

B. C. 1090. 13 ¶ ⁸ And Jesse begat his firstborn Eliab, and Abinadab the second, and ⁹Shimma the third,

14 Nethaneel the fourth, Raddai the fifth,

15 Ozem the sixth, David the seventh:

16 Whose sisters were Zeruah, and Abigail. ¹⁰ And the sons of Zeruah; Abishai, and Joab, and Asahel, three.

17 And ¹¹ Abigail bare Amasa: and the father of Amasa was ¹² Jether the Ishmaelite.

B. C. 1471. 18 ¶ And Caleb the son of Hezron begat children of Azubah his wife, and of Jerioth: her sons are these; Jeshur, and Sbobab, and Ardon.

19 And when Azubah was dead, Caleb took unto him ¹³ Ephrath, which bare him Hur.

20 And Hur begat Uri, and Uri begat ¹⁴ Bezaleel.

21 ¶ And afterward Hezron went in to the daughter of ¹⁵ Machir the father of Gilead, whom he ¹⁶ married when he was threescore years old; and she bare him Segub.

22 And Segub begat Jair, who had three and twenty cities in the land of Gilead.

23 ¹⁷ And he took Geshur, and Aram, A. M. 2533. with the towns of Jair, from them, B. C. 1471. with Kenath and the towns thereof, even threescore cities. All these belonged to the sons of Machir the father of Gilead.

24 And after that Hezron was dead in Caleb-ephratah, then Abiah, Hezron's wife, bare him ¹⁸ Ashur the father of Tekoa.

25 ¶ And the sons of Jerahmeel the firstborn of Hezron were, Ram the firstborn, and Bunah, and Orem, and Ozem, and Ahijah.

26 Jerahmeel had also another wife, whose name was Atarah; she was the mother of Onam.

27 And the sons of Ram, the firstborn of Jerahmeel, were, Maaz, and Jamin, and Eker.

28 And the sons of Onam were, Shammai, and Jada. And the sons of Shammai; Nadab, and Abishur.

29 And the name of the wife of Abishur was Abihail; and she bare him Ahban, and Molid.

30 And the sons of Nadab; Seled, and Appaim: but Seled died without children.

31 And the sons of Appaim; Ishi. And the sons of Ishi; Sheshan. And ¹⁹ the children of Sheshan; Ahlai.

32 And the sons of Jada the brother of Shammai; Jether, and Jonathan: and Jether died without children.

¹ Num. i. 7; ii. 3.—⁷ Or, Salmon, Ruth iv. 21; Matt. i. 4.
² 2 Sam. xvi. 6.—⁸ Or, Shammah, 1 Sam. xvi. 9.—⁹ 2 Sam. ii. 18.—¹⁰ 2 Sam. xvii. 25.—¹¹ 2 Sam. xvii. 25, *Ithra an Israelite.*

¹⁷ Ver. 50.—¹⁸ Exod. xxxi. 2.—¹⁹ Num. xxvii. 1.—¹⁶ Heb. took.—²⁰ Numbers xxxii. 41; Deut. iii. 14; Joshua xiii. 30. Chap. iv. 5.—²¹ Verses 34, 35.

Verses 13-15. *Eliab*—Called also *Elihu* chap. xvii. 18, unless that was another son of Jesse, as some think, not mentioned elsewhere; which would make the number to be eight, according to 1 Sam. xvi. 10; xvii. 12. Or that *Elihu*, although there called the *brother* of David, might perhaps only be his kinsman, according to the usual language of Scripture. *David the seventh*—David was certainly the youngest son of Jesse, 1 Sam. xvi. 11. And if, as seems probable, one of them died soon after the time when they were said to be eight, he would of course be reckoned as the seventh.

Verses 17, 18. *Jether the Ishmaelite*—By birth or habitation, but by profession an Israelite, 2 Sam. xvii. 25. *And her sons*—The sons of Azubah, who is by way of distinction called his wife, when Jerioth probably was only his concubine, and, it may seem, barren: therefore, upon Azubah's death he married another wife, verse 19. And those other sons of this Caleb, mentioned verse 42, are his sons by some other wife distinct from all these.

Verse 21. *The father of Gilead*—It is doubtful

whether the word Gilead is here the name of a man, or of the country so called: if it be the latter, the expression means, *the prince of Gilead*, as the word *father* often signifies: if the former, the Gilead intended must have been a person of noted valour, probably the great champion in those parts.

Verse 23. *All these belonged to the sons of Machir*—Partly to his own sons, and partly to his son-in-law Jair, who by reason of that dear affection which was between them, and his forsaking his own tribe and kindred to fight for them, and to dwell with them, is here reckoned as his own son.

Verse 24. *The father of Tekoa*—A known place, of which he is termed the father, because he was either the progenitor of the people who inhabited it, or their prince and ruler, or the builder of the city.

Verse 31. *The sons of Appaim, Ishi*—The plural number is often used, when one son or daughter only is spoken of, for in that one, all the posterity are comprehended. *Ahlai*—It is plain from verses 34 and 35, that this Ahlai was not a son, but a daughter.

A. M. 2533. 33 And the sons of Jonathan ; Pe-
B. C. 1471. leth, and Zaza. These were the
sons of Jerahmeel.

34 ¶ Now Sheshan had no sons, but daughters.
And Sheshan had a servant, an Egyptian,
whose name was Jarha.

35 And Sheshan gave his daughter to Jarha
his servant to wife ; and she bare him Attai.

36 And Attai begat Nathan, and Nathan
begat * Zabad,

37 And Zabad begat Ephlal, and Ephlal begat
Obed,

38 And Obed begat Jehu, and Jehu begat
Azariah,

39 And Azariah begat Helez, and Helez begat
Eleasah,

40 And Eleasah begat Sisamai, and Sisamai
begat Shallum,

41 And Shallum begat Jekamiah, and Jeka-
miah begat Elishama.

42 ¶ Now the sons of Caleb the brother of
Jerahmeel were, Mesha his firstborn, which was
the father of Ziph ; and the sons of Mareshah
the father of Hebron.

43 And the sons of Hebron ; Korah, and Tap-
puah, and Rekem, and Shema.

44 And Shema begat Raham, the father of
Jorkoam : and Rekem begat Shammai.

45 And the son of Shammai was Maon : and
Maon was the father of Beth-zur.

46 And Ephah, Caleb's concubine, bare Ha-

ran, and Moza, and Gazez : and A. M. 2533.
B. C. 1471. Haran begat Gazez.

47 And the sons of Jahdai ; Regem, and
Jotham, and Geshan, and Pelet, and Ephah,
and Shaaph.

48 Maachah, Caleb's concubine, bare Sheber,
and Tirhanah.

49 She bare also Shaaph the father of Mad-
mannah, Sheva the father of Machbenah, and
the father of Gibeaz : and the daughter of Caleb
was 7 Achsah.

50 ¶ These were the sons of Caleb the son of
Hur, the firstborn of 11 Ephratah ; Shobal the
father of Kirjath-jearim,

51 Salma the father of Beth-lehem, Hareph
the father of Beth-gader.

52 And Shobal the father of Kirjath-jearim
had sons ; 12 Haroeh, and 13 half of the Mana-
hethites.

53 And the families of Kirjath-jearim ; the
Ithrites, and the Puhites, and the Shumathites,
and the Mishraites : of them came the Zareath-
ites, and the Eshtaulites.

54 The sons of Salma ; Beth-lehem, and the
Netophathites, 14 Ataroth, the house of Joab, and
half of the Manahethites, the Zorites.

55 And the families of the scribes which dwelt
at Jabez ; the Tirathites, the Shimeathites, and
Suchathites. These are the * Kenites that
came of Hemath, the father of the house of
* Rechab.

* Chap. xi. 41.—7 Josh. xv. 17.—11 Or, Ephratah, Verse 19.
12 Or, Reaiah, Chapter iv. 2.—13 Or, half of the Menuchites.

or, Hatsihammenuchoth.—14 Or, Asarites, or, crowns of the house
of Joab.—2 Judg. i. 16.—3 Jer. xxxv. 2.

Verse 34. *But daughters*—We read of no more
than one daughter that he had : but the writer speaks
in the plural number, as before, verse 31. *An
Egyptian, whose name was Jarha*—To whom, as
being a proselyte to the Jewish religion, and a faith-
ful servant, his master Sheshan first gave his free-
dom, and then his daughter in marriage.

Verse 45. *The father of Beth-zur*—A place in
Judah, (Josh. xv. 58,) of which this Maon was the
founder. The same is the meaning of the word fa-
ther in several of the following verses. Madman-
nah, Machbenah, Gibeaz, &c., being the names not of
persons, but of places.

Verse 53. *The families of Kirjath-jearim ; the
Ithrites, &c.*—The inhabitants of Kirjath-jearim
were divided into several families, as Kimchi inter-
prets it, and these here mentioned were the heads
of families, denominated from *Ithra* or *Jether*, and
Puhah, &c. As from *Jimni* came the family of the
Jimnites, and from *Beriah* the *Beriites*, in Num.
xxvi. 44. *Of them came the Zareathites, &c.*—

Zarah and *Eshtaul* were two cities in the tribe of
Judah, which were built by two persons of Kirjath-
jearim of this name, who inhabited these places,
and left two great families, who were from them
called Zareathites and Eshtaulites.

Verse 54. *The sons of Salma ; Beth-lehem*—That
is, the inhabitants of Beth-lehem : and so of *Ataroth*,
and the house of *Joab*, or, as it should rather be ren-
dered, *Beth-joab*, for the writer is not speaking of a
family, but of a place. The people of those towns,
and the Manahethites, and the Zorites, were all the
descendants of this Salma, the son of Caleb. So
that, it appears, he had a very numerous posterity.

Verse 55. *The families of the scribes*—Either
civil, who were public notaries, that wrote and signed
legal instruments ; or ecclesiastical. And these were
either Levites or Simeonites, or rather Kenites, and
are here mentioned not as if they were of the tribe
of Judah, but because they dwelt among them, and
probably were allied to them by marriages, and so in
a manner incorporated with them.

CHAPTER III.

The sons of David, 1-9. His successors in the throne, 10-16. The remains of his family in and after the captivity, 17-24.

A. M. 2951. B. C. 1053. **N**OW these were the sons of David, which were born unto him in Hebron; the firstborn ^a Amnon, of Ahinoam the ^b Jezreelitess; the second ^c Daniel, of Abigail the Carmelitess:

2 The third, Absalom the son of Maachah the daughter of Talmai king of Geshur: the fourth, Adonijah the son of Haggith:

3 The fifth, Shephatiah of Abital: the sixth, Ithream by ^e Eglah his wife.

4 *These* six were born unto him in Hebron; and ^d there he reigned seven years and six months: and ^e in Jerusalem he reigned thirty and three years.

5 ^f And these were born unto him in Jerusalem; ^g Shimea, and Shobab, and Nathan, and ^h Solomon, four, of ⁱ Bath-shua the daughter of ^j Ammiel:

6 Ibhar also, and ^k Elishama, and Eliphelet,

7 And Nogah, and Nepheg, and A. M. 2951. B. C. 1053. Japhia,

8 And Elishama, and ^l Eliada, and Eliphelet, ^m nine.

9 *These were* all the sons of David, besides the sons of the concubines, and ⁿ Tamar their sister.

10 ¶ And Solomon's son was ^o Rehoboam, ^p Abia his son, Asa his son, Jehoshaphat his son,

11 Joram his son, ^q Ahaziah his son, Joash his son,

12 Amaziah his son, ^r Azariah his son, Jotham his son,

13 Ahaz his son, Hezekiah his son, Manasseh his son,

14 Amon his son, Josiah his son.

15 And the sons of Josiah were, the firstborn ¹⁰ Johanan, the second ¹¹ Jehoiakim, the third ¹² Zedekiah, the fourth Shallum.

^a 2 Sam. iii. 2.—^b Joshua xv. 56.—^c Or, *Chileab*, 2 Sam. iii. 2.—^d 2 Sam. iii. 5.—^e 2 Sam. ii. 11.—^f 2 Sam. v. 5. ^g 2 Sam. v. 14; Chap. xiv. 4.—^h Or, *Shammua*, 2 Sam. v. 14. ⁱ 2 Sam. xii. 24.—^j Or, *Bath-sheba*, 2 Sam. xi. 3.—^k Or, *Eliam*, 2 Sam. xi. 3.—^l Or, *Elishua*, 2 Sam. v. 15.—^m Or, *Beclada*, Chap. xiv. 7.

ⁿ 2 Samuel v. 14, 16.—^o 2 Samuel xiii. 1.—^p 1 Kings xi. 43; xv. 6.—^q Or, *Abijam*, 1 Kings xv. 1.—^r Or, *Azariah*, 2 Chronicles xxii. 6, or, *Jehoahaz*, 2 Chron. xxi. 17.—^s Or, *Uzziah*, 2 Kings xv. 30.—^t Or, *Jehoahaz*, 2 Kings xxiii. 30. ^u Or, *Eliakim*, 2 Kings xxiii. 34.—^v Or, *Mattaniah*, 2 Kings xxiv. 17.

NOTES ON CHAPTER III.

Verse 1. *Daniel*—This son is called *Chileab*, (2 Sam. iii. 3,) but whether he had two names, or there be an error in one of these passages, is not possible to determine. The other alterations in names, which are found in the following verses, may be corrected by the parallel passages in Samuel. As the genealogy of Judah was given first, because the dominion was vested in that tribe, and the Messiah was to descend from it; so, for similar reasons, the genealogy of David is particularly recorded.

Verse 3. *By Eglah his wife*—Eglah is generally thought by the Jews to be Michal, Saul's daughter; who, some think, is peculiarly called *his wife*, because she was his only legal wife, according to the divine institution: all the rest he took according to the custom then reigning. See on 2 Sam. iii. 5.

Verse 5. *Of Bath-shua, the daughter of Ammiel*—In 2 Sam. xi. 3, she is called *Bath-sheba*, as she is through the whole Scripture, and her father Eliam. Solomon was the eldest of these four sons; but is mentioned last, because the discourse was to return to his genealogy, verse 10.

Verse 8. *Elishama and Eliphelet*—These two names are mentioned before, verse 6. It is supposed that the two children so called had died in their infancy; and therefore David preserved their memory by giving their names unto two others, who were born afterward, and lived longer. *Nine*—Besides the four born of Bath-sheba, verse 5. There are

only seven mentioned 2 Sam. v. 16, those two, who died early, being there omitted.

Verse 15. *The firstborn Johanan*—This Johanan is thought by many to be the same with Jehoahaz, who succeeded Josiah in the throne. But it seems more probable, as he is not mentioned in the book of Kings nor elsewhere in the Scriptures, that he died before his father. *The fourth Shallum*—Of whom, at least under that name, there is no mention in the history of the reign of Josiah's sons in 2 Kings: but in Jer. xxii. 11 there is mention of *Shallum the son of Josiah, king of Judah, who reigned instead of Josiah his father*; whom most conceive to be the same, who is otherwise called Jehoahaz, 2 Kings xxiii. And this seems most probable, 1st, From that phrase, *He reigned instead of Josiah*, which implies that he immediately succeeded his father, otherwise he would have been said to have reigned instead of his brother, as Zedekiah is said to have reigned instead of Jehoiachin, 2 Kings xxiv. 17. 2d, From the order of that discourse of Jeremiah, which was directed to Zedekiah, and his servants, and people, and whom he admonisheth by the examples of the kings his predecessors, and of the sentence of God concerning each of them, and that in the order in which they reigned; of Shallum, verse 11, &c.; of Jehoiakim, verse 18, &c.; of Jehoniah or Coniah, verse 28. 3d, From the nature of that prophecy, Jer. xxii. 11, 12, delivered concerning Shallum, which perfectly agrees to Jeho-

A. M. 2951. 16 And the sons of ¹Jehoiakim :
B. C. 1053. ¹³Jeconiah his son, Zedekiah ² his
son.

17 ¶ And the sons of Jeconiah ; Assir, ¹⁴Salathiel ² his son.

18 Malchiram also, and Pedaiah, and She-
nazar, Jecamiah, Hoshama, and Nedabiah.

19 And the sons of Pedaiah *were*, Zerubbabel, and Shimei : and the sons of Zerubbabel ; Meshullam, and Hananiah, and Shelomith their sister :

20 And Hashubah, and Ohel, and Berechiah, and Hasadiah, Jushab-hesed, five.

¹ Matt. i. 11.—¹³ Or, *Jehoiachin*, 2 Kings xxiv. 6, or, *Coniah*, Jer. xxii. 24.

haz, who was carried captive, not so far as Babylon, but only to Egypt, a very near country ; whence the people hoped that he would speedily and easily return, or be re-established in his throne by the king of Egypt, in opposition to the king of Babylon. 4th, Because Jehoahaz was one of Josiah's younger sons, (2 Kings xxiii. 31, 36,) and this Shallum is here called his *fourth* son.

Verse 16. *Zedekiah his son*—This was another Zedekiah. How seldom has a crown gone in a direct line, from father to son, as it did here, for seventeen generations ! This was the recompense of David's piety. About the captivity, the lineal descent was interrupted, and the crown went from a nephew to an uncle, a presage of the glory's departing from that house.

Verse 17. *The sons of Jeconiah, Assir*—The word אסיר, *Assir*, means *captive*, or *prisoner*, and does not appear to be a person's name here, but to be added to signify that Jeconiah begat his son Salathiel when he was a captive in Babylon, according to Matt. i. 12.

Verses 18, 19. *Malchiram also, and Pedaiah*—These were the sons of Salathiel : and there is therefore something to be supplied, to make the sense of this verse plain ; namely, *The sons of Salathiel*

21 And the sons of Hananiah ; A. M. 2951.
Pelatiah, and Jesaiah : the sons of B. C. 1053.
Rephaiah, the sons of Arnan, the sons of Obadiah, the sons of Shechaniah.

22 And the sons of Shechaniah ; Shemaiah : and the sons of Shemaiah ; ° Hattush, and Igeal, and Bariah, and Neariah, and Shaphat, six.

23 And the sons of Neariah ; Elioenai, and ¹⁵Hezekiah, and Azrikam, three.

24 And the sons of Elioenai *were*, Hodaiah, and Eliashib, and Pelaiah, and Akkub, and Johanan, and Dalaiah, and Anani, seven.

² 2 Kings xxiv. 17, being his uncle.—¹⁴ Hebrew, *Shealtiel*.
¹⁵ Matt. i. 12.—¹⁶ Ezra viii. 2.—¹⁶ Heb. *Hiskijahu*.

were Malchiram, &c. The sons of Pedaiah, Zerubbabel, &c.—But, Luke iii. 27, Zerubbabel is called the son of Salathiel ; and therefore he must have been the son of Pedaiah only by adoption ; or else Salathiel dying without children, Pedaiah begat Zerubbabel of his wife, and so raised up seed to his brother. Thus Zerubbabel was the son of Pedaiah, because begotten by him, and yet the son of Salathiel, because begotten of his wife to be his heir. *Shelomith their sister*—Sister to the last two named sons of Zerubbabel, namely, by both parents ; and therefore named before the other five, (verse 20,) who were her brethren by the father, but not by the mother.

Verses 21, 22. *The sons of Shechaniah*—All these, both parents and their sons blended together, are mentioned as the sons of Hananiah, and branches of the royal stock. *Six*—Including the father. But the Hebrew word, *shisha*, which is rendered *six*, may be the proper name of one of the sons of Shemaiah. As the family of David was the most considerable of any of the tribe of Judah, the genealogy of his descendants was preserved with great care and exactness ; and is here recorded in part, to assist us in tracing the descent of our Lord Jesus Christ from him, that we might have that proof, among others, of his being the true Messiah.

CHAPTER IV.

The posterity of Shobal, 1-4. Of Ashur, 5-8. The character and prayer of Jabez, 9, 10. The posterity of Chelub and others, 11-20. Of Shelah, 21-23. The posterity, cities, and victories of Simeon, 24-43.

A. M. 2704. THE sons of Judah ; ²Pharez, Hez-
B. C. 1300. ron, and ¹Carmi, and Hur, and
Shobal.

¹ Gen. xxxviii. 29 ; xlv. 12.—¹ Or, *Chelubai*, Chap. ii. 9,

NOTES ON CHAPTER IV.

Verse 1. *The sons of Judah*—The posterity : for only Pharez was his immediate son. But they are

2 And ²Reaiah the son of Shobal begat A. M. 2704.
Jahath ; and Jahath begat Ahumai, and B. C. 1300.
Lahad. *These are the families of the Zorathites.*

or *Caleb*, Chapter ii. 18.—² Or, *Haroch*, Chapter ii. 52

all mentioned here only to show Shobal's descent from Judah.

Verses 2, 3. *The families of the Zorathites*—So

A. M. 2704. 3 And these *were* of the father of
B. C. 1300. Etam; Jezreel, and Ishma, and Id-
bash: and the name of their sister *was* Haze-
leponi:

4 And Penuel the father of Gedor, and Ezer
the father of Hushah. These *are* the sons of
Hur, the firstborn of Ephratah, the father of
Beth-lehem.

5 And Ashur the father of Tekoa had two
wives, Helah and Naarah.

6 And Naarah bare him Ahuzam, and He-
pher, and Temeni, and Haahashtari. These
were the sons of Naarah.

7 And the sons of Helah *were* Zereth, and
Jezoar, and Ethnan.

8 And Coz begat Anub, and Zobebah, and
the families of Aharhel the son of Harum.

9 ¶ And Jabez was ^d more honourable than
his brethren: and his mother called his name

^b Chapter ii. 50.—^c Chapter ii. 24.—^d Genesis xxxiv. 19.
^e That is, *sorrowful*.—^f Hebrew, *If thou wilt, &c.*—^g Hebrew,
do me.

denominated, not from a man, but a place named
Zoreah, (chap. ii. 53, and Josh. xv. 33,) situated in
the tribe of Judah. Here several families of that
tribe settled; who were descended from *Jahath*,
Ahumai, and *Lahad*, the sons and grandsons of
Shobal. *Of the father of Etam*—Descended from
the proprietor or chief man of a place, called Etam,
which was in this tribe, verse 32.

Verse 4. *Penuel the father of Gedor*—In verse
18, Jered is said to be the father, that is, the founder
or lord of Gedor. It is probable they were both
concerned in building or governing it. *The sons
of Hur*—By some other wife than her by whom he
had the children, mentioned chap. ii. 20. *The fa-
ther of Beth-lehem*—In chap. ii. 51, Salma is said to
be the father of Beth-lehem. But this may be un-
derstood as in the foregoing clause of this verse.

Verse 9. *Jabez was more honourable, &c.*—For
courage and fervent piety. *His mother called his
name Jabez*—That is, *sorrowful; saying, Because I
bare him with sorrow*—She had hard labour when
she was in travail with him. She records this, that
it might be a memorandum to herself, to be thank-
ful to God as long as she lived, for bringing her
through that sorrow: and a memorandum to him,
that she bore him into a vale of tears, in which he
might expect *few days and full of trouble*. And
the sorrow implied in his name might serve to put
a seriousness upon his spirit.

Verse 10. *Jabez called on the God of Israel*—
The living and true God, who alone can hear and
answer prayer: and in prayer he had an eye to
him as the God of Israel, a God in covenant with
his people, the God with whom Jacob wrestled and
prevailed, and was thence called Israel. *Saying,
O that thou wouldst bless me indeed!*—He did

³ Jabez, saying, Because I bare him
with sorrow. A. M. 2704.
B. C. 1300.

10 And Jabez called on the God of Israel,
saying, 'O that thou wouldst bless me indeed,
and enlarge my coast, and that thy hand
might be with me, and that thou wouldst
⁶ keep *me* from evil, that it may not grieve
me! And God granted him that which he
requested.

11 ¶ And Chelub the brother of Shuah begat
Mehir, which *was* the father of Eshton.

12 And Eshton begat Beth-rapha, and Pa-
seah, and Tehinnah the father of ⁶ Irnahash.
These *are* the men of Rechah.

13 And the sons of Kenaz; ⁶ Othniel, and
Seraiah: and the sons of Othniel; ⁷ Hathath.

14 And Meonothai begat Ophrah: and Se-
raiah begat Joab, the father of ¹ the ⁸ valley of
⁹ Charashim; for they were craftsmen.

⁶ Or, *the city of Nahash*.—⁶ Joshua xv. 17.—⁷ Or, *Ha-
thath*, and *Meonothai*, who begat, &c.—⁸ Neh. xi. 35.—⁹ Or,
inhabitants of the valley.—⁹ That is, *craftsmen*.

not say in what respect he desired God to bless
him, but leaves that to God, giving him, as it were,
a blank paper, that he might write what he pleased.
Spiritual blessings are the best blessings, and those
are blessed indeed, who are blessed with them.
God's blessings are real things, and produce real
effects. We can but *wish* a blessing: he *commands*
it. *And enlarge my coast*—Prosper my endeavours
for the increase of what has fallen to my lot: drive
out these Canaanites, whom thou hast commanded
us to root out; and therefore I justly beg and ex-
pect thy blessing in the execution of thy command.
That thy hand might be with me—The prayer of
Moses for this tribe of Judah was, that his own
hands might be sufficient for him; but Jabez ex-
pects not that, unless he have God's hand with him,
and the presence of his power. God's hand with
us to lead, protect, strengthen us, and to work all
our works in and for us, is indeed a hand sufficient
for us, yea, all-sufficient. *And keep me from evil*—
The evil of sin, the evil of trouble; all the evil de-
signs of my enemies, and all disastrous events.
That it may not grieve me—That it may not op-
press and overcome me. He uses this expression
in allusion to his name, which signifies *grief*: as
if he had said, Lord, let me not have that grief
which my name implies, and which my sin de-
serves. *God granted him that which he requested*
—Prospered him remarkably in his undertakings,
in his worldly business, in his conflicts with the Ca-
naanites, and his endeavours after knowledge, and
holiness, and other spiritual blessings.

Verses 12–14. *These are the men of Rechah*—
From these sprung the inhabitants of Rechah, a
town not mentioned elsewhere. *The sons of Kenaz*
—Who was the son, either of Chelub, (verse 11.) or

A. M. 2704. 15 And the sons of Caleb the son
B. C. 1300. of Jephunneh; Iru, Elah, and Naam:
and the sons of Elah, ¹⁰ even Kenaz.

16 And the sons of Jehaleleel; Ziph, and Ziphah, Tiria, and Asareel.

17 And the sons of Ezra were Jether, and Mered, and Ephraim, and Jalon: and she bare Miriam, and Shammai, and Ishbah the father of Eshtemoa.

18 And his wife ¹¹ Jehudijah bare Jered the father of Gedor, and Heber the father of Socho, and Jekuthiel the father of Zanoah. And these are the sons of Bithiah the daughter of Pharaoh, which Mered took.

19 And the sons of his wife ¹² Hodiah the sister of Naham, the father of Keilah the Garmite, and Eshtemoa the Maachathite.

20 And the sons of Shimon were, Amnon, and Rinnah, Ben-hanan, and Tilon. And the sons of Ishi were, Zoheth, and Ben-zoheth.

21 ¶ The sons of Shelah ¶ the son of Judah were, Er, the father of Lecah, and Laadah the

A. M. 2704. father of Mareshah, and the families
B. C. 1300. of the house of them that wrought
fine linen, of the house of Ashbea,

22 And Jokim, and the men of Chozeba, and Joash, and Saraph, who had the dominion in Moab, and Jashubi-lehem. And these are ancient things.

23 These were the potters, and those that dwelt among plants and hedges: there they dwelt with the king for his work

24 ¶ The sons of Simeon were, ¹³ Nemuel, and Jamin, ¹⁴ Jarib, Zerach, and Shaul:

25 Shallum his son, Mibsam his son, Mishma his son.

26 And the sons of Mishma; Hamuel his son, Zacchur his son, Shimei his son.

27 And Shimei had sixteen sons and six daughters: but his brethren had not many children, neither did all their family multiply ¹⁵ like to the children of Judah.

28 And they dwelt at ^b Beer-sheba, and Moladah, and Hazar-shual,

¹⁰ Or, *Uknaz*.—¹¹ Or, *the Jewess*.—¹² Or, *Jehudijah*, mentioned before.—¹³ Genesis xxxviii. 1, 5; xvi. 12.

¹³ Or, *Jemuel*, Gen. xlvi. 10; Exodus vi. 15; Num. xxvi. 12.
¹⁴ Or, *Jachin*, *Zohar*.—¹⁵ Heb. *unto*.—^b Josh. ii. 19.

of his son Eshton, (verse 12,) and the father of Jephunneh, and consequently Caleb's grandfather, (verse 15,) whence Caleb is called a Kenezite, Num. xxxii. 12. *Hathath*—Understand, and *Meonothai*, out of the beginning of the following verse, as in verse 7, where *Coz* must be supplied from the next verse. And similar ellipses we meet with elsewhere. *Joab, the father of the valley*—Of the inhabitants of the valley.

Verse 18. *Bithiah, the daughter of Pharaoh, whom Mered took*—That is, married. But it is not likely that he married the daughter of the king of Egypt, unless some natural daughter; but rather of some other person called by that name, who might either be an Israelite, or one brought by force out of Egypt by way of spoil.

Verse 21. *The sons of Shelah*—Having spoken of the posterity of Judah by Pharez, and by Zarah, he now comes to his progeny by Shelah. *The families of them that wrought fine linen*—From him came all those families that were famous for weaving and working in fine linen; wherewith their kings and priests were clothed.

Verses 22, 23. *Who had the dominion in Moab*—Which they ruled in the name and for the use of the kings of Judah, to whom Moab was subject from David's time. *Ancient things*—The sense is, those blessed times are long since past. Our ancestors had the dominion over the heathen, but their degenerate posterity are slaves in Chaldea, where they are employed as potters or gardeners, or in other servile works. *These were*—Or, rather, *these are the pot-*

ters, &c.—For he seems to oppose their present servitude to their former glory, and to show how low and mean they were in spirit, in that they would rather tarry among the heathen to do their drudgery than return to Jerusalem to serve God, and enjoy their freedom. *There they dwell*—Or, rather, *now dwell*, when their brethren are returned: for Ezra seems to have written this, after leave was given by Cyrus for the return of the Jews. *With the king for his work*—The king of Persia, esteeming it a greater honour and happiness to serve that earthly monarch in the meanest employments, than the King of kings in his temple, and in his most noble and heavenly work.

Verse 24. *The sons of Simeon were Nemuel, &c.*—These are here joined with Judah, because their possession was taken out of Judah's portion, Josh. xix. 1. This account seems to differ from that in Gen. xlvi. 10, both in the number and names of the persons; which is not strange, considering how customary it was among the Hebrews for one person to have two or three names given to him upon different occasions. And for *Ohad*, he may be omitted here, because he left no posterity after him as the rest did.

Verse 27. *Neither did their family multiply like the children of Judah*—The tribe of Simeon did not increase proportionably to the tribe of Judah in which they dwelt, as appears by those two catalogues, Num. i. 22; xxvi. 14; which is to be ascribed to God's curse upon them, delivered by the mouth of holy Jacob, (Gen. xlix.,) and signified by Moses's neglect of them, when he blessed all the other tribes.

A. M. 2704. 29 And at ¹⁶Bilhah, and at Ezem,
B. C. 1300. and at ¹⁷Tolad,

30 And at Bethuel, and at Hormah, and at Ziklag,

31 And at Beth-marcaboth, and ¹⁸Hazar-susim, and at Beth-birei, and at Shaaraim. These *were* their cities unto the reign of David.

32 And their villages *were*, ¹⁹Etam, and Ain, Rimmon, and Tochen, and Ashan, five cities:

33 And all their villages that *were* round about the same cities unto ²⁰Baal. These *were* their habitations, and ²¹their genealogy.

34 And Meshobab, and Jamlech, and Joshah the son of Amaziah,

35 And Joel, and Jehu the son of Josibiah, the son of Seraiah, the son of Asiel,

36 And Elioenai, and Jaakobah, and Jeshohaiah, and Asaiah, and Adiel, and Jesimiel, and Benaiah,

37 And Ziza the son of Shiphi, the son of Allon, the son of Jedaiah, the son of Shimri, the son of Shemaiah.

¹⁶ Or, *Balah*, Joshua xix. 3.—¹⁷ Or, *Eltolad*, Joshua xix. 4.
¹⁸ Or, *Hazarsusah*, Joshua xix. 5.—¹⁹ Or, *Ether*, Josh. xix. 7.
²⁰ Or, *Baalathbeer*, Josh. xix. 8.

Verse 31. *These were their cities*—Several of these cities, though given to Simeon by Joshua, yet, through the sloth or cowardice of that tribe, were not taken from the Philistines until David's time, who took some of them, and, the Simeonites having justly forfeited their right to them by their neglect, gave them to his own tribe. For it is evident concerning Ziklag, one of them, that it was in the Philistines' hands in David's time, and by them given to him, and by him annexed to the tribe of Judah, 1 Sam. xxvii. 6.

Verse 40. *They found fat pasture, &c.*—Those who thus dwell (as we do) in a fruitful country, and whose land is wide, and quiet, and peaceable, have reason to own themselves indebted to that God, who appoints the bounds of our habitation. Of Ham—The Canaanites, who descended from Ham. And, accordingly, these words contain a reason why they went and possessed this place, because it was not in the hands of their brethren of Judah, but in the possession of that people which they had authority to expel.

38 These ²²mentioned by *their* A. M. 2704.
names *were* princes in their families: B. C. 1300.

and the house of their fathers increased greatly.

39 ¶ And they went to the entrance B. C. 715.
of Gedor, *even* unto the east side of
the valley, to seek pasture for their flocks.

40 And they found fat pasture and good, and the land *was* wide, and quiet, and peaceable; for *they* of Ham had dwelt there of old.

41 And these written by name came in the days of Hezekiah king of Judah, and ⁱ smote their tents, and the habitations that were found there, and destroyed them utterly unto this day, and dwelt in their rooms: because *there was* pasture there for their flocks.

42 And *some* of them, *even* of the sons of Simeon, five hundred men, went to mount Seir, having for their captains Pelatiah, and Neariah, and Rephaiah, and Uzziel, the sons of Ishi.

43 And they smote ^kthe rest of the Amalekites that were escaped, and dwelt there unto this day.

²¹ Or, *as they divided themselves by nations among them.*
²² Heb. *coming*.—¹ 2 Kings xviii. 8.—^k 1 Sam. xv. 8; xxx. 17; 2 Sam. viii. 12.

Verse 41. *These came in the days of Hezekiah*—But a little before their captivity, which was in the sixth year of Hezekiah, 2 Kings xvii. So their joy in their new, pleasant, and fruitful possessions, lasted but for a very little while. *And smote their tents*—The people dwelling in tents; in which, it seems, they continued to dwell for the convenience of pasture. *And destroyed them unto this day*—So as that they could never after recover themselves.

Verse 43. *They smote the rest of the Amalekites*—Not destroyed by Saul, or David, or his successors. *That dwelt there unto this day*—Until the Babylonish captivity, or the time next after it, when these books were written. For, although the main body of the tribe of Simeon, dwelling in Canaan, were carried into captivity, yet this small remnant of them, having removed their dwellings, and being planted in mount Seir, which lay southward from Judah, might possibly be continued and preserved in those parts, when their brethren were gone into captivity.

CHAPTER V.

The genealogies of Reuben, 1–10. Of Gad, 11–17. Of the half-tribe of Manasseh, 23, 24. Joined together they conquer the Hagarites, 18–22. They are led captive by the king of Assyria, 25, 26.

A. M. 2704. B. C. 1300. **N**OW the sons of Reuben, the first-

born of Israel, (for ^a he *was* the firstborn; but, forasmuch as he ^b defiled his father's bed, ^c his birthright was given unto the sons of Joseph the son of Israel: and the genealogy is not to be reckoned after the birthright.)

2 For ^d Judah prevailed above his brethren, and of him *came* the ^e chief ^f ruler; but the birthright *was* Joseph's:)

3 The sons, *I say*, of ^f Reuben the firstborn of Israel *were*, Hanoch, and Pallu, Hezron, and Carmi.

4 The sons of Joel; Shemaiah his son, Gog his son, Shimei his son,

5 Micah his son, Reaia his son, Baal his son, 6 Beerah his son, whom ² Tilgath-pilneser king of Assyria carried away *captive*: he *was* prince of the Reubenites.

7 And his brethren by their families, (^g when the genealogy of their generations was reckoned,) *were* the chief, Jeiel, and Zechariah,

8 And Bela the son of Azaz, the ^{A. M. 2704. B. C. 1300.} son of ³ Shema, the son of Joel, who dwelt in ^h Aroer, even unto Nebo, and Baal-meon:

9 And eastward he inhabited unto the entering in of the wilderness from the river Euphrates: because their cattle were multiplied ¹ in the land of Gilead.

10 And in the days of Saul they made war ^k with the Hagarites, who fell by their hand: and they dwelt in their tents ⁴ throughout all the east *land* of Gilead.

11 ¶ And the children of Gad dwelt over against them, in the land of ¹ Bashan unto Salcah:

12 Joel the chief, and Shapham the next, and Jaanai, and Shaphat in Bashan.

13 And their brethren of the house of their fathers *were*, Michael, and Meshullam, and Sheba, and Jorai, and Jachan, and Zia, and Heber, seven.

^a Genesis xxix. 32; xlix. 3.—^b Genesis xxxv. 22; xlix. 4. ^c Genesis xlviii. 15, 22.—^d Genesis xlix. 8, 10; Psalm lx. 7; cviii. 8.—^e Micah v. 2; Matt. ii. 6.—^f Or, *prince*.—^g Gen. xvi. 9; Exod. vi. 14; Num. xxvi. 5.

^h Or, *Tiglath-pilneser*, 2 Kings xv. 29; xvi. 7.—ⁱ Verse 17. ^j Or, *Shemaiah*, Verse 4.—^k Josh. xiii. 15.—^l Josh. xxii. 9. ^m Genesis xxv. 12.—ⁿ Hebrew, *upon all the face of the east*. ^o Josh. xiii. 11, 24.

NOTES ON CHAPTER V.

Verse 1. *The son of Israel*—This is added emphatically, because the sons of Joseph, Manasseh, and Ephraim were treated as if they had been the immediate sons of Jacob. *The genealogy is not to be reckoned after the birthright*—This is the second reason which showeth both why Reuben's genealogy was not first mentioned, and if another tribe was to be ranked before it, why that was Judah, and not Joseph, because the order of their genealogy was not to be ruled by the birthright, but by a higher privilege, which was given to Judah.

Verse 2. *For Judah*—Not the person, (for in person Joseph prevailed,) but the tribe of Judah. *Prevailed*—Excelled the other tribes, especially in the following privilege. *And of him*—Rather, *For of him*, as the Hebrew ¹, *vau*, is often used: this being a reason of the foregoing assertion, or declaration, showing wherein he did prevail. *Came the chief ruler*—The government was, by God's promise and appointment, to be seated chiefly and most durably in that tribe, first in David and his successors, and then in the Messiah, who *sprang out of Judah*, (Heb. vii. 14,) which was a far greater privilege than the birthright. *But, or although, the birthright was Joseph's*—So this prevents or removes an objection to Judah's precedence taken from the birthright.

Verses 7, 8. *And his brethren*—The other sons of Reuben, and their posterity. *Were the chief*—Hebrew, *the head*: each was the head of his family. *Who dwelt in Aroer, even, &c.*—Namely, the Reuben-

ites, all those here before mentioned, as appears, both by the following verses, which relate to the whole tribe, and by the agreement of this description of their inheritance with that Josh. xiii. 15, 16.

Verse 9. *And eastward he inhabited*—That is, the tribe of Reuben. *Unto the entering in of the wilderness, &c.*—From Jordan and the wilderness, beyond it unto Euphrates. Or, *of the wilderness*, which lies *toward*, or reacheth to the river Euphrates—Namely, the great wilderness of Kedemoth, (Deut. ii. 26,) which was extended far and wide toward Euphrates: for that was the eastern border of Reuben's possession, and not Euphrates, to which their habitation never reached. *Because their cattle were multiplied*—Which forced them to enlarge their habitation as far as they could toward Euphrates.

Verse 10. *In the days of Saul they made war*—The Gadites and Manassites joining with them in the war, verses 18, 19. *With the Hagarites*—The Ishmaelites who dwelt in Arabia Deserta. *They dwelt in their tents*—The Israelites took possession of their lands, and tents or houses, which lay eastward from the land of Gilead. Thus God fulfilled his promise to his people: he cast out the enemy from before them by little and little, and gave them their land as they had occasion for it.

Verse 12. *Joel the chief*—The prince of the tribe, or, at least, of the family, when they were numbered, namely, in the days of Jotham, verse 17. *In Bashan*—That is, either who dwelt in the city of Bashan, or who abode in Bashan to defend the city and country,

A. M. 2704. 14 These *are* the children of Abi-
B. C. 1300. hail the son of Huri, the son of Jaroah,

the son of Gilead, the son of Michael, the son of Jeshishai, the son of Jahdo, the son of Buz ;

15 Ahi the son of Abdiel, the son of Guni, chief of the house of their fathers.

16 And they dwelt in Gilead in Bashan, and in her towns, and in all the suburbs of ^m Sharon, upon ^s their borders.

17 All these were reckoned by genealogies in the days of ^a Jotham king of Judah, and in the days of ^o Jeroboam king of Israel.

18 ¶ The sons of Reuben, and the Gadites, and half the tribe of Manasseh, ⁶ of valiant men, men able to bear buckler and sword, and to shoot with bow, and skilful in war, *were* four and forty thousand seven hundred and threescore, that went out to the war.

19 And they made war with the Hagarites, with ^p Jetur, and Nephish, and Nodab.

20 And ^q they were helped against them, and

the Hagarites were delivered into their hand, and all that *were* with them : A. M. 2704.
B. C. 1300.

for they cried to God in the battle, and he was entreated of them ; because they ^r put their trust in him.

21 And they ^r took away their cattle ; of their camels fifty thousand, and of sheep two hundred and fifty thousand, and of asses two thousand, and of ^s men a hundred thousand.

22 For there fell down many slain, because the war *was* of God. And they dwelt in their steads until ^t the captivity.

23 ¶ And the children of the half-tribe of Manasseh dwelt in the land : they increased from Bashan unto Baal-hermon and Senir, and unto mount Hermon.

24 And these *were* the heads of the house of their fathers, even Ephher, and Ishi, and Eliel, and Azriel, and Jeremiah, and Hodaviah, and Jahdiel, mighty men of valour, ⁹ famous men, *and* heads of the house of their fathers.

^a Chap. xxvii. 29.—^b Heb. *their goings forth*.—^c 2 Kings xv. 5, 32.—^d 2 Kings xiv. 16, 28.—^e Heb. *sons of valour*.
^f Gen. xiv. 15 ; Chap. i. 31.

^g Verse 22.—^h Psalm xxii. 4, 5.—ⁱ Hebrew, *led captive*.
^j Heb. *souls of men*, as Numbers xxxi. 35.—^k 2 Kings xv. 29 ; xvii. 6.—^l Heb. *men of names*.

when their brethren went out to war against the Hagarites, *verse 19*.

Verses 14, 15. *These are the children of Abihail*—These seven last named. *Ahi, chief of the house of their fathers*—Ahi was the head or chief of the houses or families of those seven named *verse 13*.

Verse 16. *They dwell in Gilead*—That is, the children or tribe of Gad inhabited a part of Gilead, the Reubenites and Manassites dwelling in other parts of it, Deut. iii. 12. *In Bashan*—In the land of Bashan, as is said, *verse 11*. *And in her towns*—In some of her cities and towns. *In all the suburbs of Sharon*—Not that Sharon in Canaan, but that to the east of Jordan, namely, in the fields and pasture-grounds of it. *Upon their borders*—The borders of Gilead and Bashan. For Gilead, properly so called, or the greatest part of it, belonged to the Reubenites, and the greatest part of Bashan to the Manassites ; and the Gadites, whose habitation was between these two tribes, had those parts of both these countries which lay toward their borders.

Verse 17. *In the days of Jotham king of Judah*—Who, reigning long, partly in his father's days, and partly by himself, and being at leisure from wars and troubles, thought this a fit season to examine the state of his people. *And in the days of Jeroboam*—Probably Jeroboam the second, of whom see 2 Kings xiii. 13, 14. This does not imply that Jotham and Jeroboam reigned at the same time ; but only that in their several reigns this account was taken.

Verses 18-20. *The sons of Reuben, &c.*—These three tribes, or at least so many of them as made a great army, joined their forces together, consisting of their best soldiers, to invade the country of the

Hagarites. *They were helped against them*—Against the Hagarites, who, it seems, fought stoutly ; but God assisted the Israelites, enduing them with extraordinary courage and success, in consequence of their crying to him, and putting their trust in him, in his power, mercy, and faithfulness to his promise.

Verse 21. *Of their camels fifty thousand*—For camels were very numerous in Arabia, being used in war and for burdens, &c., and being very patient of thirst, and therefore most fit for those hot and dry countries. *Of men a hundred thousand*—Whom they took prisoners, and either used as slaves, or sold them for such.

Verse 22. *For there fell down many slain*—Besides those taken captive, a great number were slain in the battle. *Because the war was of God*—Undertaken in his fear, and carried on in a dependance on him. Then we may expect to prosper in any enterprise, and then only, when we take God along with us. *And they dwell in their steads*—Most or all of those valiant men who were engaged in this war, who were forty-four thousand seven hundred and sixty, (*verse 18*), settled themselves in the country which they had conquered, and remained there *until the captivity*, of which see 2 Kings xv. 29, and xvii. 6.

Verse 23. *The half-tribe of Manasseh*—Having spoken of the Reubenites, (*verses 3-10*) and next of the Gadites, (*verse 11, &c.*) he now comes to the Manassites. *Dwell in the land*—In the same country with the Reubenites and Gadites, on the other side of Jordan, namely, in the northern part of that land.

A. M. 2704. 25 ¶ And they transgressed against
B. C. 1300. the God of their fathers, and went a
whoring after the gods of the people of the
land, whom God destroyed before them.

26 And the God of Israel stirred up the spirit
of Pul king of Assyria; and the spirit of Til-

¹ 2 Kings xvii. 7.—² 2 Kings xv. 19.

Verse 25. *They transgressed against the God of their fathers*—Had they kept close to God and their duty, they would have continued to enjoy both their ancient lot and their new conquests; but lying upon the borders, and conversing with the neighbouring nations, they learned their idolatrous usages, and transmitted the infection to the other tribes: and for this God had a controversy with them.

Verse 26. *The God of Israel*—Who had been a husband to Israel, and whose jealousy burned like fire, when Israel went a whoring after other gods. *Stirred up the spirit of Pul, king of Assyria, &c.*—

gath-pilneser king of Assyria, and he carried them away, even the Reubenites, and the Gadites, and the half-tribe of Manasseh; and brought them unto Halah, and Habor, and Hara, and to the river Gozan, unto this day.

¹ 2 Kings xv. 29.—² 2 Kings xvii. 6; xviii. 11.

That is, so governed his counsels and affections, that he brought his forces against this people rather than others. God served his own purposes by the designs of those ambitious monarchs, employed them first to chastise those revolters, and when that did not reduce them, wholly to root them out. These tribes were first placed, and they were first displaced. They would have the best land, not considering that it lay most exposed. They who are governed more by sense than by reason or faith in their inclinations and choices, may expect to fare accordingly.

CHAPTER VI.

The first fathers of the tribe of Levi, 1-3. The line of the priests from Aaron to the captivity, 4-15. Of some other families, 16-30. The work of the Levites, 31-48. Of the priests, 49-53. The cities of the priests and Levites, 54-81.

A. M. 2704. THE sons of Levi; ^a Gershon, ¹ Ko-
B. C. 1300. hath, and Merari.

2 And the sons of Kohath; Amram, ^b Izhar, and Hebron, and Uzziel.

3 And the children of Amram; Aaron, and Moses, and Miriam. The sons also of Aaron; ^c Nadab, and Abihu, Eleazar, and Ithamar.

4 ¶ Eleazar begat Phinehas, Phinehas begat Abishua.

5 And Abishua begat Bukki, and Bukki begat Uzzi,

6 And Uzzi begat Zerariah, and Zerariah begat Meraioth,

7 Meraioth begat Amariah, and Amariah begat Ahitub,

8 And ^d Ahitub begat Zadok, and ^e Zadok begat Ahimaaz,

9 And Ahimaaz begat Azariah, and Azariah begat Johanan,

10 And Johanan begat Azariah, (he it is ^f that executed the priest's office ² in the ^g temple that Solomon built in Jerusalem:)

11 And ^h Azariah begat Amariah, and Amariah begat Ahitub,

12 And Ahitub begat Zadok, and Zadok begat ³ Shallum,

^a Genesis xvi. 11; Exodus vi. 16; Num. xxvi. 67; Chapter xiii. 6.—¹ Or, Gershom, Verse 16.—² Verse 22.—^c Lev. x. 1.—^d 2 Sam. viii. 17.

^e 2 Sam. xv. 27.—^f 2 Chron. xxvi. 17, 18.—^g Heb. in the house.—^h 1 Kings vi.; 2 Chron. iii.—ⁱ Ezra vii. 3.—³ Or, Meshullam, Chap. ix. 11.

NOTES ON CHAPTER VI.

Verse 5. *Bukki begat Uzzi*—In whose days it is supposed that the high-priesthood was translated from Eleazar's family to Ithamar's, for some cause now unknown, in whose line it continued for some successions.

Verse 10. *He it is that executed the priest's office, &c.*—So did all the rest: but it is implied that he did it worthily; he filled his place well, and valiantly discharged his office. For it is supposed this was

that Azariah who boldly opposed the presumption of King Uzziah, when he invaded the priest's office, 2 Chron. xxvi. 17. This remark may, however, relate to Johanan, otherwise called Jehoiada, who is so highly commended for the good service which he did to the house of God, and of the king; of whom see 2 Kings xi. *In the temple that Solomon built*—In Solomon's temple; so denominated to distinguish it from the second temple, which was built, or in building, when these books were written.

A. M. 2704. 13 And Shallum begat Hilkiah, and
B. C. 1300. Hilkiah begat Azariah,

14 And Azariah begat ¹ Seraiah, and Seraiah begat Jehozadak,

15 And Jehozadak went *into captivity*, ² when the LORD carried away Judah and Jerusalem by the hand of Nebuchadnezzar.

16 ¶ The sons of Levi; ¹ Gershom, ⁴ Kohath, and Merari.

17 And these *be* the names of the sons of Gershom; Libni, and Shimei.

18 And the sons of Kohath *were* Amram, and Izhar, and Hebron, and Uzziel.

19 The sons of Merari; Mahli, and Mushi. And these *are* the families of the Levites according to their fathers.

20 ¶ Of Gershom; Libni his son, Jahath his son, ² Zimmah his son,

21 ⁵ Joah his son, ⁶ Iddo his son, Zerah his son, ⁷ Jeaterai his son.

22 ¶ The sons of Kohath; ⁸ Amminadab his son, Korah his son, Assir his son,

23 Elkanah his son, and Ebiasaph his son, and Assir his son,

24 Tahath his son, ⁹ Uriel his son, Uzziel his son, and Shaul his son.

25 And the sons of Elkanah: ² Amasi, and Ahimoth.

26 *As for* Elkanah: the sons of Elkanah; ² Zophai his son, and ⁰ Nahath his son,

27 ² Eliab his son, Jeroham his son, Elkanah his son.

¹ Nehemiah xi. 11.—² 2 Kings xxv. 18.—³ Exodus vi. 16.
⁴ Or, *Gershon*, Verse 1.—⁵ Verse 42.—⁶ Or, *Ethan*, Ver. 42.
⁷ Or, *Adaiah*, Verse 41.—⁸ Or, *Ethni*, Verse 41.—⁹ Or, *Izar*, Verses 2, 18.—¹⁰ Or, *Zephaniah*, *Azariah*, *Joel*, Verse 35.—¹¹ Verses 35, 36.

Verse 16. *The sons of Levi, Gershom, &c.*—This he repeats as the foundation of the following genealogy of those Levites who were not priests.

Verses 19, 20. *The families of the Levites according to their fathers*—That is, these were the heads of the families which sprang from them. And it is thought the following catalogue contains the successive heads or chiefs of their several families until the times of David, by whom they were distributed into several courses. *Zimmah his son*—His grandson by his son Shimei, as appears from verses 42, 43; the names of *father* and *son* being often used in Scripture of more remote progenitors or successors.

Verse 26. *As for Elkanah, &c.*—This was another Elkanah, son or grandson of the former Elkanah, and either the son or brother of Ahimoth, last mentioned, or of Amasai. *Nahath his son*—Called also

28 And the sons of Samuel; the firstborn ¹¹ Vashni, and Abiah. A. M. 2704. B. C. 1300.

29 ¶ The sons of Merari; Mahli, Libni his son, Shimei his son, Uzza his son,

30 Shimei his son, Haggiah his son, Asaiah his son.

31 ¶ And these *are they* whom David set over the service of song in the house of the LORD, after that the ² ark had rest. About B. C. 1280.

32 And they ministered before the dwelling-place of the tabernacle of the congregation with singing, until Solomon had built the house of the LORD in Jerusalem: and *then* they waited on their office, according to their order.

33 And these *are they* that ¹² waited with their children. Of the sons of the Kohathites; Heman a singer, the son of Joel, the son of Shemuel,

34 The son of Elkanah, the son of Jeroham, the son of Eliel, the son of ¹³ Toah,

35 The son of ¹⁴ Zuph, the son of Elkanah, the son of Mahath, the son of Amasai,

36 The son of Elkanah, the son of ¹⁵ Joel, the son of Azariah, the son of Zephaniah,

37 The son of Tahath, the son of Assir, the son of ¹ Ebiasaph, the son of Korah,

38 The son of Izhar, the son of Kohath, the son of Levi, the son of Israel.

39 And his brother Asaph, who stood on his right hand, *even* Asaph the son of Berechiah, the son of Shimea,

¹⁰ Or, *Zuph*, Verse 35; 1 Samuel i. 1.—¹¹ Verse 34. *Toah*.
¹² Verse 34, *Eliel*.—¹³ Called also *Joel*, Verse 33; 1 Samuel viii. 2.—¹⁴ Chapter xvi. 1.—¹⁵ Heb. *stood*.—¹⁶ Verse 26, *Nahath*.—¹⁷ Or, *Zophai*.—¹⁸ Verse 24, *Shaul*, *Uzziah*, *Uriel*.
¹⁹ Exod. vi. 24.

Toah, verse 34, and *Tohu*, 1 Sam. i. 1. The Elkanah mentioned in the next verse was the father of the Prophet Samuel, whose name therefore follows.

Verse 31. *And these*—Whose names follow, *are they whom David set over the service*—Appointed to minister to God by singing songs of praise in his house; *after that the ark had rest*—After David had brought it from the house of Obed-edom, and settled it in Jerusalem, 2 Sam. viii. 17.

Verse 32. *They ministered before the tabernacle, &c.*—Which David had prepared for the ark when it came to Jerusalem. *According to their order*—The order which David himself had constituted a little before his death, as we read in the latter end of this book.

Verse 39. *His brother Asaph*—Asaph is here called Heman's brother, according to the Hebrew phra-

A. M. 2704. 40 The son of Michael, the son of
B. C. 1300. Baaseiah, the son of Malchiah,

41 The son of ¹ Ethni, the son of Zerah, the son of Adaiah,

42 The son of Ethan, the son of Zimmah, the son of Shimei,

43 The son of Jahath, the son of Gershom, the son of Levi.

44 And their brethren the sons of Merari stood on the left hand: ¹⁶ Ethan the son of ¹⁷ Kishi, the son of Abdi, the son of Mal-luch,

45 The son of Hashabiah, the son of Amaziah, the son of Hilchiah,

46 The son of Amzi, the son of Bani, the son of Shamer,

47 The son of Mahli, the son of Mushi, the son of Merari, the son of Levi.

48 Their brethren also the Levites were appointed unto all manner of service of the tabernacle of the house of God.

About 49 ¶ But Aaron and his sons offered
B. C. 1444. ¹ upon the altar of the burnt-offering, and ² on the altar of incense, and were appointed for all the work of the place most holy, and to make an atonement for Israel, according to all that Moses the servant of God had commanded.

50 And these are the sons of Aaron; Eleazar

his son, Phinehas his son, Abishua his son, A. M. 2560
B. C. 1444.

51 Bukki his son, Uzzi his son, Zerabiah his son,

52 Meraioth his son, Amariah his son, Ahitub his son,

53 Zadok his son, Ahimaaz his son.

54 ¶ ¹ Now these are their dwelling-places throughout their castles in their coasts, of the sons of Aaron, of the families of the Kohathites: for theirs was the lot.

55 ² And they gave them Hebron in the land of Judah, and the suburbs thereof round about it.

56 ³ But the fields of the city, and the villages thereof, they gave to Caleb the son of Jephunneh.

57 And ⁴ to the sons of Aaron they gave the cities of Judah, namely, Hebron, the city of refuge, and Libnah with her suburbs, and Jattir, and Eshtemoa, with their suburbs,

58 And ¹⁸ Hilen with her suburbs, Debir with her suburbs,

59 And ¹⁹ Ashan with her suburbs, and Bethshemesh with her suburbs:

60 And out of the tribe of Benjamin; Geba with her suburbs, and ²⁰ Alemeth with her suburbs, and Anathoth with her suburbs. All their cities throughout their families were thirteen cities.

¹ Verse 21.—¹⁶ Jeduthun, Chapter ix. 16; xxv. 1, 3, 6.
¹⁷ Or, Kushaiah, Chap. xv. 17.—¹ Lev. i. 9.—² Exod. xxx. 7.
³ Joshua xxi. 10.

¹ Joshua xxi. 11.—² Joshua xiv. 13; xv. 13.—³ Josh. xxi. 13.—¹⁸ Or, Holon, Josh. xxi. 15.—¹⁹ Or, Ain, Josh. xxi. 16.
²⁰ Or, Almon, Josh. xxi. 18.

seology, by which all near relations are brothers; and because he was of the same office and employment.

Verse 44. *The sons of Merari stood on the left hand*—The children of the next son of Levi are here mentioned, who had the lowest place assigned them, because they were of the youngest family. So there were three principal singers, who were masters and governors of the whole choir: Heman, descended from Koath, was the prime, who, together with his sons, stood in the middle: Asaph, descended from Gershom, with his sons, stood on his right hand: and Ethan, (called also Jeduthun, 1 Chron. ix. 16; 2 Chron. xxxv. 15, and in the title of divers Psalms,) descended from Merari, on the left.

Verse 48. *Their brethren were appointed, &c.*—Such of them as had no skill in singing were otherwise employed; being porters, keepers of the vessels of the sanctuary, occupied in preparing the sacrifices, and such like things. It is observable, that in all the genealogies of the Levites, there is not a word said of the sons of Moses and their posterity, he having no ambition to prefer them unto any great office.

Verse 49. *But Aaron and his sons offered upon the altar*—The noblest part of the ministry was reserved for them. Aaron alone, and his successors in the high-priesthood, made atonement and ministered in the most holy place. But his sons, the other priests, offered on the altars of burnt-offering, and of incense.

Verse 50. *These are the sons of Aaron*—Having mentioned the work of the high-priests, he here briefly rehearseth the names of the persons who successively performed it.

Verse 54. *Throughout their castles*—So called, not only because walled and well guarded by the country, but because they and their possessions were in a particular manner the care of Divine Providence. As God was their portion, so God was their protector. And a cottage will be a castle to those that abide under the shadow of the Almighty. *Theirs was the lot*—Or, the first lot.

Verse 60. *All their cities were thirteen*—Of which eleven are here numbered, and two more are mentioned Josh. xxi. 16, 17, namely, Jattah and Gibeon; which, perhaps, were in ruins when this book was written.

A. M. 2560. 61 And unto the sons of Kohath
B. C. 1444. ^b which were left of the family of that
tribe, were cities given out of the half-tribe,
namely, out of the half-tribe of Manasseh, ^c by
lot, ten cities.

62 And to the sons of Gershom, throughout
their families, were given out of the tribe of Is-
sachar, and out of the tribe of Asher, and out
of the tribe of Naphtali, and out of the tribe of
Manasseh in Bashan, thirteen cities.

63 Unto the sons of Merari were given by lot,
throughout their families, out of the tribe of
Reuben, and out of the tribe of Gad, and out of
the tribe of Zebulun, ^d twelve cities.

64 And the children of Israel gave to the Le-
vites these cities with their suburbs.

65 And they gave by lot out of the tribe of the
children of Judah, and out of the tribe of the
children of Simeon, and out of the tribe of the
children of Benjamin, these cities, which are
called by their names.

66 And ^e the residue of the families of the
sons of Kohath had cities of their coasts out of
the tribe of Ephraim.

67 ^f And they gave unto them, of the cities of
refuge, Shechem in mount Ephraim with her
suburbs; they gave also Gezer with her suburbs,

68 And ^g Jokmeam with her suburbs, and Beth-
horon with her suburbs,

69 And Ajalon with her suburbs, and Gath-
rimmon with her suburbs:

70 And out of the half-tribe of Manasseh;
Aner with her suburbs, and Bileam with her

suburbs, for the family of the remnant A. M. 2560
of the sons of Kohath. B. C. 1444.

71 Unto the sons of Gershom were given out
of the family of the half-tribe of Manasseh, Go-
lan in Bashan with her suburbs, and Ashtaroth
with her suburbs:

72 And out of the tribe of Issachar; Kedesh
with her suburbs, Daberath with her suburbs,

73 And Ramoth with her suburbs, and Anem
with her suburbs:

74 And out of the tribe of Asher; Mashal with
her suburbs, and Abdon with her suburbs,

75 And Hukok with her suburbs, and Rehob
with her suburbs:

76 And out of the tribe of Naphtali; Ke-
desh in Galilee with her suburbs, and Ham-
mon with her suburbs, and Kirjathaim with her
suburbs.

77 Unto the rest of the children of Merari
were given out of the tribe of Zebulun, Rimmon
with her suburbs, Tabor with her suburbs:

78 And on the other side Jordan by Jericho,
on the east side of Jordan, were given them out
of the tribe of Reuben, Bezer in the wilder-
ness with her suburbs, and Jahzah with her
suburbs.

79 Kedemoth also with her suburbs, and Me-
phaath with her suburbs:

80 And out of the tribe of Gad; Ramoth in
Gilead with her suburbs, and Mahanaim with
her suburbs,

81 And Heshbon with her suburbs and Jazer
with her suburbs.

^b Verse 66.—^c Josh. xxi. 5.—^d Josh. xxi. 7, 34.—^e Verse
61.—^f Josh. xxi. 21.

^g Joshua xxi. 22-25, where many of these cities have other
names.

Verse 66. Had cities of their coasts—Or, of their
borders, that is, of their country contained within
its borders: these cities were assigned the families
of the sons of Kohath, though they were not priests,
for their support in a lower ministry.

Verse 67. They gave unto them of the cities of
refuge—That is, the children of Israel, as it is ex-
pressed verse 64, gave to the residue of the Kohath-
ites the following cities, part out of Ephraim, and
part out of the half-tribe of Manasseh. As to the
names of these cities, divers of them differ from
those mentioned as given to them Josh. xxi. 15.

Nor is it strange that the names of places should be
changed in so many hundreds of years as had inter-
vened between Joshua and this time. And as to
the cities themselves, it is further to be observed,
that they were dispersed among all the tribes, partly
that Jacob's prophecy might be fulfilled concern-
ing the scattering of the tribe of Levi, Gen. xlix. 7;
and partly that every tribe might have teachers
among them by whom they might be directed in,
and quickened to, the observation of God's laws,
upon which their safety and happiness wholly de-
pended.

CHAPTER VII.

The posterity of Issachar, 1-5. Of Benjamin, 6-12. Of Naphtali, 13. Of Manasseh, 14-19. Of Ephraim, 20-29. Of
Asher, 30-40.

A. M. 2604. B. C. 1400. **N**OW the sons of Issachar were ^a Tola, and ¹ Puah, Jashub, and Shimron, four.

2 And the sons of Tola; Uzzi, and Rephaiah, and Jeriel, and Jahmai, and Jibsam, and Shemuel, heads of their father's house, *to wit*, of Tola: *they were* valiant men of might in their generations; ^b whose number *was* in the days of David two and twenty thousand and six hundred.

3 And the sons of Uzzi; Izrahiah: and the sons of Izrahiah; Michael, and Obadiah, and Joel, Ishiah, five; all of them chief men.

4 And with them, by their generations, after the house of their fathers, *were* bands of soldiers for war, six and thirty thousand *men*: for they had many wives and sons.

5 And their brethren among all the families of Issachar *were* valiant men of might, reckoned in all by their genealogies fourscore and seven thousand.

6 ¶ *The sons* of ^c Benjamin; Bela, and Becher, and Jediahel, three.

7 And the sons of Bela; Ezbon, and Uzzi, and Uzziel, and Jerimoth, and Iri, five; heads of the house of *their* fathers, mighty men of valour; and were reckoned by their genealogies twenty and two thousand and thirty and four.

8 And the sons of Becher; Zemira, and Joash, and Eliezer, and Elioenai, and Omri, and Jerimoth, and Abiah, and Anathoth, and Alameh. All these *are* the sons of Becher.

9 And the number of them, after their gene-

alogy by their generations, heads of the house of their fathers, mighty men of valour, *was* twenty thousand and two hundred.

10 The sons also of Jediahel; Bilhan: and the sons of Bilhan; Jeush, and Benjamin, and Ehud, and Chenaanah, and Zethan, and Tharshish, and Ahishahar.

11 All these the sons of Jediahel, by the heads of their fathers, mighty men of valour, *were* seventeen thousand and two hundred *soldiers*, fit to go out for war *and* battle.

12 ^d Shuphim also, and Huphim, the children of ^e Ir, *and* Hushim, the sons of ^f Aher.

13 ¶ The sons of Naphtali; Jahziel, and Guni, and Jezer, and ^g Shallum, the sons of Bilhah.

14 ¶ The sons of Manasseh; Ashriel, whom she bare, (*but* his concubine the Aramitess bare Machir the father of Gilead:

15 And Machir took to wife *the sister* of Huphim and Shuphim, whose sister's name *was* Maachah;) and the name of the second *was* Zelophehad: and Zelophehad had daughters.

16 And Maachah the wife of Machir bare a son, and she called his name Peresh; and the name of his brother *was* Sheresh; and his sons *were* Ulam, and Rakem.

17 And the sons of Ulam; ^h Bedan. These *were* the sons of Gilead, the son of Machir, the son of Manasseh.

18 And his sister Hammoleketh bare Ishod, and ⁱ Abiezer, and Mahalah.

^a Genesis xlv. 13; Numbers xxvi. 23.—¹ Phurah, Job. ^b 2 Sam. xiv. 1; Chap. xxvii. 1.—^c Gen. xlv. 21; Numbers xxvi. 38.

^d Num. xxvi. 39, Shupham and Hupham.—^e Or, Iri, Verse 7. ^f Or, Aheram, Numbers xxvi. 38.—^g Genesis xlv. 24, Shillem. ^h 1 Sam. xii. 11.—ⁱ Num. xxvi. 30, Jezer.

NOTES ON CHAPTER VII.

Verse 2. *Whose number in the days of David, &c.*—That is, when David numbered the people, (2 Sam. xxiv.,) the descendants of Tola, Issachar's first-born, were found to be thus many; which was a very great increase.

Verse 6. *The sons of Benjamin, three*—They were ten, (Gen. xlv. 21,) and five of them are named chap. viii. 1, but here only three are mentioned, either because they were most eminent, or because the other families were now extinct.

Verse 7. *Heads of the house of their fathers*—Each of them head of that family to which he belonged. For it may seem, by comparing this with chap. viii. 3, &c., that these were not the immediate sons of Bela, but his grand-children, descended each from a several father.

Verses 13–15. *The sons of Bilhah*—The grand-

children; for Bilhah was Jacob's concubine, and mother both to Naphtali, the father of the persons last named, and to Dan. *The sons of Manasse*—Grand-children, as in the former verse. *Ashriel, whom she bare*—Whom his wife bare, his concubine being here opposed to her. *Machir took the sister of Huphim*—The word *sister*, though not in the Hebrew, is fitly supplied out of the following clause, where it is expressed, and she is called *Maacha*, and, verse 16, is said to be the wife of Machir. *The name of the second, &c.*—Of the second son or grand-son of Machir, for such Zelophehad was. *Had daughters*—That is, only daughters, and no sons.

Verses 17, 18. *These were the sons of Gilead*—Namely, Ashriel and Zelophehad, named verses 14, 15, the relative being here referred to the remoter antecedent, as is frequent in the Hebrew. *His*—

A. M. 2604. 19 And the sons of Shemida were
B. C. 1400. Ahian, and Shechem, and Likhi, and
Aniam.

20 And ^h the sons of Ephraim; Shuthelah,
and Bered his son, and Tahath his son, and
Eladah his son, and Tahath his son,

21 And Zabad his son, and Shuthelah his son,
and Ezer, and Elead, whom the men of Gath
that were born in that land slew, because they
came down to take away their cattle.

22 And Ephraim their father mourned many
days, and his brethren came to comfort him.

23 ¶ And when he went in to his wife, she
conceived and bare a son, and he called his name
Beriah, because it went evil with his house.

24 (And his daughter *was* Sherah, who built
Beth-horon the nether, and the upper, and Uz-
zen-sherah.)

25 And Reophah *was* his son, also Resheph,
and Telah his son, and Tahan his son,

26 Laadan his son, Ammihud his son, Elisha-
ma his son,

27 ⁴ Non his son, Jehoshua his son.

28 ¶ And their possessions and habitations
were Beth-el, and the towns thereof, and east-
ward ⁱ Naaran, and westward Gezer, with the
⁵ towns thereof; Shechem also and the towns
thereof, unto ⁶ Gaza and the towns thereof:

A. M. 2604. 29 And by the borders of the chil- B. C. 1400.
dren of ^k Manasseh, Beth-shean and
her towns, Taanach and her towns, ^l Megiddo
and her towns, Dor and her towns. In these
dwelt the children of Joseph the son of Israel.

30 ¶ ^m The sons of Asher; Imnah, and
Isuah, and Ishuai, and Beriah, and Serah their
sister.

31 And the sons of Beriah; Heber, and Mal-
chiel, who *is* the father of Birzavith.

32 And Heber begat Japhlet, and ⁿ Shomer,
and Hotham, and Shua their sister.

33 And the sons of Japhlet; Pasach, and Bim-
hal, and Ashvath. *These are* the children of
Japhlet.

34 And the sons of ^o Shamer; Ahi, and Roh-
gah, Jehubbah, and Aram.

35 And the sons of his brother Helem; Zo-
phah, and Imna, and Shelesh, and Amal.

36 The sons of Zophah; Suah, and Harne-
pher, and Shual, and Beri, and Imrah.

37 Bezer, and Hod, and Shamma, and Shil-
shah, and Ithran, and Beera.

38 And the sons of Jether; Jephunneh, and
Pispah, and Ara.

39 And the sons of Ulla; Arah, and Haniel,
and Rezia.

40 All these *were* the children of Asher, heads

^h Num. xxvi. 35.—⁴ Or, Nun, Num. xiii. 8, 16.—ⁱ Josh. xvi.
7, Naarath.—⁵ Heb. daughters.—⁶ Or, Ad-azza.

^k Joshua xvii. 7.—^l Josh. xvii. 11.—^m Gen. xlvi. 17; Num.
xxvi. 44.—ⁿ Verse 34, Shamer.—^o Verse 32, Shomer.

Gilead's sister. *Mahalah*—Understand, and She-
midah, out of the next verse.

Verse 21. *Whom the men of Gath slew*—This
history is not recorded elsewhere in Scripture, but
it is in the ancient Hebrew writers. The Philistines
(one of whose cities Gath was) and the Egyptians
were next neighbours; and in those ancient times
it was usual for such to make inroads one into an-
other's country, and to carry thence what prey they
could take. And as the Philistines had probably
made such inroads formerly into Egypt, and par-
ticularly into the land of Goshen, which was the
utmost part of Egypt bordering upon the Philis-
tines' land; so the Israelites might requite them
in the like kind: and particularly the children of
Ephraim, to their own loss. And this seems to
have happened a little before the Egyptian perse-
cution, and before the reign of that *new king* men-
tioned Exod. i. 8. And this clause, *that were born
in the land*, may be added emphatically, as the mo-
tive which made them more resolute in their fight
with the Ephraimites, because they fought in and
for their own land, wherein all their wealth and
concerns lay.

Verse 23. *She conceived and bare a son*—Thus
the breach was in some measure repaired, by the
addition of another son in his old age. When God
thus restores comfort to his mourners, he *makes
glad according to the days wherein he afflicted*:
setting the mercies over against the crosses, we
ought to observe the kindness of his providence.
Yet the joy that a man was born into his family
could not make him forget his grief. For he gives
a melancholy name to his son, *Beriah*, that is, *in
trouble*: for he was born when the family was in
mourning. It is good to have in remembrance the
affliction and the misery which are past, that our
souls may be *humbled within us*.

Verse 24. *His daughter*—His descendant, his
grand-child, or great-grand-child; *built Beth-ho-
ron, &c.*—Rebuilt or repaired them, which possibly
she did in Joshua's time. And this work may be
ascribed to her, because it was done either by her
design and contrivance, or by her instigation and
influence upon her husband and brethren who did it.

Verse 28. *Their possessions*—That is, the por-
tion allotted to the tribe of Ephraim: *were Beth-el*
—Which stood in the border of Benjamin, but be-

A. M. 2604. of their father's house, choice and
B. C. 1400. mighty men of valour, chief of the
princes. And the number throughout the

longed to Ephraim. *Unto Gaza*—Not the Gaza of the Philistines, which belonged to another tribe, and was remote from Ephraim, but another place of the

genealogy of them that were apt to A. M. 2604.
the war and to battle was twenty B. C. 1400.
and six thousand men.

same name. Or rather *Ad-azza*, as in the margin; the particle *ad*, here rendered *unto*, being part of the name.

CHAPTER VIII.

Some of the heads of the tribe of Benjamin, 1-32. The family of Saul, 33-40.

A. M. 2604. NOW Benjamin begat *Bela his
B. C. 1400. firstborn, Ashbel the second, and
Aharah the third,

2 Nohah the fourth, and Rapha the fifth.

3 And the sons of Bela were, ¹Addar, and Gera, and Abihud,

4 And Abishua, and Naaman, and Ahoah,

5 And Gera, and ²Shephuphan, and Huram.

6 And these *are* the sons of Ehud: these are the heads of the fathers of the inhabitants of Geba, and they removed them to ^bManahath:

7 And Naaman, and Ahiah, and Gera, he removed them, and begat Uzza, and Ahihud.

8 And Shaharaim begat *children* in the country of Moab, after he had sent them away; Hushim and Baara *were* his wives.

9 And he begat of Hodesh his wife, Jobab, and Zibia, and Mesha, and Malcham,

10 And Jeuz, and Shachia, and Mirma. These *were* his sons, heads of the fathers.

11 And of Hushim he begat Abitub, and Elpaal.

12 The sons of Elpaal; Eber, and Misham; and Shamed, who built Ono, and Lod, with the towns thereof:

13 Beriah also, and ^cShema, who *were* heads

* Gen. xlvi. 21; Num. xxvi. 38; Chapter vii. 6.—¹ Or, *Ard*, Gen. xlvi. 21.

NOTES ON CHAPTER VIII.

Verse 1. *Now Benjamin begat Bela*—He had spoken something of this tribe before, chap. vii. 6; but now he treats of it again, and that more fully and exactly: partly for Saul's sake, who was of this tribe; and partly because this tribe adhered to David, and the kingdom of Judah, and went with Judah into Babylon; and now were returned from thence in greater numbers than the other tribes, except Judah. *Bela his firstborn*—So called by Moses: but the names of the rest vary from those in Moses. Therefore either these were Benjamin's grand-

of the fathers of the inhabitants of A. M. 2604.
Ajalon, who drove away the inhabit- B. C. 1400.
ants of Gath:

14 And Ahio, Shashak, and Jeremoth,

15 And Zebadiah, and Arad, and Ader,

16 And Michael, and Ispah, and Joha, the sons of Beriah;

17 And Zebadiah, and Meshullam, and Hezeki, and Heber,

18 Ishmerai also, and Jeziah, and Jobab, the sons of Elpaal;

19 And Jakim, and Zichri, and Zabdi,

20 And Elienai, and Zilthai, and Eliel,

21 And Adaiah, and Beraiah, and Shimrath, the sons of ³Shimhi;

22 And Ishpan, and Heber, and Eliel,

23 And Abdon, and Zichri, and Hanan,

24 And Hananiah, and Elam, and Antothijah,

25 And Iphedeiah, and Penuel, the sons of Shashak;

26 And Shamsherai, and Shehariah, and Athaliah,

27 And Jaresiah, and Elijah, and Zichri, the sons of Jeroham.

28 These *were* heads of the fathers, by their

² Or, *Shupham*, Num. xxvi. 39; Chap. vii. 12.—^b Chap. ii. 52.
^c Verse 21.—³ Or, *Shema*, Verse 13.

children, or the same person had two or more names, which was not unusual.

Verse 6. *These are the sons of Ehud*—These following, verse 7, because he here speaks of them who were *removed*. He describes the sons of Benjamin by the places of their habitation, without an exact account of their parents; because their genealogies were broken by that almost total extirpation of this tribe, Judg. xx.

Verse 28. *Heads of the fathers, &c.: these dwell at Jerusalem*—All these named from verse 14 to this place. Particular notice is taken of these, that

A. M. 2604. generations, chief *men*. These dwelt
B. C. 1400. in Jerusalem.

29 And at Gibeon dwelt the ⁴ father of Gibeon; whose ⁴ wife's name was Maachah:

30 And his firstborn son Abdon, and Zur, and Kish, and Baal, and Nadab,

31 And Gedor, and Ahio, and ⁵ Zacher.

32 And Mikloth begat ⁶ Shimeah. And these also dwelt with their brethren in Jerusalem, over against them.

33 ¶ And ⁷ Ner begat Kish, and Kish begat Saul, and Saul begat Jonathan, and Malchishua, and ⁸ Abinadab, and ⁷ Eshbaal.

34 And the son of Jonathan was ⁸ Merib-baal; and Merib-baal begat ⁹ Micah.

35 And the sons of Micah were, Pithon, and Melech, and ⁹ Tarea, and Ahaz.

⁴ Called *Jehiel*, Chapter ix. 35.—^d Chapter ix. 35.—⁵ Or, *Zechariah*, Chapter ix. 37.—⁶ Or, *Shemeam*, Chapter ix. 38.
⁷ 1 Sam. xiv. 51.—⁸ 1 Sam. xiv. 49, *Ishui*.

others, at their return from captivity, might be induced to settle there too, which it seems few were willing to do, because it was the post of danger. Many great and mighty nations were then upon earth, and many illustrious men in them, whose names are buried in perpetual oblivion, while the names of multitudes of the Israel of God are here carefully preserved in everlasting remembrance: a figure of God's writing the names of his spiritual Israel in the Lamb's book of life.

36 And Ahaz begat ^b Jehoadah; A. M. 2604.
and Jehoadah begat Alemeth, and B. C. 1400.
Azmaveth, and Zimri; and Zimri begat Moza.

37 And Moza begat Binea: ⁱ Rapha was his son, Eleasah his son, Azel his son.

38 And Azel had six sons, whose names are these, Azrikam, Bocheru, and Ishmael, and Sheariah, and Obadiah, and Hanan. All these were the sons of Azel.

39 And the sons of Eshek his brother were, Ulam his firstborn, Jehush the second, and Eliphelet the third.

40 And the sons of Ulam were mighty men of valour, archers, and had many sons, and sons' sons, a hundred and fifty. All these are the sons of Benjamin.

⁷ Or, *Ish-bosheth*, 2 Sam. ii. 8.—⁸ Or, *Mephi-bosheth*, 2 Sam. iv. 4; ix. 6, 10.—⁹ 2 Sam. ix. 12.—⁹ Or, *Tahrea*, Chap. ix. 41.—^b *Jarah*, Chap. ix. 42.—ⁱ Chap. ix. 43, *Rephaiah*.

Verse 32. *These also dwell with their brethren in Jerusalem*—With those other Benjamites spoken of verse 28; *over against them*—In some street or part of Jerusalem, which was over against that where their brethren dwelt.

Verse 40. *Archers*—Hebrew, *that tread the bow*: for the bows of steel, which these used, required great strength to bend them; which therefore they did by treading the bow with their feet, and pulling the string with both their hands.

CHAPTER IX.

The chief of Judah, Benjamin, Ephraim, and Manasseh, who returned from captivity and dwelt at Jerusalem, 1–9. The priests, 10–13. The Levites, 14–16. Their various offices in the temple, 17–34. The family of Saul, 35–44.

A. M. 2804. SO ^a all Israel were reckoned by
B. C. 1200. genealogies; and behold, they were written in the book of the kings of Israel and Judah, who were carried away to Babylon for their transgression.

^a Ezra ii. 59.—^b Ezra ii. 70; Neh. vii. 73.

NOTES ON CHAPTER IX.

Verse 1. *They were written in the book*—In the public records, wherein there was an account of that kingdom, and of the several families in it.

Verse 2. *The first*—After the return from Babylon. *That dwell in their possessions*—That took possession of their own lands and cities, which had been formerly allotted them, but of late years had been taken from them for their sins, and possessed

2 ¶ ^b Now the first inhabitants that A. M. 2804.
dwelt in their possessions in their cities B. C. 1200.
were, the Israelites, the priests, Levites, and ^c the Nethinims.

3 ¶ And in ^d Jerusalem dwelt of the children

^c Josh. ix. 27; Ezra ii. 43; viii. 20.—^d Neh. xi. 1.

by other people. *Israelites*—The common people of Judah and Israel, called here by the general name of Israelites, which was given them before that unhappy division of the kingdoms; and now is restored to them, when the Israelites are united with the Jews in one and the same commonwealth, that so all the names and signs of their former division might be blotted out. And though the generality of the ten tribes were yet in captivity, yet divers of

A. M. 2804. of Judah, and of the children of
B. C. 1200. Benjamin, and of the children of
Ephraim, and Manasseh :

4 Uthai the son of Ammihud, the son of Omri,
the son of Imri, the son of Bani, of the children
of Pharez the son of Judah.

5 And of the Shilonites ; Asaiah the firstborn,
and his sons.

6 And of the sons of Zerah ; Jeuel, and their
brethren, six hundred and ninety.

7 And of the sons of Benjamin ; Sallu the son
of Meshullam, the son of Hodaviah, the son of
Hasenuah,

8 And Ibneiah the son of Jeroham, and Elah
the son of Uzzi, the son of Michri, and Meshul-
lam the son of Shephatiah, the son of Reuel, the
son of Ibnijah ;

9 And their brethren, according to their genera-
tions, nine hundred and fifty six. All these
men *were* chief of the fathers in the house of
their fathers.

10 ¶ * And of the priests ; Jedaiah, and Je-
hoiariib, and Jachin,

11 And ¹ Azariah the son of Hilkiah, the son
of Meshullam, the son of Zadok, the son of

* Neh. xi. 10, &c.—¹ Neh. xi. 11, *Seraiah*.

them, upon Cyrus's general proclamation, associ-
ated themselves, and returned with those of Judah
and Benjamin. *Levites*—These took possession of
the cities belonging to them, as they had need and
opportunity. *Nethinims*—A certain order of men,
either Gibeonites, or others joined with them, who
were נְתִינִים, *nethinim*, given to the priests and Le-
vites for performing the servile offices of the taber-
nacle or temple: accordingly the LXX. in this place
render the word by *δεδωκενοι*, *persons given*. Thus
Joshua gave the Gibeonites to be hewers of wood,
&c., Josh. ix. 21, 27. That they might attend upon
their work without distraction, they had certain
places and possessions given to them, which they
are now said to repossess.

Verse 4. *Ammihud*—That there is so great a di-
versity of names between this catalogue and that
Neh. xi., may be ascribed to two causes. 1st, To the
custom of the Hebrews, who used frequently to
give several names to one person. And, 2d, To the
change of times; for here they are named who
came up at the first return: but many of those in
Nehemiah might be such as returned afterward, and
came and dwelt, either instead of the persons here
named, or with them.

Verse 7. *Sallu the son of Meshullam*—Who is
mentioned, but described by other parents, (Neh. xi.
7,) or at least by persons under other names. Pos-
sibly these were his more immediate, and those his

Meraioth, the son of Ahitub, the ruler
of the house of God ;

12 And Adaiah the son of Jeroham, the son
of Pashur, the son of Malchijah, and Maasiah
the son of Adiel, the son of Jahzerah, the son
of Meshullam, the son of Meshillemith, the son
of Immer ;

13 And their brethren, heads of the house of
their fathers, a thousand and seven hundred and
threescore ; ² very able men for the work of the
service of the house of God.

14 ¶ And of the Levites ; Shemaiah the son
of Hasshub, the son of Azrikam, the son of
Hashabiah, of the sons of Merari ;

15 And Bakbakkar, Heresh, and Galal, and
Mattaniah the son of Micah, the son of Zichri,
the son of Asaph ;

16 And Obadiah the son of Shemaiah,
the son of Galal, the son of Jeduthun, and
Berechiah the son of Asa, the son of Elka-
nah, that dwelt in the villages of the Netop-
hathites.

17 And the porters *were* Shallum, and Akkub,
and Talmon, and Ahiman, and their brethren :
Shallum *was* the chief ;

² Heb. *mighty men of valour*.

more remote parents: or he might be begotten by
the one, and adopted by the other. For it is certain
that men are sometimes, in Scripture, called the
sons of those that adopted them, or whose right of
inheritance fell to them.

Verse 9. *Nine hundred and fifty-six*—They are
reckoned but nine hundred and twenty-eight in
Neh. xi. 8, either because there he mentions only
those that were by lot determined to dwell at Jeru-
salem, to whom he here adds those who freely of-
fered themselves to it ; or because some of the per-
sons first placed there were dead, or removed from
Jerusalem upon some emergent occasion.

Verse 11. *The ruler*—Or rather, *a ruler in the
house of God*—Not the high-priest, who was Ezra,
(Ezra iii. 8,) but a chief ruler under him.

Verse 13. *Able men*—Hebrew, *mighty men of
valour* ; which is here mentioned as an excellent
qualification for their place ; because the priests
might meet with great opposition in the discharge
of their office, in the execution of the censures up-
on all impure persons without exception, and in pre-
serving sacred things from violation by the touch
of forbidden hands.

Verses 16, 17. *The villages of the Netophathite*—
Or, *Netophathites* : which were in Judah, chap. ii. 54.
Here they now dwelt, either because their proper ci-
ties were not yet built ; or because they were not
yet numerous enough to replenish them. *The por-*

A. M. 2904. 18 Who hitherto waited in the
B. C. 1200. king's gate eastward: they were porters in the companies of the children of Levi.

19 And Shallum the son of Kore, the son of Ebiasaph, the son of Korah, and his brethren of the house of his father, the Korahites, were over the work of the service, keepers of the ³ gates of the tabernacle: and their fathers, being over the host of the LORD, were keepers of the entry.

20 And ^f Phinehas the son of Eleazar was the ruler over them in time past, and the LORD was with him.

21 And Zechariah the son of Meshelemiah was porter of the door of the tabernacle of the congregation.

22 All these which were chosen to be porters

^b Heb. thresholds.—^f Numbers xxxi. 6.—^g Chap. xxvi. 1, 2.
^h 1 Sam. ix. 9.

ters were, &c.—Whose office it was to keep all the gates of the temple, that no unclean person or thing might enter into it.

Verse 18. *King's gate*—In the east gate of the temple; which was so called, because the kings of Judah used to go to the temple through that gate. Under this gate he comprehends all the rest, which also were guarded by these porters. *In the companies*—Or, according to the courses. They kept the gates successively, according to that method into which the Levites were distributed, for the more convenient management of their several offices, among which this of the porters was one.

Verse 19. *Tabernacle*—Namely, in time past, when the tabernacle was standing, before the temple was built. *Their fathers*—The Kohathites. *Being over the host of the Lord*—When the Israelites were in the wilderness, encamped in a military manner round about the tabernacle, with whom these were then placed. *Keepers of the entry*—Of the veil by which they entered into the tabernacle; which he calls the entry, because then there were no gates. The meaning is, that all things were now restored to their primitive order; and the several persons took those offices upon them, which their ancestors had before them.

Verse 20. *Phinehas was ruler over them*—That is, over all the porters, and other Levites and priests before mentioned. The Lord was with him to direct, and assist, and bless him in the discharge of his office, which seems to be here observed to encourage his successor, and consequently all the priests and Levites of this time, to go on courageously and resolutely in their work, not doubting but God would stand by them as he had stood by their fathers.

Verse 21. *Zechariah was porter*—Chief porter, namely, in the time of David, as the following verse shows. *Of the door of the tabernacle*—The door which led out of the priests' court into the taberna-

cle, in which the ark was placed. Before the temple was built, they had a mean and moveable tent, which they made use of in the mean time. They that cannot yet have a temple, let them be thankful for a tabernacle, and make the best use of it. Never let God's work be left undone, for want of a place to do it in.

Verse 22. *These were reckoned in their villages*—Where their usual residence was, and whence they came to Jerusalem in their courses. *Whom David and Samuel did ordain*—In the times of the judges there was much disorder both in the Jewish state and church, and the Levites came to the tabernacle promiscuously, and as their inclinations or occasions brought them. But Samuel, observing they were greatly increased, began to think of establishing order in their ministration. And these intentions of his, probably, were communicated to David, who, after his own peaceable settlement in his throne, revived and perfected Samuel's design, and took care to put it in execution.

Verse 23. *They and their children had the oversight*—Namely, in David's time. *Of the tabernacle*—This is added to explain what he means by the house of the Lord: not that tabernacle which David had set up for the ark, but that more solemn tabernacle, which Moses had made by God's express command; which in David's time was at Gibeon; in which God was worshipped until the temple was built. *By wards*—By turns or courses.

Verse 24. *They and their children had the oversight of the gates of the house of the LORD, namely, the house of the tabernacle, by wards.*

Verse 25. *Their brethren were to come*—From their several villages to the place of worship. *After seven days*—Every seventh day the courses were changed, and the new-comers were to tarry till the next sabbath day. *From time to time with them*—To be with them, with the chief porters, who always abode in the place of God's worship.

Verse 26. *These Levites were in their set office*—These were constantly upon the place, in the execution of their office, that they might oversee the

255

⁴ Heb. founded.—⁵ Or, trust.—⁶ 2 Kings xi. 5.—⁷ Or, trust.
⁸ Or, store-houses.

A. M. 2804. God, because the charge *was* upon
B. C. 1200. them, and the opening thereof every
morning *pertained* to them.

28 And *certain* of them had the charge of
the ministering vessels, that they should ⁸bring
them in and out by tale.

29 *Some* of them also *were* appointed to over-
see the vessels, and all the ⁹instruments of
the sanctuary, and the fine flour, and the wine,
and the oil, and the frankincense, and the spices.

30 And *some* of the sons of the priests made
¹⁰the ointment of the spices.

31 And Mattithiah, *one* of the Levites, who
was the firstborn of Shallum the Korahite, had
the ¹⁰set office ¹over the things that were made
¹¹in the pans.

32 And *other* of their brethren, of the sons of
the Kohathites, ¹²*were* over the ¹²show-bread, to
prepare *it* every sabbath.

33 And these *are* ¹³the singers, chief of the
fathers of the Levites, *who remaining* in the
chambers *were* free: for ¹³they were employed
in *that* work day and night.

34 These chief fathers of the Levites *were*
chief throughout their generations; these dwelt
at Jerusalem.

⁸ Heb. *bring them in by tale, and carry them out by tale.*—⁹ Or, *vessels.*—¹⁰ Exod. xxx. 23.—¹¹ Or, *trust.*—¹² Lev. ii. 5; vi. 21.—¹³ Or, *on flat plates, or, slices.*

inferior porters in their work. *Were over the treasures*—In which the sacred utensils, and other treasures belonging to the temple, were kept. *They lodged round about the house of God*—They were not permitted to dwell in the villages as their brethren were, but were obliged to constant residence in the place, because their office required it.

Verses 30, 31. *The sons of the priests made the ointment*—This is added to show, that though the Levites were intrusted with the keeping of this ointment, yet none but the priests could make it. *Over the things made in the pans*—Was to take care that fine flour might be provided, that when occasion required they might make cakes in pans.

Verse 33. *And these*—Others of the Levites; of whose several offices he had spoken before. *Are*—Or rather, *were*; which is understood all along in the foregoing and following verses. *Remaining in the chambers*—That they might be ready to come

35 ¶ And in Gibeon dwelt the father ¹⁴of Gibeon, Jehiel, whose wife's name ¹⁴
was ¹⁴Maachah:

36 And his firstborn son Abdon, then Zur, and Kish, and Baal, and Ner, and Nadab,

37 And Gedor, and Ahio, and Zechariah, and Mikloth.

38 And Mikloth begat Shimeam. And they also dwelt with their brethren at Jerusalem, over against their brethren.

39 ¹⁵And Ner begat Kish; and Kish begat Saul; and Saul begat Jonathan, and Malchishua, and Abinadab, and Esh-baal.

40 And the son of Jonathan *was* Merib-baal; and Merib-baal begat Micah.

41 And the sons of Micah *were*, Pithon, and Melech, and Tahrea, ¹⁶and Ahaz.

42 And Ahaz begat Jarah; and Jarah begat Alemeth, and Azmaveth, and Zimri; and Zimri begat Moza;

43 And Moza begat Binea; and Rephaiah his son, Eleasah his son, Azel his son.

44 And Azel had six sons, whose names *are* these, Azrikam, Bocheru, and Ishmael, and Sheariah, and Obadiah, and Hanan: these *were* the sons of Azel.

¹⁴ Lev. xxiv. 8.—¹⁵ Heb. *bread of ordering.*—¹⁶ Chap. vi. 31, xxv. 1.—¹⁷ Heb. *upon them.*—¹⁸ Chap. viii. 29.—¹⁹ Chapter viii. 33.—²⁰ Chap. viii. 35.

whenever they were called to the service of God in the tabernacle. *Were free*—From all trouble and employment, that they might wholly attend upon their proper work; which was either composing or ordering sacred songs, or actually singing, or teaching others to sing them. *Day and night*—Continually, and particularly in the morning and evening, the two times appointed for solemn service. Thus was God continually praised, as it is fit he should be, who is continually doing us good.

Verses 34, 35. *These dwelt at Jerusalem*—Upon their return from Babylon they were not suffered to choose their habitations in the country, as others were, but were obliged to settle themselves at Jerusalem, that they might constantly attend upon God's service there. *Whose wife's name was Maachah*—In this and the following verses he repeats Saul's genealogy, that he might make way for the following history.

CHAPTER X.

The overthrow and death of Saul, 1-7. The triumph of the Philistines, 8-10. The men of Jabesh-gilead take down and bury the bodies of Saul and his sons, 11, 12. The reason of Saul's death, 13, 14.

A. M. 2949.
B. C. 1056.

NOW ^athe Philistines fought against Israel; and the men of Israel fled from before the Philistines, and fell down ¹slain in mount Gilboa.

2 And the Philistines followed hard after Saul, and after his sons; and the Philistines slew Jonathan, and ²Abinadab, and Malchi-shua, the sons of Saul.

3 And the battle went sore against Saul, and the ³archers ⁴hit him, and he was wounded of the archers.

4 Then said Saul to his armour-bearer, Draw thy sword, and thrust me through therewith, lest these uncircumcised come and ⁵abuse me. But his armour-bearer would not; for he was sore afraid. So Saul took a sword, and fell upon it.

5 And when his armour-bearer saw that Saul was dead, he fell likewise on the sword, and died.

6 So Saul died, and his three sons, and all his house died together.

7 And when all the men of Israel that *were* in the valley saw that they fled, and that Saul and his sons were dead, then they forsook their cities, and fled: and the Philistines came and dwelt in them.

^a 1 Sam. xxxi. 1.—¹ Or, wounded.—² Or, Ishui, 1 Sam. xiv. 9.—³ Heb. shooters with bows.—⁴ Heb. found him.—⁵ Or, mock me.

NOTES ON CHAPTER X.

Verse 1. *The men of Israel fled*—Thus princes sin, and the people suffer for it. No doubt there was enough in them to deserve it. But that which divine justice had chiefly an eye to, was the sin of Saul. Great men should, in an especial manner, take heed of provoking God's wrath. For if they kindle that fire, they know not how many may be consumed by it for their sakes. See notes on 1 Sam. xxxi.

Verse 6. *Saul died, and all his house*—All his children then present with him, namely, *his three sons*; for Ish-bosheth and Mephibosheth were not slain.

Verse 10. *In the temple of Dagon*—If we give not God the glory of our successes, even Philistines will rise up in judgment with us, and condemn us. Shall Dagon have so great a place in their triumphs, and the true God be forgotten in ours?

Verse 12. *And fasted seven days*—Every day till evening, after the manner of the Jewish fasts.

8 ¶ And it came to pass on the ^{A. M. 2949} ^{B. C. 1056.} morrow, when the Philistines came to strip the slain, that they found Saul and his sons fallen in mount Gilboa.

9 And when they had stripped him, they took his head, and his armour, and sent into the land of the Philistines round about, to carry tidings unto their idols, and to the people.

10 ^b And they put his armour in the house of their gods, and fastened his head in the temple of Dagon.

11 ¶ And when all Jabesh-gilead heard all that the Philistines had done to Saul,

12 They arose, all the valiant men, and took away the body of Saul, and the bodies of his sons, and brought them to Jabesh, and buried their bones under the oak in Jabesh, and fasted seven days.

13 ¶ So Saul died for his transgression which he ^ccommitted against the LORD, ^eeven against the word of the LORD, which he kept not, and also for asking *counsel of one that had a familiar spirit*, ^dto inquire of it;

14 And inquired not of the LORD: therefore he slew him, and ^eturned the kingdom unto David the son of ⁷Jesse.

^b 1 Samuel xxxi. 10.—^c Heb. transgressed.—^e 1 Sam. xiii. 13; xv. 23.—^d 1 Sam. xxviii. 7.—^e 1 Sam. xv. 28; 2 Sam. iii. 9; v. 3.—⁷ Heb. Isai.

Verse 13. *So Saul died for his transgression*—The sense is, wonder not that Saul fell by the hands of the Philistines, who were armed against him by his own sin, and by God's vengeance for it. *Against the word of the Lord*—Against God's express, and plain, and positive command; which is a great aggravation of any sin. *For asking counsel of one that had a familiar spirit*—Which also was contrary to a manifest command, (Lev. xix. 31,) and moreover contrary to his own conscience, which was so fully convinced of the evil of such practices, that he had endeavoured the utter extirpation of all such persons, in pursuance of God's law, 1 Sam. xxviii. 9. *To inquire of it*—Concerning the event of the approaching battle.

Verse 14. *Inquired not of the Lord*—He did in some sort, but not in a right manner; not humbly and penitently, not diligently and importunately, not patiently and perseveringly; nor till he was brought to the last extremity, and then it was too late.

CHAPTER XI.

David is made king, 1-3. He takes the castle of Zion, 4-9. A catalogue of his mighty men, 10-47.

A. M. 2956. B. C. 1048. **THEN** ^aall Israel gathered themselves to David unto Hebron, saying, Behold, we *are* thy bone and thy flesh.

2 And moreover ¹in time past, even when Saul was king, thou *wast* he that ledest out and broughtest in Israel: and the LORD thy God said unto thee, Thou shalt ²feed ^bmy people Israel, and thou shalt be ruler over my people Israel.

3 Therefore came all the elders of Israel to the king to Hebron; and David made a covenant with them in Hebron before the LORD; and ^cthey anointed David king over Israel, according to the word of the LORD ³by ^dSamuel.

4 ¶ And David and all Israel ^ewent to Jerusalem, which *is* Jebus; ^fwhere the Jebusites *were*, the inhabitants of the land.

5 And the inhabitants of Jebus said to David, Thou shalt not come hither. Nevertheless David took the castle of Zion, which *is* the city of David.

6 And David said, Whosoever smiteth the Jebusites first shall be ⁴chief and captain. So Joab the son of Zeruiah went first up, and was chief.

7 And David dwelt in the castle; therefore they called ⁵it, The city of David.

8 And he built the city round about, even from Millo round about: and Joab ⁶repaired the rest of the city.

9 So David ⁷waxed greater and greater: for the LORD of hosts *was* with him.

^a 2 Samuel v. 1.—¹ Heb. both yesterday and the third day. ^b Or, rule.—² Psa. lxxviii. 71.—^c 2 Sam. v. 3.—³ Heb. by the hand of.—^d 1 Sam. xvi. 1, 12.—^e 2 Sam. v. 6.—^f Judg. i. 21; xix. 10.—⁴ Heb. head.—⁵ That is, Zion, 2 Sam. v. 7. ⁶ Heb. revived.

NOTES ON CHAPTER XI.

Verses 1, 2. *All Israel gathered themselves to David*—That is, *all the tribes of Israel*, as it is expressed 2 Sam. v. 1, by their elders (verse 3) and officers, and a great multitude of their soldiers and people. *The Lord said unto thee*—Or, *concerning thee*: for it is apparent that they knew it was God's will David should be king, and therefore many of them had opposed David hitherto against their own consciences.

Verse 4. *David and all Israel went to Jerusalem*—Of this and the following verses, to verse 9, see notes on 2 Sam. v. 6, &c.

Verse 6. *And was chief*—Before this he was one of David's chief captains; but now he is made captain-general of all the forces of Israel and Judah.

10 ¶ ⁸These also *are* the chief of the mighty men whom David had, who ⁸strengthened themselves with him in his kingdom, *and* with all Israel, to make him king according to ^hthe word of the LORD concerning Israel.

11 And this *is* the number of mighty men whom David had; Jashobeam ⁹a Hachmonite, the chief of the captains: he lifted up his spear against three hundred slain *by him* at one time.

12 And after him *was* Eleazar the son of Dodo, the Ahohite, who *was one* of the three mighty.

13 He was with David at ¹⁰Pas-dammim, and there the Philistines were gathered together to battle, where was a parcel of ground full of barley; and the people fled from before the Philistines.

14 And they ¹¹set themselves in the midst of *that* parcel, and delivered it, and slew the Philistines; and the LORD saved *them* by a great ¹²deliverance.

15 Now ¹³three of the thirty captains ⁱwent down to the rock to David, into the cave of Adullam; and the host of the Philistines encamped ^kin the valley of Rephaim.

16 And David *was* then in the hold, and the Philistines' garrison *was* then at Beth-lehem.

17 And David longed, and said, O that one would give me drink of the water of the well of Beth-lehem, that *is* at the gate!

⁷ Heb. went in going and increasing.—⁸ 2 Samuel xxiii. 8. ⁹ Or, held strongly with him.—^h 1 Sam. xvi. 1, 12.—¹⁰ Or, son of Hachmoni.—¹¹ Or, Ephis-dammim, 1 Sam. xvii. 1.—¹² Or, stood.—¹³ Or, salvation.—¹⁴ Or, three captains over the thirty. ¹⁵ 2 Sam. xxiii. 13.—^k Chap. xiv. 9.

Verse 10. *The chief of the mighty men*—Who helped with all their might to settle him in his kingdom. *With all Israel*—In conjunction with all those loyal Israelites who joined with David. Yet David ascribed his success, not to the hosts he had, but to *the Lord of hosts*: not to the mighty men that were with him, but to the mighty God, whose presence with us is all in all.

Verse 11. *Jashobeam a Hachmonite*—Called the Tachmonite, and Adino the Eznite, 2 Sam. xxiii. 8. *He lifted up his spear against three hundred slain, &c.*—By his own hand, five hundred more being slain by others then joining with him, who pursued the victory, both which sums make up the eight hundred, numbered 2 Sam. xxiii. 8. The slaughter of all is justly ascribed to him, because it was the effect of his valour.

A. M. 2957. B. C. 1047. 18 And the three brake through the host of the Philistines, and drew water out of the well of Beth-lehem, that *was* by the gate, and took *it*, and brought *it* to David: but David would not drink *of* it, but poured it out to the LORD,

19 And said, My God forbid it me, that I should do this thing: shall I drink the blood of these men ¹⁴ that have put their lives in jeopardy? for with *the jeopardy* of their lives they brought it. Therefore he would not drink it. These things did these three mightiest.

20 ¹ And Abishai the brother of Joab, he was chief of the three: for lifting up his spear against three hundred, he slew *them*, and had a name among the three.

21 ^m Of the three, he was more honourable than the two; for he was their captain: howbeit he attained not unto the *first* three.

22 Benaiah the son of Jehoiada, the son of a valiant man of Kabzeel, ¹⁵ who had done many acts; ⁿ he slew two lion-like men of Moab: also he went down and slew a lion in a pit in a snowy day.

23 And he slew an Egyptian, ¹⁶ a man of great stature, five cubits high; and in the Egyptian's hand *was* a spear like a weaver's beam; and he went down to him with a staff, and plucked the spear out of the Egyptian's hand, and slew him with his own spear.

24 These *things* did Benaiah the son of Jehoiada, and had the name among the three mighties.

25 Behold he was honourable among the thirty, but attained not to the *first* three: and David set him over his guard.

26 Also the valiant men of the armies *were*,

A. M. 2957. B. C. 1047. ° Asahel the brother of Joab, Elhanan the son of Dodo of Beth-lehem,

27 ¹⁷ Shammoth the ¹⁸ Harorite, Helez the ¹⁹ Pelonite,

28 Ira the son of Ikkesh the Tekoite, Abiezer the Antothite,

29 ²⁰ Sibbecai the Hushathite, ²¹ Illai the Ahohite,

30 Maharai the Netophathite, ²² Heled the son of Baanah the Netophathite,

31 Ithai the son of Ribai of Gibeah *that pertained* to the children of Benjamin, Benaiah the Pirathonite,

32 ²³ Hurai of the brooks of Gaash, ²⁴ Abiel the Arbathite,

33 Azmaveth the Baharumite, Eliahba the Shaalbonite,

34 The sons of ²⁵ Hashem the Gizonite, Jonathan the son of Shage the Hararite,

35 Ahiam the son of ²⁶ Sacar the Hararite, ²⁷ Eliphai the son of ²⁸ Ur,

36 Hopher the Mecherathite, Ahijah the Pelonite,

37 ²⁹ Hezro the Carmelite, ³⁰ Naarai the son of Ezbai,

38 Joel the brother of Nathan, Mibhar ³¹ the son of Haggeri,

39 Zelek the Ammonite, Naharai the Berothite, the armour-bearer of Joab the son of Zeruiah,

40 Ira the Ithrite, Gareb the Ithrite,

41 Uriah the Hittite, Zabab the son of Ahlai,

42 Adina the son of Shiza the Reubenite, a captain of the Reubenites, and thirty with him,

43 Hanan the son of Maachah, and Joshaphat the Mithnite,

¹⁴ Heb. *with their lives*.—¹ 2 Sam. xxiii. 18, &c.—^m 2 Sam. xxiii. 19, &c.—¹⁵ Heb. *great of deeds*.—ⁿ 2 Samuel xxiii. 20. ¹⁶ Heb. *a man of measure*.—^o 2 Samuel xxiii. 24.—¹⁷ Or, *Shammoth*.—¹⁸ Or, *Harodite*, 2 Sam. xxiii. 25.—¹⁹ Or, *Palute*, 2 Sam. xxiii. 26.

²⁰ Or, *Mebunnai*.—²¹ Or, *Zalmon*.—²² Or, *Heleb*.—²³ Or, *Hiddai*.—²⁴ Or, *Abi-albon*.—²⁵ Or, *Jashen*, 2 Samuel xxiii. 32.—²⁶ Or, *Sharar*.—²⁷ Or, *Eliphelet*.—²⁸ Or, *Ahasbai*.—²⁹ Or, *Hezrai*.—³⁰ Or, *Paarai the Arbite*.—³¹ Or, *the Haggerite*.

Verses 18, 19. *David would not drink of it*—That water which he thought too precious for his own drinking, he *poured out to the Lord*—For a drink-offering. If we have any thing better than other, let God be honoured with it, who is the best, and should have the best. *Shall I drink the blood, &c.*—It put him into the utmost confusion, to think three brave men should hazard their lives to fetch water for him. In his account it turns the water into blood. It is to the honour of great men, not to be prodigal of the blood of those they employ.

Verses 20, 21. *Lifting up his spear against three*

hundred, he slew them—He vanquished them all, and slew a great number of them: it is, however, not said that he slew them all at one time, as it is said of Jashobeam, verse 11. *He attained not unto the first three*—He did not equal them in valiant exploits.

Verses 41, 42. *Uriah the Hittite*—The last of that catalogue in 2 Sam. xxiii. 39. But here some others are added to the number, because though they were not of the thirty, yet they were men of great valour and renown among David's commanders. *Thirty with him*—Thirty captains, who were under him as their colonel.

A. M. 2957. 44 Uzzia the Ashterathite, Shama
B. C. 1047. and Jehiel the sons of Hothan the
Aroerite,
45 Jedaiel the ³²son of Shimri, and Joha his
brother, the Tizite,

46 Eliel the Mahavite, and Jeribai, A. M. 2957.
B. C. 1047. and Joshaviah, the sons of Elnaam,
and Ithmah the Moabite,
47 Eliel, and Obed, and Jasiel the Mesobaites.

³² Or,

Shimrite.

Verse 44. *The Aroerite*—So called possibly because his station and quarters were upon the river Aroer, beyond Jordan, being placed there for the defence of those parts.

Verse 46. *Ithmah the Moabite*—So called, either because he was by birth a Moabite, though now pro-

elyted to the true religion; or from some eminent service done by him among the Moabites. Thus, among the Romans, Publius Scipio was surnamed *Africanus*, for his great achievements in Africa; and Lucius Scipio, his brother, *Asiaticus*, for his victory over Antiochus at Magnesia in Asia.

CHAPTER XII.

The companies that came to David at Ziklag, 1-22. The armies that came to him at Hebron, 23-40.

A. M. 2946. **NOW** ^a these are they that came to
B. C. 1058. David to ^b Ziklag, ¹ while he yet
kept himself close because of Saul the son of
Kish: and they were among the mighty men,
helpers of the war.

2 They were armed with bows, and could use both the right hand and ^c the left in *hurling* stones, and *shooting* arrows out of a bow, even of Saul's brethren of Benjamin.

3 The chief was Ahiezer, then Joash, the sons of ² Shemaah the Gibeathite; and Jeziel, and Pelet, the sons of Azmaveth; and Bera-chah, and Jehu the Antothite,

4 And Ismaiah the Gibeonite, a mighty man among the thirty, and over the thirty; and Je-

remiah, and Jahaziel, and Johanan, A. M. 2946.
B. C. 1058. and Josabad the Gederathite,

5 Eluzai, and Jerimoth, and Bealiah, and Shemariah, and Shephatiah the Haruphite,

6 Elkanah, and Jesiah, and Azareel, and Joezer, and Jashobeam, the Korhites,

7 And Joelah, and Zebadiah, the sons of Jeroham of Gedor.

8 And of the Gadites there separated themselves unto David into the hold to the wilderness men of might, and men ³ of war fit for the battle, that could handle shield and buckler, whose faces were like the faces of lions, and were ^d as ⁴ swift as the roes upon the mountains;

^a 1 Sam. xxvii. 2.—^b 1 Sam. xxvii. 6.—^c Heb. being yet shut up.—^d Judg. xx. 16.—^e Or, Harnaah.

³ Heb. of the host.—⁴ 2 Sam. ii. 18.—⁵ Heb. as the roes upon the mountains to make haste.

NOTES ON CHAPTER XII.

Verse 1. *Now these are they that came to David, &c.*—This author thought fit to do those the honour of having their names recorded, (which was omitted in the book of Samuel,) who came and joined themselves to him when he was in exile; and were afterward great assistants to him in his wars. *While he kept himself close*—Or was shut out from his own land and people: for the writer speaks not of that time when he was shut up, and hid himself in caves in the land of Judah, but when he was at Ziklag.

Verse 2. *Could use both the right hand and the left*—With like nimbleness and certainty: compare Judg. iii. 15; and xx. 16. *Saul's brethren of Benjamin*—Of Saul's own tribe: who were moved hereto by God's Spirit, by the conscience of their duty to David, and by their observation of God's departure from Saul, and of his special presence with David.

Verse 4. *A mighty man among the thirty*—Who came attended with thirty valiant Benjamites, and was their commander.

Verse 8. *They separated themselves*—From Saul, to whom they had hitherto adhered, and from their brethren of their own tribe, who yet maintained Saul's cause; and from their families, and the places where they lived, from whom they went to David. *Into the hold to the wilderness*—Or rather, *into the hold of the wilderness*; that is, either to the cave of Adullam or Engedi, or rather to Ziklag, which was in the wilderness of Judah, and may be here called the *hold* or *fortress*, for the same reason for which that name is given to the city of David, chap. xi. 7, (see the Hebrew,) namely, because it was a strong, well-fortified place. *Whose faces were like the faces of lions*—Who were full of courage, and by the majesty and fierceness of their countenances terrified their adversaries. *As swift as the roes*

A. M. 2946. 9 Ezer the first, Obadiah the second,
B. C. 1058. Eliab the third,

10 Mishmannah the fourth, Jeremiah the fifth,

11 Attai the sixth, Eliel the seventh,

12 Johanan the eighth, Elzabad the ninth,

13 Jeremiah the tenth, Machbanai the eleventh.

14 These were of the sons of Gad, captains of the host: ⁵ one of the least was over a hundred, and the greatest over a thousand.

15 These are they that went over Jordan in the first month, when it had ⁶ overflowed all his banks; and they put to flight all them of the valleys, both toward the east and toward the west.

16 And there came of the children of Benjamin and Judah to the hold unto David.

17 And David went out ⁷ to meet them, and answered and said unto them, If ye be come peaceably unto me to help me, my heart shall

⁵ Or, one that was least could resist a hundred, and the greatest a thousand.—⁶ Heb. filled over.—⁷ Joshua iii. 15.—⁸ Heb. before them.—⁹ Heb. be one.

upon the mountains—As their very looks daunted their enemies, and put them to flight, so they could easily pursue, and overtake, and destroy them in their flight.

Verse 15. *These are they that went over Jordan, &c.*—Namely, in Saul's time, when, it seems, the enemies of the Israelites had made an inroad, and done some mischiefs to the Israelites beyond Jordan, to whose help these persons then came. *When it had overflowed all its banks*—As it commonly did about that time. Probably these, being men of great courage and dexterity, swam over Jordan, at the time here specified, through their ardent desire to help their brethren, and to fight with their enemies. *And they put to flight all them of the valleys*—The people that lived in the valleys or deserts beyond Jordan, who, it seems, when Saul was engaged against the Philistines, took that advantage to fall upon the Israelites beyond Jordan. *Both toward the east and toward the west*—Both the people that lived more eastward and remote from Jordan, and those that lived more westward and nearer to it.

Verse 17. *David went out to meet them, and answered*—That is, spake, for that word is often used in the Scriptures, even of him that speaks first. *My heart shall be knit unto you*—I shall ever esteem and love you, and show this by my actions to you hereafter. *But if ye be come to betray me, &c.*—Which your number, and quality, and near relation to Saul, give me some cause to suspect. *Seeing there is no wrong in my hands*—I have done no injury to Saul nor to you; but have spared him and you when it was in my power to have destroyed you. *The God of our fathers look thereon, and*

⁸ be knit unto you: but if ye be come to betray me to mine enemies, seeing ⁹ there is no wrong in my hands, the God of our fathers look thereon, and rebuke it.

18 Then ¹⁰ the spirit came upon ¹¹ Amasai, who was chief of the captains, and he said, Thine are we, David, and on thy side, thou son of Jesse: peace, peace be unto thee, and peace be to thy helpers; for thy God helpeth thee. Then David received them, and made them captains of the band.

19 And there fell some of Manasseh to David, ¹² when he came with the Philistines against Saul to battle: but they helped them not: for the lords of the Philistines upon advisement sent him away, saying, ¹³ He will fall with his master Saul ¹⁴ to the jeopardy of our heads.

20 As he went to Ziklag, there fell to him of Manasseh, Adnah, and Jozabad, and Jediel,

¹⁰ Or, violence.—¹¹ Heb. the spirit clothed Amasai; Judges vi. 34.—¹² 2 Sam. xvii. 25.—¹³ 1 Samuel xxix. 2.—¹⁴ 1 Samuel xxix. 4.—¹⁵ Heb. on our heads.

rebuke it—Namely, by his power, manifested for me, and against you, for your perfidiousness. In saying, *the God of our fathers*, meaning both his fathers and theirs, he suggests a reason why they should not deal ill with him: namely, because they were both descendants from the same patriarchs, and servants of the same God. And thus he encourages himself to believe, that God would right him if he were injured. For he was *the God of his fathers*, therefore a blessing was entailed upon him: and a God to all Israel in particular, as well as a Judge to all the earth.

Verse 18. *The Spirit came upon Amasai*—Not only saving graces, but other heroic and generous motions are ascribed to God's Spirit, which here stirred up in him a more than ordinary greatness of mind and resolution. *Thy God helpeth thee*—We have seen evidences of God's singular and gracious care of thee, and kindness to thee; and if we should oppose thee we should fight against God, and his word and providence. *Then David made them captains of the band*—Of those forces which they brought with them: or, he put them among the heads, or officers of his band; that is, he gave them commands, either now in his small army, each according to his quality; or afterward, when he was advanced to the kingdom: for it is not here said when he did this.

Verses 19, 20. *They helped them not*—That is, the Manassites here named, and the rest of David's forces, to whom they had now joined themselves, did not help the Philistines in battle, as David had pretended to do. *As he went to Ziklag*—As he returned thither from the camp of the Philistines.

A. M. 2948. and Michael, and Jozabad, and Elihu,
B. C. 1056. and Zilthai, captains of the thousands
that were of Manasseh.

21 And they helped David ¹² against ¹ the
band of the rovers: for they were all mighty
men of valour, and were captains in the host.

22 For at that time day by day there came to
David to help him, until it was a great host,
like the host of God.

23 ¶ And these are the numbers of the
¹³ bands ¹⁴ that were ready armed to the war,
and ^k came to David to Hebron, to ¹ turn the
kingdom of Saul to him, ^m according to the
word of the LORD.

24 The children of Judah that bare shield and
spear were six thousand and eight hundred,
ready ¹⁵ armed to the war.

25 Of the children of Simeon, mighty men of va-
lour for the war, seven thousand and one hundred.

26 Of the children of Levi four thousand and
six hundred.

27 And Jehoiada was the leader of the Aaron-
ites, and with him were three thousand and
seven hundred:

¹² Or, with a band.—¹ 1 Sam. xxx. 1, 9.—¹³ Or, captains,
or, men.—¹⁴ Heb. heads.—^k 2 Sam. ii. 3; v. 2; Chap. xi. 1.
¹ Chapter x. 14.—^m 1 Samuel xvi. 1, 3.—¹⁵ Or, prepared.
² 2 Sam. viii. 17.—¹⁶ Heb. brethren, Gen. xxxi. 23.

Verses 21, 22. *They helped David against the band, &c.*—Against the Amalekites, who had taken and burned Ziklag, and whom David and his six hundred men were now pursuing. Or, as in the margin, *with a band*, or troop of soldiers, which they brought along with them to David's assistance. *They were all mighty men of valour*—Therefore they readily came to David's help. *At that time, day by day*—While David was at Ziklag, and in his march to Hebron, and principally at Hebron. *There came to David—like the host of God*—An innumerable multitude, like the stars or angels of God, both which are called God's host.

Verses 23, 24. *According to the word of the Lord*—Whereby he had settled the crown on David after Saul's death. *Six thousand, &c.*—Who came hither in the name of their brethren: for that whole tribe adhered to David.

Verses 27–29. *Jehoiada was the leader of the Aaronites*—Not the high-priest, for that was Abiathar, (1 Sam. xxiii. 6,) but one of some eminent place under him. *And Zadok*—Thought to be the same who was made high-priest in Solomon's time, (1 Kings ii. 35,) which, if true, he must have been very young at that time. *Twenty and two captains*—Whom he brought along with him. *Had kept the ward of the house of Saul*—Had endeavoured to keep the crown in their own tribe, and in Saul's family.

28 And ^a Zadok, a young man A. M. 2948.
mighty of valour, and of his father's B. C. 1056.
house twenty and two captains.

29 And of the children of Benjamin, the ¹⁶ kin-
dred of Saul, three thousand: for hitherto ¹⁷ the
^o greatest part of them had kept the ward of the
house of Saul.

30 And of the children of Ephraim twenty
thousand and eight hundred, mighty men of
valour, ¹⁸ famous throughout the house of their
fathers.

31 And of the half-tribe of Manasseh eighteen
thousand, which were expressed by name, to
come and make David king.

32 And of the children of Issachar, ^p which
were men that had understanding of the times,
to know what Israel ought to do; the heads of
them were two hundred; and all their brethren
were at their commandment.

33 Of Zebulun, such as went forth to battle,
¹⁹ expert in war, with all instruments of war,
fifty thousand, which could ²⁰ keep rank: they
were ²¹ not of double heart.

34 And of Naphtali a thousand captains, and

¹⁷ Heb. a multitude of them.—^o 2 Sam. ii. 8.—¹⁸ Heb. men
of names.—^p Esth. i. 13.—¹⁹ Or, rangers of battle, or, ranged
in battle.—²⁰ Or, set the battle in array.—²¹ Heb. without a
heart and a heart, Psa. xii. 2.

Verse 31. *Of the half-tribe of Manasseh*—Which was within Jordan: for of the other half beyond Jordan he speaks verse 37. *Which were expressed by name*—Who were not ashamed publicly to own David by putting their names to some paper presented to them for that purpose.

Verse 32. *That had understanding of the times*—They understood public affairs, the temper of the nation, and the tendencies of the present events. And they showed their wisdom at this time; for as they had adhered to Saul, while he lived, as knowing the time was not yet come for David to take possession of the kingdom; and as they could not join David, while Abner lived, and had the command of the other tribes wherewith they were encompassed, so, as soon as he was dead, and they had opportunity to declare themselves, they owned David for their king.

Verse 33. *Fifty thousand*—For this tribe, being next to that of Issachar, which was generally well affected to David, were probably very much swayed by their opinion and advice. *Which could keep rank*—Or, which were prepared, or ordered for battle, or to fight for David if occasion required. *Not of double heart*—They were sincerely loyal, and did not dissemble with David, pretending to be for him, while in their hearts they favoured Saul's family. And none had any separate interests, but all were for the public good.

A. M. 2948. with them with shield and spear thirty
B. C. 1056. and seven thousand.

35 And of the Danites expert in war twenty and eight thousand and six hundred.

36 And of Asher, such as went forth to battle, ²² expert in war, forty thousand.

37 And on the other side of Jordan, of the Reubenites, and the Gadites, and of the half-tribe of Manasseh, with all manner of instruments of war for the battle, a hundred and twenty thousand.

38 All these men of war, that could keep rank, came with a perfect heart to Hebron, to make

²² Or, keeping their ranks.

Verse 40. *They that were nigh them*—That lived not far from Hebron, the place where they now were. *Unto Issachar, &c.*—This is added by way of amplification and explication, to show that this was not to be understood of those Israelites only who lived in the neighbourhood of Hebron, but of those also who lived at some distance, yet were nearer to Hebron than some of the other tribes here named. *And on oxen*—Which, though not commonly used in this manner, nor very fit for such purposes, yet were now employed, because the quantity of provisions which they brought was very great, as the number of the people at Hebron were, and of horses they had few in Israel, and most of their asses,

David king over all Israel: and all ^{A. M. 2948.}
the rest also of Israel *were* of one ^{B. C. 1056.}
heart to make David king.

39 And there they were with David three days, eating and drinking: for their brethren had prepared for them.

40 Moreover, they that were nigh them, *even* unto Issachar, and Zebulun, and Naphtali, brought bread on asses, and on camels, and on mules, and on oxen, *and* ²³ meat, meal, cakes of figs, and bunches of raisins, and wine, and oil, and oxen, and sheep abundantly: for *there was joy* in Israel.

²³ Or, victual of meal.

camels, and mules, here mentioned, were probably used to carry men, women, and children, to this great, and public, and happy solemnity. *For there was joy in Israel*—Partly because their civil wars were wholly ended, and they were all united under one king; and partly because they had now a king of eminent valour and piety, and therefore expected to be saved from all their enemies and calamities, as indeed they were. Such was the joy and feasting when David was made king. And when the throne of the Son of David is set up in any soul, there is great joy in that soul; and provision is made for the feasting of it, not as here, merely for two or three days, but for the whole life, nay, for eternity

CHAPTER XIII.

David brings up the ark from Kirjath-jearim, 1-8. Uzza being smitten, it is left at the house of Obed-edom, 9-14.

A. M. 2959. **A**ND David consulted with the
B. C. 1045. captains of thousands, and hundreds, *and* with every leader.

2 And David said unto all the congregation

¹ Heb. let us break forth and send.

NOTES ON CHAPTER XIII.

Verse 1. *David consulted with the captains of thousands, &c.*—With all the principal persons in authority, who had any command over others. For it is a dangerous thing for a prince, especially in the beginning of his reign, to rely wholly on his own wisdom, and not advise with others.

Verse 2. *David said unto all the congregation*—Unto all the people then assembled with him at Hebron. In the second book of Samuel (chap. v. and vi.) this story of removing the ark is mentioned after the taking of Jerusalem, and the two first fights with the Philistines, whereas here it is placed before the latter, and there is no mention of the former.

2

of Israel, *if it seem good* unto you, ^{A. M. 2959.}
and that it be of the LORD our God, ^{B. C. 1045.}

¹ let us send abroad unto our brethren everywhere, *that are* ² left in all the land of Israel,

¹ 1 Sam. xxxi. 1; Isa. xxxvii. 4.

The case seems to have been as follows: There being now a great and general concourse of all Israel, and David being now established in his throne with universal consent and applause, he begins with God, and his first thoughts and cares are concerning religion, and what was then the great instrument and ornament of it, the ark. And, having this assembly with him, he takes the opportunity of desiring their advice and concurrence with him about bringing the ark, either to Hebron, which was then the royal city, or to Jerusalem, which, as probably he told them, he was resolved to besiege, and hoped, by God's help, to take. After this was proposed by the king, and accepted by the people, this great assembly

209

A. M. 2959. and with them *also* to the priests and
B. C. 1045. Levites which are ² in their cities
and suburbs, that they may gather themselves
unto us :

3 And let us ³ bring again the ark of our God
to us : ^b for we inquired not at it in the days of
Saul.

4 And all the congregation said that they
would do so : for the thing was right in the eyes
of all the people .

5 So ^c David gathered all Israel together, from
^d Shihor of Egypt even unto the entering of
Hemath, to bring the ark of God ^e from Kir-
jath-jearim.

6 And David went up, and all Israel, to
^f Baalah, *that is*, to Kirjath-jearim, which be-
longed to Judah, to bring up thence the ark of
God the LORD, ^g that dwelleth between the
cherubims, whose name is called *on it*.

7 And they ^h carried the ark of God ⁱ in a new
cart ^j out of the house of Abinadab : and Uzza
and Ahio drave the cart.

8 ^k And David and all Israel played before
God with all *their* might, and with ^l singing,

^a Heb. in the cities of their suburbs. — ^b Heb. bring about.
^c 1 Sam. vii. 1. — ^d 1 Sam. vii. 1; 2 Sam. vi. 1. — ^e Josh. xiii.
3. — ^f 1 Sam. vi. 21; vii. 1. — ^g Josh. xv. 9, 60. — ^h 1 Sam.
iv. 4; 2 Sam. vi. 2. — ⁱ Heb. make the ark to ride. — ^j Num.
iv. 15; Chap. xv. 2, 13.

was dismissed, only some of them David reserved to go with him against Jerusalem, which accordingly he did, and succeeded in his enterprise. But before his resolution to fetch the ark could be executed, the Philistines came and fought twice with him, as is related 2 Sam. v. 17, &c., and here chap. xiv. 8, &c. And after they were repulsed with great loss and shame, David sets upon the execution of what he had resolved, and, in order to it, calls another general assembly of the people. *And it be of the Lord our God*—If this translation of the ark be pleasing to God; *let us send abroad*—Hebrew, נִפְרֵטָא, *niphretsa*, *Let us break out and send*. We are now in some sort pent up in one place, but let us break up the assembly, and disperse ourselves, and send messengers speedily and universally to the several tribes about this work. It is a metaphor taken from the sea, or rivers, which, when the banks are broken, suddenly overflow the adjacent country. *That are left in all the land of Israel*—By which expression he reminds them of the great desolations and destructions brought upon them for their sins; and therefore advises that remnant, whom God had so graciously saved in and from those dreadful ruins, more seriously to set themselves to seek God than they had formerly done.

Verse 3. *We inquired not at it in the days of Saul*—The ark was then neglected, and the generality of the people contented themselves with going

and with harps, and with psalteries, A. M. 2959.
and with timbrels, and with cymbals, B. C. 1045.
and with trumpets.

9 ¶ And when they came unto the threshing-floor of ⁶ Chidon, Uzza put forth his hand to hold the ark; for the oxen ⁷ stumbled.

10 And the anger of the LORD was kindled against Uzza, and he smote him, ¹ because he put his hand to the ark: and there he ² died before God.

11 And David was displeased because the LORD had made a breach upon Uzza: wherefore that place is called ³ Perez-uzza to this day.

12 And David was afraid of God that day, saying, How shall I bring the ark of God *home* to me ?

13 So David ⁴ brought not the ark *home* to himself to the city of David, but carried it aside into the house of Obed-edom the Gittite.

14 ⁵ And the ark of God remained with the family of Obed-edom in his house three months. And the LORD blessed ⁶ the house of Obed-edom, and all that he had.

¹ 1 Sam. vii. 1. — ² 2 Sam. vi. 5. — ³ Heb. songs. — ⁴ Called Nachon, 2 Sam. vi. 6. — ⁵ Heb. shook it. — ⁶ Numbers iv. 15; Chap. xv. 13, 15. — ⁷ Lev. x. 2. — ⁸ That is, *The breach of Uzza*. — ⁹ Heb. removed. — ¹⁰ 2 Samuel vi. 11. — ¹¹ Gen. xxx. 27; Chap. xxvi. 5.

to Gibeon and offering sacrifices there, not caring, though the ark, the soul of the tabernacle, was in another place. As soon as David had power in his hand, he would use it for the advancement of religion. It ought to be the first care of those that are enriched or preferred, to honour God with their honours, and to serve him, and the interests of his kingdom among men, with their wealth and power.

Verses 4, 5. *The thing was right in the eyes of all the people*—Their consciences smiting them for their former negligence, and being fully convinced of the piety and reasonableness of this proposal. *So David gathered all Israel together*—All the chosen men of Israel, as it is expressed 2 Sam. vi. 1, their elders and representatives. *From Shihor of Egypt*—By which the Targum, and most of the Jews, understood the river Nile. It here stands for the southern bounds of the land of Canaan. *Unto the entering of Hemath*—The northern boundary of the land.

Verse 6. *David went up, and all Israel, to Baalah, that is, Kirjath-jearim*—Which explication is justified by Josh. xv. 9, 60, where the same city is called by both names: see note on 2 Sam. vi. 2. *The ark of God the Lord, that dwelleth between the cherubim*—Showing himself in a singular manner present or visible between the cherubim, before which his name was called upon, 2 Sam. vi. 1.

CHAPTER XIV.

David is confirmed in his kingdom, 1, 2. His wives and children, 3-7. His victories over the Philistines, 8-17.

A. M. 2961. B. C. 1043. **N**OW ^aHiram king of Tyre sent messengers to David, and timber of cedars, with masons and carpenters, to build him a house.

2 ¶ And David perceived that the LORD had confirmed him king over Israel, for his kingdom was lifted up on high, because of his people Israel.

3 ¶ And David took ¹more wives at Jerusalem: and David begat more sons and daughters.

4 Now ^bthese are the names of his children which he had in Jerusalem; Shammua, and Shobab, Nathan, and Solomon,

5 And Ibhar, and Elishua, and Elpalet,

6 And Nogah, and Nepheg, and Japhia,

7 And Elishama, and ²Beeliada, and Eliphalet,

8 ¶ And when the Philistines heard that ^cDavid was anointed king over all Israel, all the Philistines went up to seek David. And David heard of it, and went out against them.

B. C. 1047. 9 And the Philistines came and spread themselves ^din the valley of Rephaim.

10 And David inquired of God, saying, Shall I go up against the Philistines? and wilt thou deliver them into my hand? And the LORD

A. M. 2957. B. C. 1047. said unto him, Go up; for I will deliver them into thy hand.

11 So they came up to Baal-perazim; and David smote them there. Then David said, God hath broken in upon mine enemies by my hand like the breaking forth of waters: therefore they called the name of that place ³Baal-perazim.

12 And when they had left their gods there David gave a commandment, and they were burned with fire.

13 ^eAnd the Philistines yet again spread themselves abroad in the valley.

14 Therefore David inquired again of God: and God said unto him, Go not up after them; turn away from them, ^fand come upon them over against the mulberry-trees.

15 And it shall be, when thou shalt hear a sound of going in the tops of the mulberry-trees, *that* then thou shalt go out to battle: for God is gone forth before thee, to smite the host of the Philistines.

16 David therefore did as God commanded him: and they smote the host of the Philistines from ^gGibeon even to Gazer.

17 And ^hthe fame of David went out into all lands; and the LORD ⁱbrought the fear of him upon all nations.

^a 2 Sam. v. 11.—^b Heb. yet.—^c Chap. iii. 5.—^d Eliada, 2 Sam. v. 16.—^e 2 Sam. v. 17.—^f Ch. xi. 15.—^g That is, a

place of breaches.—^h 2 Sam. v. 22.—ⁱ 2 Sam. v. 23.—^j 2 Sam. v. 25, Gaba.—^k Josh. vi. 27; 2 Chron. xxvi. 8.—^l Deut. ii. 25.

NOTES ON CHAPTER XIV.

Verse 2. *David perceived that the Lord had confirmed him king over Israel*—By the remembrance of God's promise, and his providence conspiring

with it. *For his kingdom was lifted up on high, because of his people Israel*—But of this and the following verses of this chapter, see notes on 2 Sam. v. 12-26, where the same history is related.

CHAPTER XV.

David prepares to bring up the ark, 1-24. It is brought up, 25-28. Michal despises him, 29.

A. M. 2962. B. C. 1042. **A**ND David made him houses in the city of David, and prepared

A. M. 2962. B. C. 1042. a place for the ark of God, ^aand pitched for it a tent.

^a Chap.

xvi. 1.

NOTES ON CHAPTER XV.

Verse 1. *David made him houses in the city of David*—A palace consisting of many houses or apartments for his several wives and children. *And*

prepared a place for the ark of God—He did not fetch the tabernacle of Moses from Gibeon, because he intended forthwith to build the temple. See note on 2 Sam. vi. 17.

A. M. 2962. 2 Then David said, ¹ None ought
B. C. 1042. to carry the ^b ark of God but the
Levites: for them hath the LORD chosen to
carry the ark of God, and to minister unto him
for ever.

B. C. 1042. 3 And David ^c gathered all Israel
together to Jerusalem, to bring up the
ark of the LORD unto his place, which he had
prepared for it.

4 And David assembled the children of Aaron,
and the Levites:

5 Of the sons of Kohath; Uriel the chief, and
his ² brethren a hundred and twenty:

6 Of the sons of Merari; Asaiah the chief, and
his brethren two hundred and twenty:

7 Of the sons of Gershom; Joel the chief,
and his brethren a hundred and thirty:

8 Of the sons of ^d Elizaphan; Shemaiah the
chief, and his brethren two hundred:

9 Of the sons of ^e Hebron; Eliel the chief,
and his brethren fourscore:

10 Of the sons of Uzziel; Amminadab the
chief, and his brethren a hundred and twelve.

11 And David called for Zadok and Abiathar
the priests, and for the Levites, for Uriel, Asaiah,
and Joel, Shemaiah, and Eliel, and Ammi-
nadab,

12 And said unto them, *Ye are the chief of
the fathers of the Levites: sanctify yourselves,
both ye and your brethren, that ye may bring
up the ark of the LORD God of Israel unto the
place that I have prepared for it.*

¹ Hebrew, It is not to carry the ark of God, but for the Levites.
^b Num. iv. 2, 15; Deut. x. 8; xxxi. 9.—^c 1 Kings viii. 1; Chap.
xii. 5.—^d Or, kinsmen.—^e Exod. vi. 22.—^f Exod. vi. 18.

Verse 2. *David said, None ought to carry the ark of God but the Levites*—The former miscarriage, when they brought up the ark from Kirjath-jearim, had taught him to treat it with greater reverence, according to the prescription of the law, which ordered the Levites to carry it on their shoulders, Num. iv. 15.

Verse 5. *Of the sons of Kohath; Uriel the chief*—The sons of Kohath are mentioned Exod. vi. 17, 18, and Uriel is not one of them: therefore he must have been his grandson, and a person so famous that his descendants are mentioned in the first place.

Verses 11, 12. *David called for Zadok and Abiathar*—The chief priests: Abiathar being the high-priest, and Zadok the second priest. *And said, Sanctify yourselves*—By solemn purification and preparation of yourselves, both in soul and body: see notes on Gen. xxxv. 2, and Exod. xix. 10.

Verse 16. *By lifting up the voice with joy*—Singing so loud that all might hear, and having their

13 For ^f because ye *did it* not at A. M. 2962.
the first, ^g the LORD our God made B. C. 1042.
a breach upon us, for that we sought him not
after the due order.

14 So the priests and the Levites sanctified
themselves to bring up the ark of the LORD
God of Israel.

15 And the children of the Levites bare the
ark of God upon their shoulders with the staves
thereon, as ^h Moses commanded, according to
the word of the LORD.

16 And David spake to the chief of the Le-
vites to appoint their brethren *to be* the singers
with instruments of music, psalteries, and harps,
and cymbals, sounding, by lifting up the voice
with joy.

17 So the Levites appointed ⁱ Heman the son
of Joel; and of his brethren, ^k Asaph the son of
Berechiah; and of the sons of Merari their
brethren, ^l Ethan the son of Kushaiah;

18 And with them their brethren of the second
degree, Zechariah, Ben, and Jaaziel, and She-
miramoth, and Jehiel, and Unni, Eliab, and
Benaiah, and Maaseiah, and Mattithiah, and
Eliphelah, and Mikneiah, and Obed-edom, and
Jeiel, the porters.

19 So the singers, Heman, Asaph, and Ethan,
were appointed to sound with cymbals of brass;

20 And Zechariah, and ^m Aziel, and Shemira-
moth, and Jehiel, and Unni, and Eliab, and
Maaseiah, and Benaiah, with psalteries ⁿ on
Alamoth;

^f 2 Sam. vi. 3; Chap. xiii. 7.—^g Chap. xiii. 10.—^h Exod.
xxv. 14; Num. iv. 15; vii. 9.—ⁱ Chap. vi. 33.—^j Ch. vi. 39.
^k Chap. vi. 44.—^l Verse 18, *Jaaziel*.—^m Psa. xlvii. title.

hearts lifted up to God with joy. There was scarce any solemn service performed to their gods, either by Greeks or barbarians, without both vocal and instrumental music.

Verse 18. *Their brethren of the second degree*—The first rank or degree of sacred musicians was that of those three famous persons, named verse 17; the next consisted of these here mentioned. *The porters*—Who were to keep the doors of the tabernacle and courts, but withal were instructed in music, that when they were free from attendance upon their proper office, they might not be idle nor unprofitable in God's house.

Verse 20. *With psalteries on Alamoth*—Or, *with Alamoth*, which is thought by many to be the name of an instrument of music; or of a certain tune, or note, or part in music. Houbigant renders the words *with psalteries*, of a deeper sound. The certain signification of the expression is not now known.

A. M. 2962. 21 And Mattithiah, and Elipheleh,
B. C. 1042. and Mikneiah, and Obed-edom, and
Jeiel, and Azaziah, with harps ⁴ on the Shemi-
nith to excel.

22 And Chenaniah, chief of the Levites, ⁵ was
for ⁶ song: he instructed about the song, because
he was skilful.

23 And Berechiah and Elkanah were door-
keepers for the ark.

24 And Shebaniah, and Jehoshaphat, and
Nethaneel, and Amasai, and Zechariah, and
Benaiiah, and Eliezer, the priests, ^a did blow
with the trumpets before the ark of God: and
Obed-edom and Jehiah were door-keepers for
the ark.

25 ¶ So ^o David and the elders of Israel, and
the captains over thousands, went to bring up
the ark of the covenant of the LORD out of the
house of Obed-edom with joy.

⁴ Or, on the eighth to oversee, Psa. vi. title.—⁵ Or, was for the
carriage; he instructed about the carriage.—⁶ Heb. lifting up.

Verse 21. *With harps on Sheminith*—Some think Sheminith signifies a harp with eight strings. But perhaps, as was said of Alamoith, it might be the name of a tune, or note, or part in music. Or it might be the beginning of some psalm much used. Its signification is very doubtful, nor is it necessary to know it. *To excel*—The original word לָנַחַח, *lenatzeach*, being derived from נָצַח, *natzach*, to overcome, is thought by Strigelius to signify an extension or elevation of the voice above all the rest.

Verse 22. *Chenaniah was for song*—Or, as it may be translated, *was for the carriage*, namely, of the voice. He was the moderator of the music, instructing them when and how to lift up their voice, change their notes, or make stops. Accordingly, the following words tell us, *he instructed about song*—Or taught them how to sing; *because he was skilful*—Was a great artist in singing.

Verse 23. *Berechiah and Elkanah were door-keepers*—Were appointed to keep the door of the tent in which the ark was to be put and kept, that no unhallowed person might press in and touch it. And in like manner they were to attend upon the ark in the way, and to guard it from the press and touch of profane hands: for which end these two went before the ark, as their other two brethren, mentioned in the close of verse 24, came after it, that it might be guarded on all sides.

Verse 26. *God helped the Levites*—Not only preserved them from committing any error, so that no plague was inflicted upon them as had happened to Uzza, but gave them strength to bear their burden, and encouraged them in their work with some comfortable sign of his presence with them, and approbation of them.

26 And it came to pass, when God ^a helped the Levites that bare the ark ^b of the covenant of the LORD, that they offered seven bullocks and seven rams.

27 And David was clothed with a robe of fine linen, and all the Levites that bare the ark, and the singers, and Chenaniah the master of the ⁷ song with the singers: David also had upon him an ephod of linen.

28 ^p Thus all Israel brought up the ark of the covenant of the LORD with shouting, and with sound of the cornet, and with trumpets, and with cymbals, making a noise with psalteries and harps.

29 ¶ And it came to pass, ^q as the ark of the covenant of the LORD came to the city of David, that Michal the daughter of Saul looking out at a window saw King David dancing and playing: and she despised him in her heart.

^a Num. x. 8; Psa. lxxxii. 3.—^b 2 Sam. vi. 12, &c.; 1 Kings viii. 1.
⁷ Or, carriage.—^p Chap. xiii. 8.—^q 2 Sam. vi. 16.

Verse 27. *David was clothed with a robe of fine linen, also an ephod of linen*—“David was clothed with a double garment, with a robe of fine linen, and with a linen ephod. These two garments are expressly distinguished in the account of the vestments of the high-priest, Exod. xxix. 5, and xxviii. 4, 6, and xxxix. 23. The fabric of them was different; the ephod was made of gold, blue, purple, scarlet; whereas the robe was formed all of blue. The shape of them was different; the ephod reaching only to the knees, the robe flowing down even to the very covering of the feet. The robe had no division in it throughout, but was made whole and round, with an opening in the middle of it, at the top; so that it was impossible any part of the body could be seen through it, especially as the ephod, on this occasion of David’s dancing, was thrown over it, and tied, probably, with a girdle, as the priest’s ephod always was. David clothed himself with these linen garments on this solemnity, both out of reverence to God, and for convenience, because they were cooler. It may be further observed, that this robe was worn by kings, their children, princes, priests, Levites, and prophets, when they appeared on any solemn occasion, and it covered their other garments: see 1 Sam. xxviii. 14; 2 Sam. xiii. 8. David, therefore, dressed himself on this occasion with this long, flowing linen robe, instead of the robe of state proper to him as king of Israel, and which was made of richer materials; and hence he was scornfully insulted by Saul’s daughter, as uncovering himself as a king, and appearing in a habit wholly unworthy, as she thought, of his royal character and dignity.” See on 2 Sam. vi. 20; Chandler’s *Review*, and Dodd.

CHAPTER XVI.

David's sacrifices and alms, 1-3. He appoints Levites to minister before the ark, 4-6. His psalm of thanksgiving, 7-36. Ministers and others are appointed to attend the ark continually, 37-43.

A. M. 2962. B. C. 1042. **SO** * they brought the ark of God, and set it in the midst of the tent that David had pitched for it: and they offered burnt-sacrifices and peace-offerings before God.

2 And when David had made an end of offering the burnt-offerings and the peace-offerings, he blessed the people in the name of the LORD.

3 And he dealt to every one of Israel, both man and woman, to every one a loaf of bread, and a good piece of flesh, and a flagon of wine.

4 ¶ And he appointed certain of the Levites to minister before the ark of the LORD, and to record, and to thank and praise the LORD God of Israel:

5 Asaph the chief, and next to him Zechariah, Jeiel, and Shemiramoth, and Jehiel, and Mattithiah, and Eliab, and Benaiah, and Obededom: and Jeiel ¹ with psalteries and with harps; but Asaph made a sound with cymbals;

6 Benaiah also and Jahaziel the priests with trumpets continually before the ark of the covenant of God.

7 ¶ Then on that day David delivered ° first *this psalm* to thank the LORD, into the hand of Asaph and his brethren.

8 ^d Give thanks unto the LORD, call upon his name, make known his deeds among the people.

9 Sing unto him, sing psalms unto him, talk ye of all his wondrous works.

10 Glory ye in his holy name: let the heart of them rejoice that seek the LORD. A. M. 2962. B. C. 1042.

11 Seek the LORD and his strength, seek his face continually.

12 Remember his marvellous works that he hath done, his wonders, and the judgments of his mouth;

13 O ye seed of Israel his servant, ye children of Jacob, his chosen ones.

14 He is the LORD our God; his judgments are in all the earth.

15 Be ye mindful always of his covenant; the word which he commanded to a thousand generations;

16 *Even of the ° covenant* which he made with Abraham, and of his oath unto Isaac;

17 And hath confirmed the same to Jacob, for a law, and to Israel, for an everlasting covenant,

18 Saying, Unto thee will I give the land of Canaan, ² the lot of your inheritance;

19 When ye were but ³ few, ⁴ even a few, and strangers in it.

20 And when they went from nation to nation, and from one kingdom to another people;

21 He suffered no man to do them wrong: yea, he ⁵ reprov'd kings for their sakes,

22 *Saying*, ^b Touch not mine anointed, and do my prophets no harm.

^a 2 Sam. vi. 17-19.—^b Psalm xxxviii.; lxx. title.—¹ Heb. with instruments of psalteries and harps.—² 2 Samuel xxiii. 1. ³ Psalm cv. 1, 15.

⁴ Gen. xvii. 1; xxvi. 3; xxxviii. 13; xxxv. 11.—⁵ Heb. the cord.—⁶ Heb. men of number.—⁷ Gen. xxxiv. 30.—⁸ Gen. xiii. 17; xx. 3; Exod. vii. 15, 18.—⁹ Psa. cv. 15.

NOTES ON CHAPTER XVI.

Verses 1-3. *So they brought back the ark of God*—For these three verses, see notes on 2 Sam. vi. 17-19. *A flagon of wine*—A draught of wine.—Hiller and Waterland.

Verse 4. *To record, and to thank and praise the Lord, &c.*—To rehearse and declare unto the people the wonderful works God had done for Israel, and to give him thanks for them, and to extol his almighty goodness and his glorious perfections. All our rejoicings should express themselves in thanksgivings to him from whom all our comforts are received.

Verse 7. *Then David delivered first this psalm, &c.*—Or, as Houbigant renders it, *On that same day David delivered this psalm, that Asaph and his brethren might praise the Lord by it*—That is, on the day in which David appointed the

Levites to sing before God, he gave them the song or hymn which follows. There is, however, nothing in the Hebrew for *psalm*. And the translation of the LXX. is perfectly accurate, save that they have rendered נתן, *he gave*, by *erats, he appointed*. It is, *Then, in that day David appointed at first (ev apxn, in the beginning) to praise the Lord, by the hand of Asaph and his brethren*. The Hebrew expression, בראש, *barosh, at first, or in the beginning*, seems to imply that David, after this, delivered many other psalms successively into their hands to be sung by them to the praise of God in his public service: see 2 Samuel xxiii. 1; 2 Chronicles xxix. 30. The reader will find some explanatory observations on the following verses, Psalms xvi. and cv., in which they occur with little or no variation, all but the three last verses of the Psalm.

A. M. 2962. 23 ¹ Sing unto the LORD, all the earth; show forth from day to day his salvation.

24 Declare his glory among the heathen; his marvellous works among all nations.

25 For great *is* the LORD, and greatly to be praised: he also *is* to be feared above all gods.

26 For all the gods ² of the people *are* idols: but the LORD made the heavens.

27 Glory and honour *are* in his presence; strength and gladness *are* in his place.

28 Give unto the LORD, ye kindreds of the people, give unto the LORD glory and strength.

29 Give unto the LORD the glory *due* unto his name: bring an offering, and come before him: worship the LORD in the beauty of holiness.

30 Fear before him, all the earth: the world also shall be stable, that it be not moved.

31 Let the heavens be glad, and let the earth rejoice: and let *men* say among the nations, The LORD reigneth.

32 Let the sea roar, and the fulness thereof: let the fields rejoice, and all that *is* therein.

33 Then shall the trees of the wood sing out at the presence of the LORD, because he cometh to judge the earth.

34 ¹ O give thanks unto the LORD; for *he*

is good; for his mercy *endureth* for ever.

35 ² And say ye, Save us, O God of our salvation, and gather us together, and deliver us from the heathen, that we may give thanks to thy holy name, *and* glory in thy praise.

36 ³ Blessed *be* the LORD God of Israel for ever and ever. And all ⁴ the people said, Amen, and praised the LORD.

37 ¶ So he left there before the ark of the covenant of the LORD, Asaph and his brethren, to minister before the ark continually, as every day's work required:

38 And Obed-edom with their brethren, threescore and eight; Obed-edom also the son of Jeduthun and Hosah *to be* porters:

39 And Zadok the priest, and his brethren the priests, ⁵ before the tabernacle of the LORD ⁶ in the high place that *was* at Gibeon,

40 To offer burnt-offerings unto the LORD upon the altar of the burnt-offering continually ⁷ morning ⁸ and evening, and *to do* according to all that is written in the law of the LORD, which he commanded Israel;

41 And with them Heman and Jeduthun, and the rest that were chosen, who were expressed by name, to give thanks to the LORD, ⁹ because his mercy *endureth* for ever;

¹ Psa. xcvi. 1, &c.—² Lev. xix. 4.—³ Psa. cvii. 1; cvii. 1; cxlvi. 1.—⁴ Psalm cvi. 47.—⁵ 1 Kings viii. 15.
⁶ Deut. xxvii. 15.—⁷ Chap. xxi. 29; 2 Chron. i. 3.

⁸ 1 Kings iii. 4.—⁹ Exodus xxix. 39; Numbers xxviii. 3.
¹⁰ Heb. *on the morning, and in the evening.*—¹¹ Ver. 34; 2 Chron. v. 13; vii. 3; Ezra iii. 11; Jer. xxxiii. 11.

Verse 35. *Deliver us from the heathen*—This might seem an improper and unseasonable prayer for David's time, when the Israelites were not scattered among the heathen, but indeed it was not so: 1st, Because they had already been sadly divided by a civil war among themselves; and though they were now externally and visibly united under David, yet he might justly think that there were some who yet retained in their hearts their old leaven, their hatred of him, and their affection to Saul, which might hereafter break forth when occasion was offered, as it did, 2 Sam. xvi. 8; and therefore he justly prays that they might be gathered and united together in hearty love, as well as in outward show; and, 2d, Because this psalm or prayer was made by David for the use of the church, not only in that present time, but in future ages, in which David foresaw, by the spirit of prophecy, the Israelites would forsake God, and for their apostasy be dispersed among the heathen. In the midst of our praises, we must not forget to pray for those servants of God that are in distress. When we are rejoicing in God's favours, we should remember our afflicted brethren, and pray for their deliverance as our own. We are members one of another.

Verse 37. *He left there before the ark Asaph and his brethren*—He appointed them their work and station there. Indeed, no incense was burned there, nor sacrifices offered, because the altars were not there; but David's prayers were directed *as incense, and the lifting up of his hands as an evening sacrifice*. So early did spiritual worship take the place of ceremonial.

Verse 39. *Zadok the priest*—Not the high-priest, but the second, and the chief priest at Gibeon, where the tabernacle and altar made by Moses still were, where also the ordinary sacrifices were offered, and the stated worship of God was performed, as the extraordinary worship was before the ark upon great occasions, as when God was consulted, which was to be done before the ark, and by the high-priest, who now was Abiathar, and who therefore abode with the ark, when Zadok was left at Gibeon.

Verse 40. *Which he commanded Israel*—These must be kept up, because, however in their own nature they were inferior to prayer and praise, yet, as they were types of the mediation of Christ, the observance of them was of mighty importance.

A. M. 2962. 42 And with them Heman and
B. C. 1042. Jeduthun, with trumpets and cym-
bals for those that should make a sound,
and with musical instruments of God. And

^a Heb. for the gate.

Verse 42. *With musical instruments of God*—
Appropriated to the worship of God; not such as
they used on other occasions. Between common

the sons of Jeduthun were ^b porters. A. M. 2962.
43 ^c And all the people departed B. C. 1042.
every man to his house: and David returned
to bless his house.

^d 2 Sam. vi. 19.

mirth and holy joy, there is a vast difference; and
the limits and distances between them must be care-
fully kept up.

CHAPTER XVII.

God forbids David's building him a house, 1-10. Gives him a gracious promise, 11-15. David's prayer, 16-27.

A. M. 2962. NOW ^a it came to pass, as David
B. C. 1042. sat in his house, that David said
to Nathan the prophet, Lo, I dwell in a house
of cedars, but the ark of the covenant of the
LORD remaineth under curtains.

2 Then Nathan said unto David, Do all that
is in thy heart; for God is with thee.

3 ¶ And it came to pass the same night, that
the word of God came to Nathan, saying,

4 Go and tell David my servant, Thus saith
the LORD, Thou shalt not build me a house to
dwell in:

5 For I have not dwelt in a house since the
day that I brought up Israel unto this day: but
¹ have gone from tent to tent, and from one ta-
bernacle to another.

6 Wheresoever I have walked with all Israel,
spake I a word to any of the judges of Israel,
whom I commanded to feed my people, saying,
Why have ye not built me a house of cedars?

7 Now therefore thus shalt thou say unto my
servant David, Thus saith the LORD of hosts,
I took thee from the sheep-cote, even ² from fol-
lowing the sheep, that thou shouldest be ruler
over my people Israel:

8 And I have been with thee whithersoever

^a 2 Sam. vii. 1, &c.—¹ Heb. have been.

NOTES ON CHAPTER XVII.

Verse 1. *Now it came to pass, &c.*—This whole
chapter is explained 2 Sam. vii., where the same
things are recorded with very little variation of the
words.

Verse 10. *Furthermore I tell thee, &c.*—Must he
think that his purpose was in vain, and that he
should lose the reward of it? No: it being God's
act that prevented the execution of it, he shall be
as fully recompensed as if it had been done.

thou hast walked, and have cut off A. M. 2962.
all thine enemies from before thee, B. C. 1042.
and have made thee a name like the name of
the great men that are in the earth.

9 Also I will ordain a place for my people Israel,
and will plant them, and they shall dwell in
their place, and shall be moved no more; nei-
ther shall the children of wickedness waste them
any more, as at the beginning,

10 And since the time that I commanded
judges to be over my people Israel. Moreover,
I will subdue all thine enemies. Furthermore,
I tell thee that the LORD will build thee a house.

11 ¶ And it shall come to pass, when thy
days be expired, that thou must go to be with
thy fathers, that I will raise up thy seed after
thee, which shall be of thy sons; and I will
establish his kingdom.

12 He shall build me a house, and I will
establish his throne for ever.

13 ^b I will be his father, and he shall be my
son: and I will not take my mercy away from
him, as I took it from him that was before thee:

14 But ^c I will settle him in my house and in
my kingdom for ever: and his throne shall be
established for evermore.

^a Heb. from after.—^b 2 Sam. vii. 14.—^c Luke i. 33.

Verse 14. *I will settle him in my house*—In my
dwelling-place, 1st, In Jerusalem, the place where
God had put his name for ever; or, 2d, In the tem-
ple, which is more properly and constantly called
God's house; and so this expression agrees but very
imperfectly with Solomon or his successors; who
might, indeed, be said to be settled in God's house,
because they dwelt near it, and, in some sort, were
set over it; and because they were to take care that
the priests and others should perform their offices,

A. M. 2962. 15 According to all these words, and
B. C. 1042. according to all this vision, so did
Nathan speak unto David.

16 ¶ ^d And David the king came and sat before the LORD, and said, Who *am* I, O LORD God, and what *is* my house, that thou hast brought me hitherto?

17 And *yet* this was a small thing in thine eyes, O God; for thou hast *also* spoken of thy servant's house for a great while to come, and hast regarded me according to the estate of a man of high degree, O LORD God.

18 What can David *speak* more to thee for the honour of thy servant? for thou knowest thy servant.

19 O LORD, for thy servant's sake, and according to thine own heart, hast thou done all this greatness, in making known all *these* ³ great things.

20 O LORD, *there is* none like thee, neither is *there any* God besides thee, according to all that we have heard with our ears.

21 And what one nation in the earth *is* like thy people Israel, whom God went to redeem, *to be* his own people, to make thee a name of

greatness and terribleness, by driving ^{A. M. 2962.}
out nations from before thy people, ^{B. C. 1042.}
whom thou hast redeemed out of Egypt?

22 For thy people Israel didst thou make thine own people for ever; and thou, LORD, becamest their God.

23 Therefore now, LORD, let the thing that thou hast spoken concerning thy servant, and concerning his house, be established for ever, and do as thou hast said.

24 Let it even be established, that thy name may be magnified for ever, saying, The LORD of hosts *is* the God of Israel, *even* a God to Israel: and *let* the house of David thy servant *be* established before thee.

25 For thou, O my God, ⁴ hast told thy servant that thou wilt build him a house: therefore thy servant hath found *in his heart* to pray before thee.

26 And now, LORD, thou art God, and hast promised this goodness unto thy servant:

27 Now therefore ⁵ let it please thee to bless the house of thy servant, that it may be before thee for ever: for thou blessest, O LORD, and *it shall be* blessed for ever.

⁴ 2 Samuel vii. 18.—³ Heb. *greatnesses*.—⁵ Heb. *hast*

revealed the ear of thy servant.—⁵ Or, *it hath pleased thee*.

and God's service in it; but, strictly and properly, it agrees only to Christ, to whom alone that promise also of an everlasting establishment in this kingdom belongs, as was observed on 2 Sam. vii. 16. And this expression seems to be most emphatically added to signify that the person in whom all those promises should be fully and perfectly accomplished, namely, the Messiah, should be settled not only in the king's throne, as others of David's successors were, but also in God's house or temple; and consequently that he should be a *priest* as well as a *king*; which mystery was clearly revealed to David, Psa. cx. 1, 2, 4, and may be intimated, though obscurely, in these words. *And in my kingdom*—Either, 1st, In the kingdom of Israel, which God calls *his* kingdom, because he was, in a special manner, the king and governor of it, having raised them up and formed them into a kingdom, and given them that protection and assistance which kings owe to their kingdoms; and because he expected and required from them what kings do from their people, that they should be wholly governed by his laws, and devoted to his service. Or, 2d, In God's kingdom, in a more large and general sense. And this, as well as the former phrase, may seem singularly to belong to the Messiah, who was not only to be the king of Israel, but also of all nations, as was foretold even in the Old Testament, in sundry passages; and, thus understood, this may be an intimation of that great mystery, which is more fully re-

vealed in the New Testament, namely, that Christ is the head, king, or governor of all God's church, consisting of Jews and Gentiles, and of all nations, and indeed of all creatures, the angels not excepted; all which is God's kingdom, and by him given to his Son, our blessed Lord Jesus Christ.

Verse 16. *Who am I?* &c.—We have here David's solemn address to God, in answer to his gracious message. How humbly does he here abase himself, and acknowledge his own unworthiness! How highly does he advance the name of God, and admire his condescending favour! With what devout affections does he magnify the God of Israel: with what assurance build upon the promise! What an example this of believing, fervent prayer! The Lord enable us all thus to seek him!

Verses 18, 19. *For the honour of thy servant*—The honour God puts upon his servants, by taking them into covenant and communion with himself, is so great, that they need not, they cannot desire to be more highly honoured. *Servant's sake*—In 2 Sam. vii. 21, it is, *for thy word's sake*, for the sake of thy promise made to thy servant.

Verse 24. *A God to Israel*—He is really to his people that which he hath styled himself, *their God*, having taken such care of them, and showed such mercy and truth to them, as fully answered that title.

Verse 27. *Let it please thee to bless the house of thy servant*—He is therefore encouraged to ask a

blessing because God had intimated to him that he had blessings in store for him and his family; *thou blessest, O Lord*—And therefore unto thee shall all flesh come for a blessing: unto thee do I come for the blessing promised to me. And he is therefore earnest for the blessing, because those whom God blesseth are truly and eternally blessed. *Thou blessest, and it shall be blessed*—Men can but beg the blessing, it is God that commands it; what he

designs, he effects; what he promises, he performs; saying and doing are not two things with him. Nay, *it shall be blessed for ever*—His blessings shall not be revoked from the faithful, and the benefits conferred by them are such as will survive time and days. David's prayer concludes as God's promise did, (verse 14,) with that which is *for ever*. God's word looks at things eternal, and so should our desires and hopes.

CHAPTER XVIII.

David conquers the Philistines, the Moabites, the king of Zobah, and the Syrians, 1-8. Makes the king of Hamath and the Edomites pay tribute, 9-13. His court and kingdom flourish, 14-17.

A. M. 2964. B. C. 1040. NOW after this ^a it came to pass that David smote the Philistines, and subdued them, and took Gath and her towns out of the hand of the Philistines.

2 And he smote Moab; and the Moabites became David's servants, and brought gifts.

3 ¶ And David smote ¹ Hadarezer king of Zobah unto Hamath, as he went to establish his dominion by the river Euphrates.

4 And David took from him a thousand chariots, and ^b seven thousand horsemen, and twenty thousand footmen: David also houghed all the chariot-horses, but reserved of them a hundred chariots.

5 And when the Syrians of ² Damascus came to help Hadarezer king of Zobah, David slew of the Syrians two and twenty thousand men.

6 Then David put garrisons in Syria-damascus; and the Syrians became David's servants,

and brought gifts. Thus the LORD ^{A. M. 2964. B. C. 1040.} preserved David whithersoever he went.

7 And David took the shields of gold that were on the servants of Hadarezer, and brought them to Jerusalem.

8 Likewise from ³ Tibhath, and from Chun, cities of Hadarezer, brought David very much brass, wherewith ^c Solomon made the brazen sea, and the pillars, and the vessels of brass.

9 ¶ Now when ⁴ Tou king of Hamath heard how David had smitten all the host of Hadarezer king of Zobah;

10 He sent ⁵ Hadoram his son to King David, ⁶ to inquire of his welfare, and ⁷ to congratulate him, because he had fought against Hadarezer, and smitten him; (for Hadarezer ⁸ had war with Tou;) and with him all manner of vessels of gold, and silver, and brass.

^a 2 Samuel viii. 1, &c.—¹ Or, Hadadazer, 2 Samuel viii. 3. ^b 2 Sam. viii. 4, seven hundred.—² Heb. Darmesek.—³ Called in the book of Samuel Beth, and Berothai.

^c 1 Kings vii. 15, 23; 2 Chron. iv. 12, 15.—⁴ Or, Toi, 2 Sam. viii. 9.—⁵ Or, Joram, 2 Samuel viii. 10.—⁶ Or, to salute. ⁷ Heb. to bless.—⁸ Heb. was the man of wars.

NOTES ON CHAPTER XVIII.

Verse 1. *Now after this David smote the Philistines*—After the sweet communion he had had with God by the word and prayer, as is recorded in the foregoing chapter, he went on in his work with an extraordinary vigour and courage, conquering and to conquer. The reader will find all this chapter explained in the notes on 2 Sam. viii. Nevertheless we shall here make two or three short observations upon some parts of it.

Verse 3. *David smote Hadarezer, as he went to establish his dominion*—Such is the uncertainty of this world, that many times men lose their wealth and power, then when they think to confirm them. The meaning of the words, however, may be, that as David went to establish his own dominion, this king of Zobah came out to oppose him, and therefore David smote him. See on 2 Sam. viii. 3.

Verses 5, 6. *When the Syrians came to help Hadarezer, David slew of the Syrians, &c.*—Thus the enemies of God's church are often made to ruin themselves by helping one another. *The Syrians became David's servants, and brought gifts*—For the wealth of the sinner often proves to have been laid up for the just. The Syrians' shields of gold, and their brass, were brought to Jerusalem, verses 7, 8. As the tabernacle was built of the spoils of the Egyptians, so the temple of the spoils of other Gentile nations: a happy presage of the interest the Gentiles should have in the gospel church.

Verse 10. *He sent Hadoram his son to King David, &c.*—It is our interest to make those our friends who have the presence of God with them, as this king of Hamath, hearing of David's great success, sent to congratulate him and to court his favour with a noble present, judging it in vain to oppose one

A. M. 2964. 11 Them also King David dedi-
B. C. 1040. cated unto the LORD, with the silver

and the gold that he brought from all these nations; from Edom, and from Moab, and from the children of Ammon, and from the Philistines, and from Amalek.

12 Moreover, ⁹Abishai the son of Zeruiah slew of the Edomites in the valley of Salt ^deighteen thousand.

13 ¶ ^eAnd he put garrisons in Edom; and all the Edomites became David's servants. Thus the LORD preserved David whithersoever he went.

⁹ Heb. *Abshai*.—^d 2 Samuel vii. 13.—^e 2 Sam. vii. 14, &c.
¹⁰ Or, *remembrancer*.—¹¹ Called *Ahimelech*, 2 Sam. viii. 17.

whose cause God so evidently espoused. And is it not still more in vain to contend with the son of David? Reader, *kiss the Son lest he be angry*: let the kings and judges of the earth, and all inferior people, be thus wise, thus instructed. The presents which we are to bring to him are not vessels of gold and silver, as here: those shall be welcome to him, who have no such presents to bring: but our hearts and affections; ourselves, our whole selves we must present to him as living sacrifices.

Verse 11. *Them also King David dedicated to the Lord*—Not only the spoils of his enemies, but the presents of his friends, he devoted to God, and laid up toward the building and enriching of the temple. Thus, we must honour God with that wherewith he blesseth us. And, indeed, that is most

14 ¶ So David reigned over all A. M. 2964.
Israel, and executed judgment and B. C. 1040.
justice among all his people.

15 And Joab the son of Zeruiah was over the host; and Jehoshaphat the son of Ahilud, ¹⁰recorder;

16 And Zadok the son of Ahitub, and ¹¹Abimelech the son of Abiathar, were the priests; and ¹²Shavsha was scribe;

17 ¶ And Benaiah the son of Jehoiada was over the Cherethites and the Pelethites; and the sons of David were chief ¹³about the king.

¹⁰ Called *Seraiah*, 2 Samuel viii. 17, and *Shisha*, 1 Kings iv. 3.
¹¹ 2 Sam. viii. 18.—¹² Heb. *at the hand of the king*.

truly and most comfortably our own, which we have consecrated to the Lord, and which we use for his glory. *Let our merchandise and our hire be holiness to the Lord.*

Verse 13. *The Lord preserved David whithersoever he went*—Those who take God along with them wherever they go, may expect to prosper and be preserved in all places. And those are always under the eye of God, that have God always in their eye.

Verse 14. *So David reigned, and executed judgment and justice among the people*—And therefore answered the end of his elevation; and served the purposes of the kingdom of providence, and of that God who sits in the throne judging right. Thus also he became an eminent type of the Messiah, the sceptre of whose kingdom is a right sceptre.

CHAPTER XIX.

David's friendly message to King Hanun, 1, 2. Hanun's base usage of his ambassadors, 3-5. The Ammonites prepare for war, 6, 7. David overthrows them and the Syrians, 8-19.

A. M. 2967. NOW ^ait came to pass after this,
B. C. 1037. that Nahash the king of the children of Ammon died, and his son reigned in his stead.

2 And David said, I will show kindness unto Hanun the son of Nahash, because his father

^a 2 Sam.

NOTES ON CHAPTER XIX.

Verse 1. *Nahash the king of the children of Ammon died*—Of the contents of this chapter, see the notes on 2 Sam. x.

Verse 2. *David said, I will show kindness unto Hanun*—Religion teaches us to be civil and obliging to all; to honour all men, and to be ready to do all

showed kindness to me. And David A. M. 2967.
sent messengers to comfort him con- B. C. 1037.
cerning his father. So the servants of David came into the land of the children of Ammon to Hanun, to comfort him.

3 But the princes of the children of Ammon

x. 1, &c.

offices of kindness to those among whom we live: and difference in the modes and forms of religion, or even in religion itself, must be no obstruction to it. But, besides this, David remembered the kindness which his father had showed him. They that have received kindness should return it as they have ability and opportunity: and they that have received

A. M. 2967. said to Hanun, ¹ Thinkest thou that
B. C. 1037.

David doth honour thy father, that he hath sent comforters unto thee? are not his servants come unto thee for to search, and to overthrow, and to spy out the land?

4 Wherefore Hanun took David's servants, and shaved them, and cut off their garments in the midst hard by their buttocks, and sent them away.

5 Then there went *certain*, and told David how the men were served. And he sent to meet them: for the men were greatly ashamed. And the king said, Tarry at Jericho until your beards be grown, and *then* return.

6 ¶ And when the children of Ammon saw that they had made themselves ² odious to David, Hanun and the children of Ammon sent a thousand talents of silver to hire them chariots and horsemen out of Mesopotamia, and out of Syria-maachah, ^b and out of Zobah.

7 So they hired thirty and two thousand chariots, and the king of Maachah and his people, who came and pitched before Medeba. And the children of Ammon gathered themselves together from their cities, and came to battle.

8 And when David heard of *it*, he sent Joab, and all the host of the mighty men.

9 And the children of Ammon came out, and put the battle in array before the gate of the city: and the kings that were come *were* by themselves in the field.

10 Now when Joab saw that ³ the battle was set against him before and behind, he chose out of all the ⁴ choice of Israel, and put *them* in array against the Syrians.

11 And the rest of the people he delivered unto the hand of ⁵ Abishai his brother, and they

¹ Hebrew, *In thine eyes doth David, &c.*—² Hebrew, *to stink.*
^b Chap. xviii. 5, 9.—³ Heb. *the face of the battle was.*

it from the parents, should return it to the children when the parents are gone.

Verse 6. *The children of Ammon saw they had made themselves odious to David*—It would therefore have been their wisdom to have desired conditions of peace, to have humbled themselves and offered any satisfaction for the injury they had done him; and the rather, because they had made themselves not only odious to David, but obnoxious to the justice of God, who is the king of nations, and will assert the injured rights, and maintain the violated laws of nations. But, instead of this, they prepared

set *themselves* in array against the children of Ammon. A. M. 2967.
B. C. 1037.

12 And he said, If the Syrians be too strong for me, then thou shalt help me: but if the children of Ammon be too strong for thee, then I will help thee.

13 Be of good courage, and let us behave ourselves valiantly for our people, and for the cities of our God: and let the LORD do *that which is good* in his sight.

14 So Joab and the people that *were* with him drew nigh before the Syrians unto the battle; and they fled before him.

15 And when the children of Ammon saw that the Syrians were fled, they likewise fled before Abishai his brother, and entered into the city. Then Joab came to Jerusalem.

16 ¶ And when the Syrians saw ^{B. C. 1036.} that they were put to the worse before

Israel, they sent messengers, and drew forth the Syrians that *were* beyond the ⁶ river: and ⁷ Shophach the captain of the host of Hadarezer *went* before them.

17 And it was told David; and he gathered all Israel, and passed over Jordan, and came upon them, and *set the battle* in array against them. So when David had put the battle in array against the Syrians, they fought with him.

18 But the Syrians fled before Israel; and David slew of the Syrians seven thousand *men which fought in* chariots, and forty thousand footmen, and killed Shophach the captain of the host.

19 And when the servants of Hadarezer saw that they were put to the worse before Israel, they made peace with David, and became his servants: neither would the Syrians help the children of Ammon any more.

⁴ Or, *young men.*—⁵ Hebrew, *Abshai.*—⁶ That is, *Euphrates.*
⁷ Or, *Shoback*, 2 Sam. x. 16.

for war, and so brought upon themselves those desolations which David never intended them.

Verse 19. *They made peace with David, and became his servants*—Those who have *meddled with strife that belonged not to them*, and have found that they meddled to their own hurt, do well to learn wisdom at length, and meddle no further. Let those who have in vain stood it out against God, be thus wise for themselves, and *agree with him quickly while they are in the way with him.* Let them become his servants, for they are undone if they remain his enemies.

CHAPTER XX.

A repetition of David's wars with the Ammonites, and the taking of Rabbah, 1-8; with the giants of the Philistines, 4-8.

A. M. 2969. B. C. 1035. **AND** ^a it came to pass, that ¹ after the year was expired, at the time that kings go out to battle, Joab led forth the power of the army, and wasted the country of the children of Ammon, and came and besieged Rabbah. But David tarried at Jerusalem. And ^b Joab smote Rabbah, and destroyed it.

B. C. 1033. **2** And David ^c took the crown of their king from off his head, and found it to ² weigh a talent of gold, and there were precious stones in it; and it was set upon David's head: and he brought also exceeding much spoil out of the city.

3 And he brought out the people that were in it, and cut them with saws, and with harrows of iron, and with axes. Even so dealt David with all the cities of the children of Ammon. And David and all the people returned to Jerusalem.

^a 2 Sam. xi. 1.—¹ Heb. at the return of the year.—^b 2 Sam. xii. 26.—^c 2 Sam. xii. 30.—² Heb. the weight of.—^d 2 Sam. xxi. 19.—³ Or, continued.—⁴ Hebrew, stood.—⁵ Or, Gob.—⁶ Chap. xi. 29.—⁷ Or, Saph, 2 Sam. xxi. 18.

NOTES ON CHAPTER XX.

Verse 1. *Joab led forth the army, and wasted, &c.*—For this verse, see note on 2 Sam. xi. 1; for verses 2, 3, on 2 Sam. xii. 30, 31; and for the rest of the chapter, on 2 Sam. xxi. 15, &c. *And came and besieged Rabbah*—It was at this time, while Joab was besieging Rabbah, that David fell into that great sin in the matter of Uriah. And it is observable, that though the rest of the story be repeated here, that is not. The sacred writer, however, seems to have intended to give a hint of it, when he says, *But David tarried at Jerusalem*—This gave occasion to his sin. If he had been abroad with his army, he would have been out of the way of that temptation; but indulging his ease he fell into sin, and involved himself in many and great calamities, brought upon him and his house by a just and holy God. Now as the recording of his fall, and the circumstances of it in the former history, is an instance of the impartiality and fidelity of the sacred writers; so the avoiding the repetition of it here, when there was a fair occasion to speak of it again, is designed to teach us, that though there may be a just occasion to speak of the faults and miscarriages of others, yet we

A. M. 2986. B. C. 1018. **4** ¶ And it came to pass after this, ^a that there ³ arose ⁴ war at ⁵ Gezer with the Philistines: at which time ⁶ Sibbechai the Hushathite slew ⁶ Sippai, that was of the children of ⁷ the giant: and they were subdued.

5 And there was war again with the Philistines; and Elhanan the son of ⁸ Jair slew Lahmi the brother of Goliath the Gittite, whose spear's staff was like a weaver's beam.

6 And yet again ¹ there was war at Gath, where was ⁹ a man of great stature, whose fingers and toes were four and twenty, six on each hand, and six on each foot: and he also was ¹⁰ the son of the giant.

7 But when he ¹¹ defied Israel, Jonathan the son of ¹² Shimea, David's brother, slew him.

8 These were born unto the giant in Gath; and they fell by the hand of David, and by the hand of his servants.

⁷ Or, Rapha.—⁸ Called also Jaare-oregim, 2 Samuel xxi. 19.—⁹ Heb. a man of measure.—¹⁰ Heb. born to the giant, or, Rapha.—¹¹ Or, reproached.—¹² Called Sham-mah, 1 Sam. xvi. 9.

should not take delight in the repetition of them. Of those persons or actions of which we can say no good, we had best say nothing.

Verse 7. *When he defied Israel, Jonathan the son of Shimea slew him*—None are more visibly marked for ruin than those that reproach God and his Israel. God will do great things rather than suffer the enemy to behave themselves proudly, Deut. xxxii. 27.

Verse 8. *They fell by the hand of David, and of his servants*—The servants of David were quite too hard for the giants of Gath in every encounter, because they had God on their side, who takes pleasure in abasing the lofty looks, and humbling the pride and haughtiness of the giants of the earth. Never let the church's friends be disheartened by the power and pride of the church's enemies. We need not fear great men against us, while we have the great God for us. But let it be observed that, as David's victories, so those of the Son of David, are gradual. *We do not yet see all things put under him*; but we shall see this shortly, and death itself, the last enemy, like these giants, shall be subdued and triumphed over.

CHAPTER XXI.

David causes Joab to number the people, 1-6. He repents, 7, 8. God gives him his choice of three judgments, and he chooses the pestilence, 9-13. The havoc made thereby: Jerusalem spared, 14, 15. David's prayer, 16, 17. His sacrifice and staying of the plague, 18-30.

A. M. 2986. B. C. 1018. **AND** ^a Satan stood up against Israel, and provoked David to number Israel.

2 And David said to Joab, and to the rulers of the people, Go, number Israel from Beer-sheba even to Dan; ^b and bring the number of them to me, that I may know it.

3 And Joab answered, The LORD make his people a hundred times so many more as they be: but my lord the king, are they not all my lord's servants? why then doth my lord require this thing? why will he be a cause of trespass to Israel?

4 Nevertheless the king's word prevailed against Joab. Wherefore Joab departed, and went throughout all Israel, and came to Jerusalem.

5 ¶ And Joab gave the sum of the number of the people unto David. And all *they of Israel* were a thousand thousand and a hundred thousand men that drew sword: and Judah

^a 1 Sam. xxiv. 1, &c.—^b Chap. xxvii. 23.—^c Chap. xxvii. 24.—^d Heb. And it was evil in the eyes of the LORD concerning this thing.

NOTES ON CHAPTER XXI.

Verse 1. *Satan stood up against Israel*—Before the Lord and his tribunal, to accuse David and Israel, and to ask God's permission to tempt David. *Standing* is the accuser's posture before men's tribunals; and consequently the Holy Scriptures (which use to speak of the things of God after the manner of men, to bring them down to our capacities) elsewhere represent Satan in this posture. See 1 Kings xxii. 21; Zech. iii. 1. In 2 Sam. xxiv. 1, it is said, *The anger of the Lord was kindled against Israel, and he moved David, or rather, there was who moved David*; namely, Satan, as is here stated, by God's permission. The righteous judgments of God are to be observed and acknowledged even in the sins and unrighteousness of men. But we are sure God is not the author of sin, and that, strictly speaking, *he tempts no man*, James i. 13. That passage, therefore, must be explained by this. But of this particular, and of the contents of this whole chapter, and of the variations and seeming contradictions between this narrative and that in Samuel, see notes there.

Verse 3. *Why will he be*—Or, *why should this be*; a cause of trespass—Or, an occasion of punishment; (Hebrew words, which signify *sin*, being often used for the punishment of sin,) *to, or against Israel?*—Why wilt thou provoke God by this sin to punish Israel? He speaks thus because God commonly punishes the people for the sins of their rulers, the people being for the most part guilty of their rulers' sins, in one kind or other.

Verse 6. *Levi and Benjamin counted he not*—Partly for the following reason, and principally by

was four hundred threescore and ten thousand men that drew sword. A. M. 2995. B. C. 1018.

6 ^o But Levi and Benjamin counted he not among them: for the king's word was abominable to Joab.

7 ¶ ¹ And God was displeased with this thing, therefore he smote Israel.

8 And David said unto God, ^d I have sinned greatly, because I have done this thing: ^o but now, I beseech thee, do away the iniquity of thy servant; for I have done very foolishly.

9 ¶ And the LORD spake unto Gad, David's seer, saying,

10 Go and tell David, saying, Thus saith the LORD, I ² offer thee three things; choose thee one of them, that I may do it unto thee.

11 So Gad came to David, and said unto him, Thus saith the LORD, ³ Choose thee

12 ^e Either three years' famine; or three months to be destroyed before thy foes, while that the sword of thine enemies overtaketh

^d 2 Samuel xxiv. 10.—^e 2 Samuel xii. 13.—^f 1 Samuel ix. 9.—^g Heb. stretch out.—^h Heb. Take to thee.—ⁱ 2 Sam. xxiv. 13.

God's gracious providence to Levi, because they were devoted to his service; and to Benjamin, because they were the least of all the tribes, having been almost extinct, (Judges xxi.) and because God foresaw that they would be faithful to the house of David in the division of the tribes, and therefore he would not have them diminished. And Joab also presumed to leave these two tribes unnumbered, because he had specious pretences for it; for Levi, because they were no warriors, and the king's command reached only of those that drew sword; and for Benjamin, because they, being so small a tribe, and bordering upon Jerusalem, might easily be numbered afterward.

Verse 7. *God was displeased with this thing*—Because it was done without any colour of necessity, and out of mere curiosity and ostentation, as David's own conscience afterward told him, which therefore smote him, as is related 2 Sam. xxiv. 10. *Therefore he smote Israel*—As is particularly related in the following verses. Undoubtedly God did this because Israel concurred with David in the act of numbering the people, and approved of it, as well as because of all their other sins.

Verse 8. *I have done very foolishly*—I see plainly, and acknowledge, that I have been very foolish in thinking to found my security on the number of my people, instead of depending solely on thy almighty power and sovereign help.

Verses 12, 13. *Either three years of famine*—In 2 Sam. xxiv. 13, it is said the prophet propounded to David seven years of famine, concerning which see the note there. *Let me fall now into the hand of*

A. M. 2986. *thee*; or else three days the sword of
B. C. 1018. the LORD, even the pestilence, in the land, and the angel of the LORD destroying throughout all the coasts of Israel. Now therefore advise thyself what word I shall bring again to him that sent me.

13 And David said unto Gad, I am in a great strait: let me fall now into the hand of the LORD; for very ⁴great *are* his mercies: but let me not fall into the hand of man.

14 ¶ So the LORD sent pestilence upon Israel: and there fell of Israel seventy thousand men.

15 And God sent an ^hangel unto Jerusalem to destroy it: and as he was destroying, the LORD beheld, and ⁱhe repented him of the evil, and said to the angel that destroyed, It is enough, stay now thy hand. And the angel of the LORD stood by the thrashing-floor of ⁵Ornan the Jebusite.

16 ¶ And David lifted up his eyes, and ^ksaw the angel of the LORD stand between the earth and the heaven, having a drawn sword in his hand, stretched out over Jerusalem. Then David and the elders of Israel, who *were* clothed in sackcloth, fell upon their faces.

17 And David said unto God, *Is it not I that* commanded the people to be numbered? even I it is that have sinned and done evil indeed; but *as for* these sheep, what have they done? let thy hand, I pray thee, O LORD my God, be on me, and on my father's house; but not

^a Or, *many*.—² Sam. xxiv. 16.—¹ Gen. vi. 6.—^b Or, *Araunah*, ² Sam. xxiv. 18.—² Chron. iii. 1.—³ 2 Chron. iii. 1.

the Lord—The pestilence is more properly called *the hand*, or *sword of the Lord*, than other common calamities. For they have visible causes, but none know whence this sudden destruction comes, unless immediately from the hand or stroke of God.

Verse 14. *There fell of Israel*—He was proud of the number of his people, but God took a course to make them fewer. Justly is that which we are proud of taken from us, or imbittered to us.

Verses 15, 16. *God sent an angel unto Jerusalem to destroy it, &c.*—This seems to import that there were more angels than one employed to effect this destruction in different parts of the country: and that the angels, sent to Jerusalem, had begun to slay some of its inhabitants. *The Lord beheld, and repented him of the evil*—Probably because he beheld their serious repentance. *David and the elders clothed in sackcloth*—That is, in mourning garments;

on thy people, that they should be
A. M. 2986. plagued.
B. C. 1018.

18 ¶ Then the ^langel of the LORD commanded Gad to say to David, that David should go up, and set up an altar unto the LORD in the thrashing-floor of Ornan the Jebusite.

19 And David went up at the saying of Gad, which he spake in the name of the LORD.

20 ⁶And Ornan turned back, and saw the angel; and his four sons with him hid themselves. Now Ornan was thrashing wheat.

21 And as David came to Ornan, Ornan looked, and saw David, and went out of the thrashing-floor, and bowed himself to David with *his* face to the ground.

22 Then David said to Ornan, ⁷Grant me the place of *this* thrashing-floor, that I may build an altar therein unto the LORD: thou shalt grant it me for the full price: that the plague may be stayed from the people.

23 And Ornan said unto David, Take *it* to thee, and let my lord the king do *that which is* good in his eyes: lo, I give *thee* the oxen also for burnt-offerings, and the thrashing instruments for wood, and the wheat for the meat-offering; I give it all.

24 And King David said to Ornan, Nay; but I will verily buy it for the full price: for I will not take *that which is* thine for the LORD, nor offer burnt-offerings without cost.

25 So ^mDavid gave to Ornan for the place six hundred shekels of gold by weight.

⁴ Or, *When Ornan turned back and saw the angel, then he and his four sons with him hid themselves.*—⁷ Hebrew, *Give*.—^m 2 Sam. xxiv. 24.

fell on their faces—Humbling themselves before God for their sins, and deprecating his wrath against the people.

Verse 18. *The angel commanded that David should go and set up an altar*—This command was a blessed token of reconciliation. For if God had been pleased to kill him, he would not have commanded, because he would not have accepted, a sacrifice at his hands.

Verse 20. *His four sons with him hid themselves*—Because of the glory and majesty in which the angel appeared, which men's weak natures are not able to bear; and from the fear of God's vengeance, which now seemed to be coming to their family.

Verse 25. *David gave six hundred shekels of gold, &c.*—How this is reconciled with 2 Sam. xxiv. 24, where it is said, *David bought the thrashing-floor, &c., for fifty shekels of silver*, see note there.

A. M. 2986. B. C. 1018. 26 And David built there an altar unto the LORD, and offered burnt-offerings and peace-offerings, and called upon the LORD; and ^ahe answered him from heaven by fire upon the altar of burnt-offering.

27 And the LORD commanded the angel; and he put up his sword again into the sheath thereof.

28 ¶ At that time when David saw that the

^a Lev. ix. 24; 2 Chron. iii. 1; vii. 1.—^c Chap. xvi. 39.

Verse 26. *He answered him from heaven by fire*—Hebrew, *by fire from heaven*; which was a sign of God's acceptance. The fire that might justly have fastened on the sinner, fastened upon the sacrifice and consumed it. Thus *Christ was made sin and a curse* for us, and it pleased the Lord to bruise him, that through him God might be to us, not a consuming fire, but a reconciled Father.

Verse 28. *Then he sacrificed there*—When he perceived that his sacrifice offered there was acceptable to God, he proceeded to offer more sacrifices in that place, and did not go to Gibeon, as otherwise he should have done.

LORD had answered him in the ^{A. M. 2986. B. C. 1018.} thrashing-floor of Ornan the Jebusite, then he sacrificed there.

29 ^o For the tabernacle of the LORD, which Moses made in the wilderness, and the altar of the burnt-offering, *were* at that season in the high place at ^p Gibeon.

30 But David could not go before it to inquire of God: for he was afraid because of the sword of the angel of the LORD.

^p 1 Kings iii. 4; Chap. xvi. 39; 2 Chron. i. 3.

Verse 30. *David could not go before it*—Did not dare to go before the tabernacle, where the altar stood. *To inquire of God*—Hebrew, לירוש, *lidrosh*, to seek God, or humbly to entreat his favour by prayer and sacrifice. *For he was afraid because of the sword of the angel of the Lord*—That is, when he saw the angel stand with his drawn sword over Jerusalem, he durst not go away to Gibeon, lest the angel in the mean time should destroy Jerusalem: for the prevention whereof he thought it proper to worship God in that place, which he had consecrated by his special presence and acceptance.

CHAPTER XXII.

David prepares for building the temple, 1-5. Instructs Solomon concerning the work, 6-16. Commands the princes to assist him therein, 17-19.

A. M. 2986. B. C. 1018. **T**HEN David said, ^aThis is the house of the LORD God, and this is the altar of the burnt-offering for Israel.

2 And David commanded to gather together ^b the strangers that *were* in the land of Israel; and he set masons to hew wrought stones to build the house of God.

3 And David prepared iron in abundance for the nails for the doors of the gates, and for the

^a Deut. xii. 5; 2 Samuel xxiv. 18; Chapter xxi. 18, 19, 26, 28; 2 Chron. iii. 1.

NOTES ON CHAPTER XXII.

Verse 1. *Then David said*—Through the instinct and direction of God's Spirit, by which as he is said to have had the pattern of the house, porch, altar, &c., (1 Chron. xxviii. 11, 12-19,) so doubtless he was instructed as to the place where the house should be built. *This is the house, &c.*—This is the place appointed by God for the building of his temple and altar.

Verses 2, 3. *To gather the strangers that were in the land of Israel*—The same persons whom Solomon afterward employed in the same work; of

joinings; and brass in abundance ^{A. M. 2986. B. C. 1018.} ^c without weight;

4 Also cedar-trees in abundance: for the ^d Zidonians and they of Tyre brought much cedar-wood to David.

5 And David said, ^e Solomon my son is young and tender, and the house *that is* to be builded for the LORD *must be* exceeding magnificent, of fame and of glory throughout all countries: I

^b 1 Kings ix. 21.—^c Verse 14; 1 Kings vii. 47.—^d 1 Kings v. 6.—^e Chap. xxix. 1.

which see 1 Kings v. 15, and ix. 20, 21. *He set masons to hew wrought stones*—Wherein he could not do much, being prevented by death; but Solomon carried on and perfected what David had begun. *For the joinings*—To be used, together with melted lead, for the joining of those great and square stones together.

Verse 5. *So David prepared abundantly*—And with good reason, because it was intended for the honour of the great God, and was to be a type of Christ, in whom all fulness dwells, and in whom are hid all treasures.

A. M. 2986. will *therefore* now make preparation
B. C. 1013. for it. So David prepared abundantly
before his death.

6 ¶ Then he called for Solomon his son, and charged him to build a house for the LORD God of Israel.

7 And David said to Solomon, My son, as for me, ^f it was in my mind to build a house ^e unto the name of the LORD my God.

8 But the word of the LORD came to me, saying, ^h Thou hast shed blood abundantly, and hast made great wars: thou shalt not build a house unto my name, because thou hast shed much blood upon the earth in my sight.

9 ⁱ Behold, a son shall be born to thee, who shall be a man of rest; and I will give him ^h rest from all his enemies round about: for his name shall be ^l Solomon, and I will give peace and quietness unto Israel in his days.

10 ^l He shall build a house for my name; and ^m he shall be my son, and I *will be* his father; and I will establish the throne of his kingdom over Israel for ever.

11 Now, my son, ⁿ the LORD be with thee; and prosper thou, and build the house of the LORD thy God, as he hath said of thee.

12 Only the LORD ^o give thee wisdom and understanding, and give thee charge concerning

^f 2 Samuel vii. 2; 1 Kings viii. 17; Chap. xvii. 1; xxviii. 2. ^e Deut. xii. 5, 11.—^g 1 Kings v. 3; Chap. xxviii. 3.—^h Chap. xxviii. 5.—ⁱ 1 Kings iv. 25; v. 4.—^l That is, *peaceable*. ^l 2 Samuel vii. 13; 1 Kings v. 5; Chapter xvii. 12; xxviii. 6. ^m Heb. i. 5.—ⁿ Verse 16.

Verse 8. *Thou hast shed blood, &c.; thou shalt not build a house unto my name*—Not that wars are simply unlawful, but to teach us that the church (whereof the temple was an illustrious type) should be built by Christ, *the Prince of peace*, Isa. ix. 6, and that it should be gathered and built up, *not by might or power*, but by God's Spirit, Zech. iv. 6, and by the preaching the gospel of peace. David therefore was less fit for that service, than one who had not been called to such bloody work. Likewise, by setting him aside for this reason, God showed how precious human life is to him.

Verse 14. *Behold, in my trouble I have prepared for the house of the Lord*—This he alleges as a reason why he could do no more, because of the many troubles and wars in which he had been engaged, both foreign and domestic, whereby much of his treasure had been exhausted. *A hundred thousand talents of gold, &c.*—The sum here mentioned is so great, according to the usually computed value of a talent, being not less than three hundred and sixty millions sterling, that most interpreters

Israel, that thou mayest keep the law A. M. 2986.
of the LORD thy God. B. C. 1018.

13 ^p Then shalt thou prosper, if thou takest heed to fulfil the statutes and judgments which the LORD charged Moses with concerning Israel: ^q be strong, and of good courage; dread not, nor be dismayed.

14 Now behold, ^r in my trouble I have prepared for the house of the LORD a hundred thousand talents of gold, and a thousand thousand talents of silver; and of brass and iron ^r without weight; for it is in abundance: timber also and stone have I prepared; and thou mayest add thereto.

15 Moreover, *there are* workmen with thee in abundance, hewers and ^s workers of stone and timber, and all manner of cunning men for every manner of work.

16 Of the gold, the silver, and the brass, and the iron, *there is* no number. Arise, *therefore*, and be doing, and ^t the LORD be with thee.

17 ¶ David also commanded all the princes of Israel to help Solomon his son, saying,

18 *Is not the LORD your God with you?* ^u and hath he *not* given you rest on every side? for he hath given the inhabitants of the land into my hand; and the land is subdued before the LORD, and before his people.

19 Now ^v set your heart and your soul to seek

^o 1 Kings iii. 9, 12; Psa. lxxii. 1.—^p Josh. i. 7; Chapter xxviii. 7.—^q Deut. xxxi. 7; Joshua i. 6, 9; Chap. xxviii. 20. ^r Or, *in my poverty*.—^s Verse 3.—^t That is, *masons and carpenters*.—^u Verse 11.—^v Deut. xii. 10; Josh. xxii. 4; 2 Sam. vii. 1; Chap. xxiii. 25.—^w 2 Chron. xx. 3.

conclude, either that some error has crept into the text through the inaccuracy of transcribers, or else that the word ככרִים, *chicharim*, should not be translated *talents*, in this place, but only *masses, plates, or pieces*, such as we call *ingots*, of gold and silver. And thus Budæus observes in his book *De Asse*, that in Homer's time there was a talent of lesser value; for he speaks of two talents which were given with other things as a reward of a victory obtained in some exercises. Such talents he thinks we are to understand in this place; for David reigned about the time of the rise of the kingdom of the Assyrians, which was not very far from the time of Homer. Houbigant translates the former part of this verse, *But I, according to my poor ability, have prepared a hundred talents of gold, and a thousand talents of silver*. See Joseph. *Antiq.*, l. 7, c. 14, sect. 2.

Verse 16. *Of the brass and the iron there is no number*—The meaning is, the quantity of brass and iron was not numbered, as that of the gold and silver was. *Arise, therefore, and be doing*—When

A. M. 2986. the LORD your God; arise, therefore,
B. C. 1018. and build ye the sanctuary of the
LORD God, to ² bring the ark of the covenant

² 1 Kings viii. 6, 21; 2 Chron. v. 7; vi. 11.

thou shalt come to the throne. The sense of God's presence must not slacken our endeavours; because he is with us, we must *rise and be doing*. Then he will be with us even to the end. Work out your salvation, and God will work in you.

of the LORD, and the holy vessels of A. M. 2986.
God, into the house that is to be built B. C. 1018.
⁷ to the name of the LORD.

⁷ Verse 7; 1 Kings v. 3.

Verse 18. *The land is subdued before the Lord, and before his people*—It is brought under the command of God, and of you his people, all the enemies of God and of Israel, in it or near it, being now perfectly subdued.

CHAPTER XXIII.

David declares Solomon his successor, 1. Numbers the Levites, and appoints them their several offices, 2-5. Takes an account of the families of the Levites, 6-23. Reckons them from twenty years old, and appoints them their work, 24-32.

A. M. 2989. SO when David was old and full of
B. C. 1015. days, he made ^a Solomon his son
king over Israel.

2 ¶ And he gathered together all the princes of Israel, with the priests and the Levites.

B. C. 1045. 3 Now the Levites were numbered from the age of ^b thirty years and upward: and their number by their polls, man by man, was thirty and eight thousand.

4 Of which twenty and four thousand were

^a 1 Kings i. 33-39; Chap. xxviii. 5.—^b Numbers iv. 3, 47.
¹ Or, to oversee.—^c Deuteronomy xvi. 18; Chapter xxvi. 29;
2 Chronicles xix. 8.

NOTES ON CHAPTER XXIII.

Verse 1. *He made Solomon king over Israel*—Not that he resigned the kingdom to him, but only declared his mind concerning Solomon's succeeding him in the throne after his death. Thus David himself is called *king*, 1 Sam. xvi. 1, because he was appointed and anointed to be king after Saul's death, though till then he was only a subject.

Verse 2. *He gathered together all the princes, &c.*—Partly to declare God's will, and his own desire, that Solomon should be his successor; and so to cut off the claims and pretences which others of his sons might have made to the crown; and partly to acquaint them with those directions which he had received from God, by the Spirit, as appears from chap. xxviii. 11, &c., concerning the establishment of a new order and method in the ministrations of the priests and Levites in the temple.

Verse 3. *From the age of thirty years and upward*—Not only till fifty, as it was appointed Num. iv. 2, 3, but even till their death: for that was but a temporary law grounded upon a special reason, because the Levites were employed in carrying the tabernacle and sacred vessels from place to place; and therefore God would have them freed from those burdens when they came to feel the infirmities of age: which reason wholly ceasing upon

280

¹ to set forward the work of the house A. M. 2989.
of the LORD; and six thousand were B. C. 1015.

^c officers and judges:

5 Moreover, four thousand were porters; and four thousand praised the LORD with the instruments ^d which I made, *said David*, to praise *therewith*.

6 And ^e David divided them into ² courses among the sons of Levi, *namely*, Gershon, Kohath, and Merari.

⁴ 2 Chronicles xxix. 25; Amos vi. 5.—^e Exodus vi. 16; Num. xxvi. 57; Chap. vi. 1, &c.; 2 Chron. viii. 14; xxix. 25.
⁵ Heb. divisions.

the building of the temple, their work being far easier than it had been, and their service being more a privilege than a burden, their time of service is justly prolonged.

Verse 4. *To set forward the work of the house of the Lord*—To take care that all the work of the temple, about sacrifices, should be punctually performed, either by themselves or others; which they were not to do all at once, but by courses, a thousand at a time. *Six thousand were officers and judges*—Not in the affairs of the temple, there the priests presided, but in several parts of the kingdom, where they assisted the princes and elders of every tribe, in the administration of justice.

Verse 5. *Four thousand were porters*—Whose office it was to take the charge of all the gates of the temple, and its courts, that no forbidden or unclean person might enter there, and of the courts themselves, and of the several chambers and buildings belonging to the temple and the service thereof. These also were to do their work by turns. *Praised the Lord with instruments*—Whereof two hundred and eighty-eight persons were of greater skill than their brethren, and instructed them, and had some authority over them.

Verse 6. *David divided them into courses*—Which he did not by his own invention, but, as a

2

A. M. 2999. 7 Of the 'Gershonites were' Laa-
B. C. 1015. dan and Shimei.

8 The sons of Laadan; the chief was Jehiel, and Zetham, and Joel, three.

9 The sons of Shimei; Shelomith, and Haziel, and Haran, three. These were the chief of the fathers of Laadan.

10 And the sons of Shimei were, Jahath, 'Zina, and Jeush, and Beriah. These four were the sons of Shimei.

11 And Jahath was the chief, and Zizah the second: but Jeush and Beriah had not many sons; therefore they were in one reckoning, according to their father's house.

12 ¶ The sons of Kohath; Amram, Izhar, Hebron, and Uzziel, four.

13 The sons of ^bAmram; Aaron and Moses: and ⁱAaron was separated, that he should sanctify the most holy things, he and his sons for ever, ^kto burn incense before the LORD, ^lto minister unto him, and ^mto bless in his name for ever.

14 Now concerning Moses the man of God, ⁿhis sons were named of the tribe of Levi.

15 ^oThe sons of Moses were, Gershom, and Eliezer.

16 Of the sons of Gershom, ^pShebuel was the chief.

17 And the sons of Eliezer were, ^qRehabiah

A. M. 2999. other sons; but the sons of Rehabiah
B. C. 1015. ^rwere very many.

18 Of the sons of Izhar; ^sShelomith the chief.

19 ^tOf the sons of Hebron; Jeriah the first, Amariah the second, Jahaziel the third, and Jekameam the fourth.

20 Of the sons of Uzziel; Micah the first, and Jesiah the second.

21 ¶ ^uThe sons of Merari; Mahli, and Mushi. The sons of Mahli; Eleazar, and ^vKish.

22 And Eleazar died, and ^whad no sons, but daughters: and their ^xbrethren the sons of Kish ^ytook them.

23 ^zThe sons of Mushi; Mahli, and Eder, and Jeremoth, three.

24 ¶ These were the sons of ^{aa}Levi after the house of their fathers; even the chief of the fathers, as they were counted by number of names by their polls, that did the work for the service of the house of the LORD, from the age of ^{ab}twenty years and upward.

25 For David said, The LORD God of Israel ^{ac}hath given rest unto his people, ^{ad}that they may dwell in Jerusalem for ever;

26 And also unto the Levites: they shall no ^{ae}more ^{af}carry the tabernacle, nor any vessels of it for the service thereof.

27 For by the last words of David the Le-

¹ Chap. xxvi. 21.—² Or, Libni, Chap. vi. 17.—³ Or, Zizah, Verse 11.—⁴ Heb. did not multiply sons.—⁵ Exodus vi. 18. ⁶ Exod. vi. 20.—⁷ Exod. xxviii. 1; Heb. v. 4.—⁸ Exod. xxx. 7; Num. xvi. 40; 1 Sam. ii. 28.—⁹ Deut. xxi. 5.—¹⁰ Num. vi. 23.—¹¹ Chapter xxvi. 23, 25.—¹² Exodus ii. 22; xviii. 3. ¹³ Chap. xxvi. 24.—¹⁴ Shubael, Chap. xxiv. 20.—¹⁵ Chap. xxvi. 25.—¹⁶ Or, the first.

¹⁷ Heb. were highly multiplied.—¹⁸ Shelomoth, Chapter xxiv. 22.—¹⁹ Chapter xxiv. 23.—²⁰ Chapter xxiv. 26.—²¹ Chapter xxiv. 29.—²² Chapter xxiv. 28.—²³ Or, kinsmen.—²⁴ Num. xxxvi. 6, 8.—²⁵ Chapter xxiv. 30.—²⁶ Numbers x. 17, 21. ²⁷ Verse 27; Num. i. 3; iv. 3; viii. 24; Ezra iii. 8.—²⁸ Chap. xxii. 18.—²⁹ Or, and he dwelleth in Jerusalem, &c.—³⁰ Num. iv. 5, &c.

man of God, by his command, and with the advice and concurrence of Gad and Nathan the prophets, as is manifest from 2 Chron. viii. 14, and xxix. 25.

Verse 13. That he should sanctify the most holy things—That he might keep them from pollution: for these most holy things were polluted when they were touched by any other person. He and his sons for ever—Not only his eldest sons the high-priests successively, but all his posterity, or all the priests: for the works here following were not peculiar to the high-priest, but common to all the priests.

Verse 14. His sons were named of the tribe of Levi—They were accounted only as common Levites, and were not priests: which is mentioned for the honour of Moses, and the demonstration of his eminent piety and self-denial, who willingly left the government to Joshua, and the priesthood to Aaron, and was content to have his posterity reduced to a private and mean condition.

Verse 24. From the age of twenty years and upward—As the Levites were anciently numbered

from two several times, from the twenty-fifth year of their age, and from the thirtieth, (Num. iv. 3; viii. 24,) in like manner they are here numbered, both from their twentieth year, when they were solemnly prepared for, and instructed, and by degrees exercised, in some parts of their work; and from their thirtieth year, when they were admitted to the full exercise of their office. And the reason why they were now sooner admitted to service than they had been formerly, is given in the next verses, because now their work was more easy, being wholly discharged from that burdensome work of carrying the tabernacle. Besides, the people of Israel were multiplied, therefore more hands were necessary; that every Israelite who brought an offering, might find a Levite ready to assist him.

Verse 27. By the last words of David—By his last order and constitution, made by God's direction, and by the Holy Spirit. This is here added to signify, that this great affair was thus settled by David, not in his younger years, when it might have been

A. M. 2989. vites were ¹² numbered from twenty
B. C. 1015. years old and above :

28 Because ¹³ their office was to wait on the sons of Aaron for the service of the house of the LORD, in the courts, and in the chambers, and in the purifying of all holy things, and the work of the service of the house of God ;

29 Both for ^d the show-bread, and for ^e the fine flour for meat-offering, and for ^f the unleavened cakes, and for ^g that which is baked in the ¹⁴ pan, and for that which is fried, and for all manner of ^h measure and size ;

¹² Heb. numbers.—¹³ Heb. their station was at the hand of the sons of Aaron, Neh. xi. 24.—^d Exod. xxv. 30.—^e Levit. vi. 20 ; Chap. ix. 29, &c.

thought to have been the effect of youthful heat, presumption, and rashness, but when he was come to the greatest maturity, when he was old and near his death, and going to give up his account to his Lord and Maker of all his actions, and particularly of the alterations which he made in the service of God, which he declared was done by the Spirit of God. These were, in a manner, his dying words, which usually make the deepest impression.

Verse 28. *In the purifying of holy things*—Holy places, and garments, and vessels, and sacrifices, which were to be washed and cleansed from any filthiness that might cleave to them.

Verse 29. *For all manner of measure*—All measures used either in sacred or civil things, the public standards whereof were kept in the temple ; and

30 And to stand every morning to thank and praise the LORD, and likewise at even ;

31 And to offer all burnt-sacrifices unto the LORD ⁱ in the sabbaths, in the new-moons, and on the ^k set feasts, by number, according to the order commanded unto them, continually before the LORD :

32 And that they should ^l keep the charge of the tabernacle of the congregation, and the charge of the holy place, and ^m the charge of the sons of Aaron their brethren, in the service of the house of the LORD.

ⁱ Lev. ii. 4.—^g Lev. ii. 5, 7.—¹⁴ Or, flat plate.—^h Lev. xix. 35.—^l Numbers x. 10 ; Psa. lxxxi. 3.—^k Lev. xxiii. 4. ¹ Num. i. 53.—^m Num. iii. 6-9.

therefore the care of keeping them inviolable, and producing them upon occasion, must needs belong to the priests, and under them to the Levites, who were to examine other measures, and all things by them, as occasion required, that so the priests might be at leisure for their higher and greater employments.

Verses 30-32. *To stand every morning, &c., and at evening*—The two solemn times of offering sacrifices : which work was attended with public prayer and thanksgiving. *According to the order commanded unto them continually*—That is, unto those persons, the Levites, of whom he speaks. *The charge of the sons of Aaron*—That is, what the priests should commit to their charge, or command them to do.

CHAPTER XXIV.

The priests are divided by lot into twenty-four orders, 1-19. Ministers are allotted them from the Levites, out of the tribes of the Kohathites and the Merarites, 20-31.

A. M. 2989. NOW these are the divisions of
B. C. 1015. the sons of Aaron. ^a The sons of Aaron ; Nadab, and Abihu, Eleazar, and Ithamar.

2 But ^b Nadab and Abihu died before their father, and had no children : therefore Eleazar

^a Lev. x. 1, 6 ; Num. xxvi. 60.

NOTES ON CHAPTER XXIV.

Verses 1, 2. *These are the divisions of the sons of Aaron*—The several branches into which that family was divided. *Therefore Eleazar and Ithamar executed the priest's office*—Their brethren being dead, and leaving no issue, they and their

and Ithamar executed the priest's office.

3 And David distributed them, both Zadok of the sons of Eleazar, and Ahimelech of the sons of Ithamar, according to their offices in their service.

^b Num. iii. 4 ; xxvi. 61.

sons were the only persons to whom the execution of that office could be committed according to the law.

Verse 3. *And David distributed them, &c.*—To avoid all confusion, now that they were much increased, he distributed the priests, as he had done the Levites, into several courses, allotting to each

A. M. 2989. 4 And there were more chief men
B. C. 1015. found of the sons of Eleazar than of
the sons of Ithamar; and *thus* were they di-
vided. Among the sons of Eleazar *there were*
sixteen chief men of the house of *their* fathers,
and eight among the sons of Ithamar according
to the house of their fathers.

5 Thus were they divided by lot, one sort
with another; for the governors of the sanc-
tuary, and governors of *the house* of God, were
of the sons of Eleazar, and of the sons of
Ithamar.

6 And Shemaiah the son of Nethaneel the
scribe, *one* of the Levites, wrote them before
the king, and the princes, and Zadok the priest,
and Ahimelech the son of Abiathar, and *before*
the chief of the fathers of the priests and Levites:
one ¹ principal household being taken for Elea-
zar, and *one* taken for Ithamar.

7 Now the first lot came forth to Jehoiarib,
the second to Jedaiah,

8 The third to Harim, the fourth to Seorim,

9 The fifth to Malchijah, the sixth to Mijamin,

10 The seventh to Hakkoz, the eighth to ° Abijah,

11 The ninth to Jeshuah, the tenth to She-
caniah,

12 The eleventh to Eliashib, the twelfth to
Jakim,

13 The thirteenth to Huppah, the fourteenth
to Jeshebeab,

14 The fifteenth to Bilgah, the sixteenth to
Immer,

15 The seventeenth to Hezer, the eighteenth
to Aphses,

16 The nineteenth to Pethahiah, the twentieth
to Jehezekel,

17 The one and twentieth to Jachin, the two
and twentieth to Gamul,

18 The three and twentieth to Delaiah, the
four and twentieth to Maaziah.

19 These *were* the orderings of them in their
service ^d to come into the house of the LORD,
according to their manner, under Aaron their
father, as the LORD God of Israel had com-
manded him.

¹ Heb. *house of the father*.

^c Neh. xii. 4, 17; Luke i. 5.—^d Chap. ix. 25.

of them the times wherein they should by turns
have the government of holy ministrations.

Verse 4. *Among the sons of Eleazar were sixteen
chief men, &c.*—He appointed, therefore, sixteen
courses of the sons of Eleazar, under as many heads
of their families, and half as many of the posterity
of Ithamar.

Verse 5. *Thus were they divided by lot*—That
the business being committed, in this way, to the
Divine disposal, there might be no occasion for com-
plaint, and so all contentions might be prevented, as
no man could be charged with partiality, nor could
any say they had wrong done them. Solomon
says, the lot causes contention to cease. It is evi-
dent from the Scriptures, that it was a very ancient
custom to refer matters of a doubtful nature to the
decision of the lot; and, in particular, persons were
often chosen in this way to sacred offices. But, as
it is an appeal to God, it ought to be managed with
a proper reverence and sincerity. Thus Matthias
was chosen to the apostleship by lot with solemn
prayer. "And I know not," says Henry, "but it
might still be used, in faith, in parallel cases, as an
instituted ordinance." *One sort with another*—Both
the sons of Eleazar and those of Ithamar were thus
chosen, who should wait together. *Governors of
the house of God*—Hebrew, *governors of God*; that
is the judges, says Houbigant. The ministers of
religion are expressed in the foregoing words, *the
governors of the sanctuary*. It is very justly ob-
served by Grotius, that *governors of God* never
signify, in the sacred writings, those that minister

to God, but governors in the commonwealth, *chiefs,
or judges*. *Were of the sons of Eleazar and the
sons of Ithamar*—These two families had obtained
the chief functions, both in the temple and in the
magistracy; which could not be distributed so well
any way as by lot, without danger of envy among
themselves.

Verse 6. *Shemaiah, the scribe, wrote them before
the king*—Their names were written and put into
an urn, out of which the lots were to be drawn:
which, that there might be no suspicion of fraud,
were drawn before the king, the princes, the high-
priest and his assistant, and before the several fami-
lies of priests and Levites. *One principal house-
hold being taken for Eleazar, &c.*—That is, one of
the principal families of Eleazar was first taken, and
then one of Ithamar's, and thus alternately, till all
the families of Ithamar had received their lot. And
afterward all the lots came forth to the rest of Ele-
azar's families, which were double in number to
those of Ithamar.

Verse 19. *These were the orderings of them*—In
this order and method they were to come to per-
form the offices of the temple. *To come into the
house*—To come into the temple every sabbath day,
and to continue there till the next sabbath, when
they were relieved by others. *Under Aaron*—Un-
der the direction of the high-priest, whom he calls
Aaron, because he represented Aaron's person, and
executed his office; and *their father*—Because of
the authority which, by God's appointment, he had
over them.

A. M. 2989. 20 ¶ And the rest of the sons of Levi
B. C. 1015.

were these: Of the sons of Amram;
• Shubael: of the sons of Shubael; Jehdeiah.

21 Concerning † Rehabiah: of the sons of Re-
habiah, the first was Isshiah.

22 Of the Izharites; ‡ Shelomoth: of the sons
of Shelomoth; Jahath.

23 And the sons of ^bHebron; Jeriah the first,
Amariah the second, Jahaziel the third, Jeka-
meam the fourth.

24 Of the sons of Uzziel; Michah: of the
sons of Michah; Shamir.

25 The brother of Michah was Isshiah: of
the sons of Isshiah; Zechariah.

26 ¶ ⁱ The sons of Merari were Mahli, and
Mushi: the sons of Jaaziah; Beno.

• Chap. xxiii. 16, *Shubael*.—† Chap. xxiii. 17.—‡ Chap. xxiii.
18, *Shelomith*.

Verse 20. *The rest of the sons of Levi*—Either such as were only Levites, and not priests, or such as were not named or numbered before, in this or the former chapter. *The sons of Shubael, Jehdeiah*—Who being, as it seems, an eminent person, or having a very numerous family, was not reckoned with or under his father's family, but was accounted as a distinct head of another family.

Verse 31. *These likewise cast lots*—There was the like solemnity used in their distribution as there

27 The sons of Merari by Jaaziah; A. M. 2989.
Beno, and Shoham, and Zaccur, and B. C. 1015.
Ibri.

28 Of Mahli came Eleazar, ^k who had no
sons.

29 Concerning Kish: the son of Kish was
Jerahmeel.

30 ^l The sons also of Mushi; Mahli, and Eder,
and Jerimoth. These were the sons of the Le-
vites after the house of their fathers.

31 These likewise cast lots over against their
brethren the sons of Aaron in the presence of
David the king, and Zadok, and Ahimelech,
and the chief of the fathers of the priests and
Levites, even the principal fathers over against
their younger brethren.

^b Chap. xxiii. 19; xxvi. 31.—ⁱ Exod. vi. 19; Chap. xxiii. 21.
^k Chap. xxiii. 22.—^l Chap. xxiii. 23.

was in that of the priests, by casting lots; whereby they knew what Levites should wait in every course with the sons of Aaron. *Even the principal fathers over against their younger brethren*—These words are somewhat obscure, but the meaning, says Bishop Patrick, is, that both elder and younger had their places by lot, not by seniority of houses: they who were of greater dignity drew lots against those who were of less: and they were to take their courses as they fell either to the elder or the younger family.

CHAPTER XXV.

The persons that were to be employed in singing, 1-7. The order in which they were to attend, determined by lot, 8-31.

A. M. 2989. **M**OREOVER David and the cap-
B. C. 1015. tains of the host separated to the
service of the sons of ^aAsaph, and of Heman,
and of Jeduthun, who should prophesy with

^a Chap. vi.

NOTES ON CHAPTER XXV.

Verse 1. *And captains*—All the princes of Israel, with the priests and the Levites, whom David gathered together (chap. xxiii. 2) for this very end, that, with their approbation and consent, all these things might be established, who are here fitly called *the captains of the host*; for the princes were, under David, the chief captains of the militia of the kingdom; and as the Levites are called a host, and the *Lord's host*, because of their number and order in holy ministrations, so these priests and Levites were the captains and governors of the rest. *Separated*—Distributed them into their several ranks: which, though chiefly done by David as a prophet, and by divine direction, yet is imputed in part to the captains of the host,

harp, with psalteries, and with cym- A. M. 2989.
bals: and the number of the work- B. C. 1015.
men according to their service was:

2 Of the sons of Asaph; Zaccur, and Joseph,

33, 39, 44.

because it was done with their concurrence and approbation. *The service*—To the service of God, under the conduct of these persons. *Who should prophesy*—Praise God by singing the psalms of David, and other sacred songs made by themselves, who were prophets, or by other prophets or holy men of God. *The number of the workmen according to their service*—Although this sacred work of praising God is here termed *service*, and the persons employed in it *workmen*, yet it is the greatest liberty and pleasure to be engaged in it. But the expressions intimate that it is our duty to make a business of it, and stir up all that is within us to it; and that in our present state of corruption and infirmity, it will not be done, as it should be done, without labour

A. M. 2989. and Nethaniah, and ¹Asarelah, the
B. C. 1015. sons of Asaph under the hands of
Asaph, which prophesied ²according to the order
of the king.

3 Of Jeduthun: the sons of Jeduthun; Gedaliah, and ³Zeri, and Jeshaiiah, Hashabiah, and Mattithiah, ⁴six, under the hands of their father Jeduthun, who prophesied with a harp, to give thanks and to praise the LORD.

4 Of Heman: the sons of Heman; Bukkiah, Mattaniah, ⁵Uzziel, ⁶Shebuel, and Jerimoth, Hananiah, Hanani, Eliathah, Giddalti, and Romamti-ezer, Joshbekashah, Mallothi, Hothir, and Mahaziath:

5 All these *were* the sons of Heman the king's seer in the ⁷words of God, to lift up the horn. And God gave to Heman fourteen sons and three daughters.

6 All these *were* under the hands of their father for song in the house of the LORD, with cymbals, psalteries, and harps, for the service of the house of God, ^baccording⁸ to the king's order to Asaph, Jeduthun, and Heman.

7 So the number of them, with their brethren

that were instructed in the songs of A. M. 2989. the LORD, *even* all that were cunning, B. C. 1015. was two hundred fourscore and eight.

8 ¶ And they cast lots, ward against ward, as well the small as the great, ^othe teacher as the scholar.

9 Now the first lot came forth for Asaph to Joseph: the second to Gedaliah, who, with his brethren and sons, *were* twelve:

10 The third to Zaccur, *he*, his sons, and his brethren, *were* twelve:

11 The fourth to Izri, *he*, his sons, and his brethren, *were* twelve:

12 The fifth to Nethaniah, *he*, his sons, and his brethren, *were* twelve:

13 The sixth to Bukkiah, *he*, his sons, and his brethren, *were* twelve:

14 The seventh to Jesharelah, *he*, his sons, and his brethren, *were* twelve:

15 The eighth to Jeshaiiah, *he*, his sons, and his brethren, *were* twelve:

16 The ninth to Mattaniah, *he*, his sons, and his brethren, *were* twelve:

17 The tenth to Shimei, *he*, his sons, and his brethren, *were* twelve:

¹Otherwise called *Jesharelah*, Verse 14.—²Heb. *by the hands of the king*, Verse 6.—³Or, *Izri*, Verse 11.—⁴With Shimei, mentioned Verse 17.

⁵Or, *Azareel*, Verse 18.—⁶Or, *Shubael*, Verse 20.—⁷Or, *matters*.—⁸Verse 2.—^oHebrew, *by the hands of the king*.
^c2 Chron. xxiii. 13.

and struggle. We must take pains with our hearts to bring and keep them to this work, and to engage all that is within us in it. It is probable, Heman, Asaph, and Jeduthun were bred up under Samuel, and had their education in the schools of the prophets, of which he was the founder and president. Then they were pupils, now they come to be masters. Those that would be eminent must begin early and take time to prepare themselves. This good work, of singing God's praises, Samuel revived and set on foot, but lived not to see it brought to the perfection in which it appears here. Solomon perfects what David began. So David perfects what Samuel began. Let each in their day do what they can for God and his church, though they cannot carry it so far as they would; when they are gone, God can out of stones raise up others, who shall build upon their foundation, and bring forth the top-stone.

Verses 2, 3. *Under the hands of Asaph*—Under his oversight and direction. *According to the order of the king*—In such manner and order as David appointed. *The sons of Jeduthun, six*—Jeduthun, their father, being included in that number; or Shimei, mentioned verse 17.

Verse 5. *The king's seer*—Or prophet. Either he was a prophet as well as a singer; or he is thus called because he prophesied, or praised God, in the sense designed verse 1. And he is called the *king's*

seer, because the king took special delight in him; or because he frequently attended the king in his palace, executing his sacred office there, while the rest were employed in the tabernacle. *In the words of God*—To sing such divine songs as were inspired by God to the prophets or holy men of God. *To lift up the horn*—To praise God with the sound of a trumpet, or some other musical instrument made of horn, which, being a martial kind of music, might be most grateful to David's martial spirit: though he was also skilled in other instruments of music which he used in the house of God.

Verse 7. *All that were cunning*—Who were so skilful that they were able to teach others; and, together with their scholars, made up the four thousand mentioned chap. xxiii. 5.

Verse 8. *Ward against ward*—A course of Levites answerable to one of the priests, upon whom the Levites were to wait in their holy ministrations, chap. xxiii. 28. *As well the teacher as the scholar*—Without any respect to their different ages or abilities.

Verse 9. *To Joseph*—For the family of Asaph, of which Joseph was. Here that clause, *he, his sons, and his brethren were twelve*, is to be understood as it is expressed in all the following verses, otherwise they do not make up that number of two hundred and eighty-eight, mentioned verse 7.

A. M. 2989. 18 The eleventh to Azareel, *he*, his
B. C. 1015. sons, and his brethren, *were* twelve :

19 The twelfth to Hashabiah, *he*, his sons,
and his brethren, *were* twelve :

20 The thirteenth to Shubael, *he*, his sons,
and his brethren, *were* twelve :

21 The fourteenth to Mattithiah, *he*, his sons,
and his brethren, *were* twelve :

22 The fifteenth to Jeremoth, *he*, his sons, and
his brethren, *were* twelve :

23 The sixteenth to Hananiah, *he*, his sons,
and his brethren, *were* twelve :

24 The seventeenth to Joshbekashah, *he*, his
sons, and his brethren, *were* twelve :

25 The eighteenth to Hanani, *he*, his
sons, and his brethren, *were* twelve : A. M. 2989.
B. C. 1015.

26 The nineteenth to Mallothi, *he*, his sons,
and his brethren, *were* twelve :

27 The twentieth to Eliathah, *he*, his sons,
and his brethren, *were* twelve :

28 The one and twentieth to Hothir, *he*, his
sons, and his brethren *were* twelve :

29 The two and twentieth to Giddalti, *he*, his
sons, and his brethren, *were* twelve :

30 The three and twentieth to Mahazioth, *he*,
his sons, and his brethren, *were* twelve :

31 The four and twentieth to Romamti-ezer,
he, his sons, and his brethren, *were* twelve.

CHAPTER XXVI.

The Levites that were appointed to be porters, 1-19. Those that were appointed to be treasurers and store-keepers, 20-28.
Those that were officers and judges in the country, 29-32.

A. M. 2989. CONCERNING the divisions of
B. C. 1015. the porters: Of the Korhites *was*

¹ Meshelemiah the son of Kore, of the sons of
² Asaph.

2 And the sons of Meshelemiah *were*, Zech-
ariah the firstborn, Jediael the second, Zebadiah
the third, Jathniel the fourth,

3 Elam the fifth, Jehohanan the sixth, Eli-
oenai the seventh.

4 Moreover the sons of Obed-edom *were*, She-
maiah the firstborn, Jehozabad the second, Joah
the third, and Sacar the fourth, and Nethaneel
the fifth,

5 Ammiel the sixth, Issachar the seventh,
Peulthai the eighth: for God blessed ³ him.

6 Also unto Shemaiah his son *were* sons born,
that ruled throughout the house of their father :

for they *were* mighty men of valour. A. M. 2989.
B. C. 1015.

7 The sons of Shemaiah; Othni,
and Rephael, and Obed, Elzabad, whose brethren
were strong men, Elihu, and Semachiah.

8 All these of the sons of Obed-edom: they
and their sons and their brethren, able men for
strength for the service, *were* threescore and two
of Obed-edom.

9 And Meshelemiah had sons and brethren,
strong men, eighteen.

10 Also ⁴ Hosah of the children of Merari
had sons; Simri the chief; (*for though* he was
not the firstborn, yet his father made him the
chief;)

11 Hilkiyah the second, Tebaliah the third,
Zechariah the fourth: all the sons and brethren
of Hosah *were* thirteen.

¹ Or, *Shelemaiah*, Ver. 14.—² Or, *Ebiasaph*, Chap. vi. 37; ix.

19.—³ That is, Obed-edom, Chap. xiii. 14.—⁴ Chap. xvi. 38.

NOTES ON CHAPTER XXVI.

Verse 5. *For God blessed him*—With a numerous posterity, and other blessings, for his respect and affection to the ark. The increase and building up of families are owing to the divine blessing. And a great blessing it is to have many children when they are like these, eminent in the service of God.

Verse 6. *They were mighty men of valour*—This clause is divers times mentioned, because their office required both strength and courage: for they were to shut the doors of the temple, one whereof was so great and weighty that in the second temple it re-

quired twenty men to open and shut it. They were also to keep the guard, to keep out all unclean or forbidden persons, to prevent or suppress any tumults or disorders which might happen in the temple or in its courts, to keep the treasures of the temple, (verses 20, 22, 24, 26,) to be *officers and judges over Israel*, (verse 29,) and to manage *every matter pertaining to God and the affairs of the king*, verse 32.

Verse 10. *His father made him the chief*—Not in inheriting the estate, (this was forbidden by the law,) but in this service, for which he was better qualified than his elder brother.

A. M. 2989. B. C. 1015. 12 Among these *were* the divisions of the porters, *even* among the chief men, *having* wards one against another, to minister in the house of the LORD.

13 ¶ And they cast lots, ⁴ as well the small as the great, according to the house of their fathers, for every gate.

14 And the lot eastward fell to ⁵ Shelemiah. Then for Zechariah his son, a wise counsellor, they cast lots; and his lot came out northward.

15 To Obed-edom southward; and to his sons the house of ⁶ Asuppim.

16 To Shuppim and Hosah *the lot came forth* westward, with the gate Shallecheth, by the causeway of the going ^d up, ward against ward.

17 Eastward *were* six Levites, northward four a day, southward four a day, and toward Asuppim, two *and* two.

⁴ Or, as well for the small as for the great.—⁵ Called Meshel-mash. Verse 1.—⁶ Hebrew, gatherings.—¹ Kings x. 5; ² Chron. ix. 4.

Verse 12. *Wards*—Hebrew, having *wards* answerably to their brethren the other Levites, who were divided into twenty-four courses, as the priests also, and the porters were.

Verse 13. *They cast lots, as well the small as the great*—Determining the times and places of their service, not by age or dignity, but merely by lot. *According to the house of their fathers*—A several lot being allowed for each several house. *For every gate*—That it might be known to whom the care of each gate was more especially committed.

Verses 14, 15. *Zechariah his son, a wise counsellor*—Which is noted as an excellent and useful accomplishment for his office, in which there was need of wisdom as well as courage, as may appear by the description of their work, verse 20, &c. See the note on verse 6. *The house of Asuppim*—Or, of gatherings; probably so named from the assembly of the elders, who met there to consult about the affairs of the temple.

Verse 16. *With the gate Shallecheth*—A gate of the court, so called, as some think, because the ashes and filth of the temple were cast out on that side, which was the most convenient for that purpose, because that was a private quarter, the great ways to the temple lying on the other sides. *By the causeway of going up*—By which causeway they went up toward the temple. *Ward against ward*—As one gate was over against another, the west against the east, and the north against the south, so one ward was over against another.

Verse 17. *Eastward were six Levites*—For that, being the chief gate of the temple, required a better guard. *Toward Asuppim*—That is, *the house of Asuppim*, as it is called verse 15, where also it is said to be on the south side; on which there seems to have been a double guard, both belonging to

A. M. 2989. B. C. 1015. 18 At Parbar westward, four at the causeway, *and* two at Parbar.

19 These *are* the divisions of the porters among the sons of Kore, and among the sons of Merari.

20 ¶ And of the Levites, Ahijah *was* ^b over the treasures of the house of God, and over the treasures of the ⁷ dedicated things.

21 *As concerning* the sons of ⁸ Laadan; the sons of the Gershonite Laadan, chief fathers, *even* of Laadan the Gershonite, *were* ⁹ Jehieli.

22 The sons of Jehieli; Zetham, and Joel his brother, *which were* over the treasures of the house of the LORD.

23 Of the Amramites, *and* the Izharites, the Hebronites, *and* the Uzzielites:

24 And ^o Shebuel the son of Gershom, the son of Moses, *was* ruler of the treasures.

^b Chapter xxviii. 12; Malachi iii. 10.—⁷ Heb. *holy things*. ⁸ Or, Libni, Chap. vi. 17.—⁹ Or, Jehiel, Chap. xxiii. 8; xxix. 8. ^c Chap. xxiii. 16.

Obed-edom, (verse 15,) one at the south gate, and the other at Asuppim, where possibly the sacred treasures, mentioned verse 20, &c., were laid up, and therefore a particular guard was necessary. See on verse 15.

Verse 18. *At Parbar westward*—Or, *As concerning Parbar*, which was another gate, or some building on the western quarter of the temple. *Four at the causeway*—Which led to Parbar. *And two at Parbar*—At the gate or house itself; by which it may seem that this was a place of some importance, either the vessels of the temple, or some part of the treasures of God's house, being kept there.

Verse 20. *The treasures of the house of God, and the treasures of the dedicated things*—These seem to be two different kinds of treasures, the former containing the sacred vessels and other treasures, which by God's command were appropriated to the maintenance of the house; the latter only those things which had been freely given or dedicated to God.

Verse 23. *Of the Amramites*—Or, *Concerning the Amramites, &c.* The meaning is, the persons following were of these, or the most of these families. Only here is none of the family of the Uzzielites; either because that family was now extinct, whence it is that we read no more of them in the Scripture, but only in this place, and Num. iii. 27, or because there was none of them fit to be employed and trusted in these matters.

Verse 24. *Shebuel, the son of Moses*—That is, descended from Moses; *was ruler of the treasures*—The chief over all the treasures mentioned before or afterward, as his very title shows, which is peculiarly given to him, and to none of the rest. This is the sole honour that we read of hitherto conferred upon any of the posterity of Moses.

A. M. 2989. B. C. 1015. 25 And his brethren by Eliezer; Rehabiah his son, and Jeshaiah his son, and Joram his son, and Zichri his son, and ^dShelomith his son.

26 Which Shelomith and his brethren were over all the treasures of the dedicated things, which David the king, and the chief fathers, the captains over thousands and hundreds, and the captains of the host, had dedicated.

27 ¹¹ Out of the spoils won in battles did they dedicate to maintain the house of the LORD.

28 And all that Samuel ^o the seer, and Saul the son of Kish, and Abner the son of Ner, and Joab the son of Zeruiah, had dedicated; and whosoever had dedicated *any thing*, it was under the hand of Shelomith, and of his brethren.

29 ¶ Of the Izharites, Chenaniah and his

sons were for the outward business over Israel, for ^f officers and judges. A. M. 2989. B. C. 1015

30 And of the Hebronites, Hashabiah and his brethren, men of valour, a thousand and seven hundred, were ¹² officers among them of Israel on this side Jordan westward in all the business of the LORD, and in the service of the king.

31 Among the Hebronites was ^g Jerijah the chief, even among the Hebronites according to the generations of his fathers. In the fortieth year of the reign of David they were sought for, and there were found among them mighty men of valour ^h at Jazer of Gilead.

32 And his brethren, men of valour, were two thousand and seven hundred chief fathers, whom King David made rulers over the Reubenites, the Gadites, and the half-tribe of Manasseh, for every matter pertaining to God, and ¹³ affairs ⁱ of the king.

^d Chapter xxxiii. 18.—¹¹ Hebrew, *Out of the battles and spoils.*
^o 1 Sam. ix. 9.—^f Chap. xxxiii. 4.

^g Heb. *over the charge.*—^h Chap. xxxiii. 19.—^h Josh. xxi. 19.
¹³ Heb. *thing.*—ⁱ 2 Chron. xix. 11.

Verse 27. *To maintain the house of the Lord*—Hebrew, *To strengthen it*: either to make that building strong and substantial by these and other charges; or, rather, to repair it when it should be built; for which they might the rather take peculiar care, because it was likely that every one would contribute to the building of the temple, and there could be no want for that use: but few would provide for the repairs of it, when by the injury of men or time it should receive any damage.

Verse 28. *Whosoever had dedicated any thing, it was under the hand of Shelomith, &c.*—Who is particularly named here, and verse 26, because they were chiefly committed to his trust, he being, it seems, a person of eminent wisdom and faithfulness.

Verse 29. *Chenaniah, &c., were for the outward business*—That is, the business without the city of Jerusalem; which neither belonged to the singers nor the porters, whose business was within the city. *For officers and judges*—To be assessors with the ordinary judges in the several cities and towns, to determine questions and controversies which might arise among them. And the reason why the Levites were intrusted with these matters was, because the common law of Israel, by which they had and held all their rights, was no other than the law of God, whereof the priests and Levites, being the established interpreters, must needs be the most proper judges of things depending thereon.

Verse 30. *In all business of the Lord*—In all things which concerned the house or worship of God; to take care that such moneys as were given toward

building the temple, or toward the sacrifices and other holy ministrations, should be gathered and received, and faithfully sent up to Jerusalem; and to see the execution of all the laws of God among the people. *In the service of the king, &c.*—They served the king in the execution of his decrees, by which the several rights of the king and people were established. And as the king was the principal person intrusted with the execution of God's laws, so these Levites chiefly were his eyes, by which he saw his people's transgressions, and his hands, by which he inflicted due censures upon them for their miscarriages.

Verse 31. *In the fortieth year of the reign of David*—His last year, in which he made all the orders of families and officers recorded in these chapters. We should be so much the more diligent in doing good, *as we see the day approaching.* If we live not to enjoy the fruit of our labours, let us not grudge it to them that come after us.

Verse 32. *Two thousand and seven hundred chief fathers*—Which is a very great number to be employed about two tribes and a half, when all the rest of the tribes had only one thousand seven hundred, (verse 30,) besides those under Chenaniah, of whom see on verse 29. But the reason hereof is plain, because the tribes without Jordan, being more remote from the king's court, and from the place of public and solemn worship, needed more than ordinary help to instruct and keep them in the practice of true religion, and the worship of God, and obedience to their king.

CHAPTER XXVII.

The captains for every month of the year, 1-15. The princes of the several tribes, 16-24. The officers of the court, 25-34.

A. M. 2989. B. C. 1015. **N**OW the children of Israel after their number, *to wit*, the chief fathers and captains of thousands and hundreds, and their officers that served the king in any matter of the courses, which came in and went out month by month throughout all the months of the year, of every course *were* twenty and four thousand.

2 Over the first course for the first month *was* ^a Jashobeam the son of Zabdiel: and in his course *were* twenty and four thousand.

3 Of the children of Perez *was* the chief of all the captains of the host for the first month.

4 And over the course of the second month *was* ¹ Dodai an Ahohite, and of his course *was* Mikloth also the ruler: in his course likewise *were* twenty and four thousand.

5 The third captain of the host for the third month *was* Benaiah the son of Jehoiada, a ² chief priest: and in his course *were* twenty and four thousand.

6 This *is that* Benaiah, *who was* ^b mighty among the thirty, and above thirty: and in his course *was* Ammizabad his son.

7 The fourth *captain* for the fourth month *was* ^o Asahel the brother of Joab, and Zebadiah his son after him: and in his course *were* twenty and four thousand.

8 The fifth *captain* for the fifth month *was* Shamhuth the Izrahite: and in his course *were* twenty and four thousand.

9 The sixth *captain* for the sixth month *was* ^d Ira the son of Ikkesheh the Tekoite: and in his course *were* twenty and four thousand.

^a 2 Sam. xxiii. 8; Chap. xi. 11.—¹ Or, Dodo, 2 Sam. xxiii. 9.
² Or, principal officer, 1 Kings iv. 5.

^b 2 Sam. xxiii. 20, 22; Chap. xi. 22, &c.—^c 2 Sam. xxiii. 24; Chap. xi. 26.—^d Chap. xi. 28.

NOTES ON CHAPTER XXVII.

Verse 1. *Now the children of Israel, &c.*—After the settlement of sacred affairs, we have here an account of the manner in which the army, or militia, as we may call it, was disposed. It was distributed into twelve legions, each consisting of twenty-four thousand men, who were commanded by one of the *chief of the fathers*; under whom there were *captains of thousands*, such as we now call colonels; and then under them *captains of hundreds*. Each of these legions attended one month, for the security of the king and kingdom; at the end of which they were dismissed, and another legion, with their general, succeeded: so that their course came but once in a year, and that only for one month, which was no considerable burden to them. *That served the king in any matter of the courses*—In all the business in which the king had occasion for these persons. *Which came in and went out, &c.*—Who, being armed and mustered, were to wait upon the king, at Jerusalem, or other places, as the king should see fit. By this order near three hundred thousand of his people were instructed and exercised in the use of their arms, and fitted for the defence of their king and kingdom when it should be needful, and in the mean time sufficient provision was made against any sudden tumults or irruptions of enemies. And this monthly course was contrived that the burden of it might be easy, and equally distributed among the people.

Verses 2, 3. *Over the first course was Jashobeam*—Of whom see 2 Sam. xxiii. 8; 1 Chron. xi. 11. *Of the children of Perez*—Or, of Pharez, of the posterity of Judah, Gen. xvi. 12. This seems to be intended of Jashobeam, and to be mentioned as a reason why he was the chief. *Chief of all the captains*

of the host—Whose several names here follow. The meaning is, he was chief in dignity and precedency, but not in power and authority; for these captains were equal in power, and Joab was their general.

Verse 4. *And Mikloth also was the ruler*—Either, 1st, The captain of this course after the death of this Dodai, as Zebadiah was after Asahel, verse 7. Or, 2d, His lieutenant, or deputy, in case of his necessary absence. Or, rather, 3d, One of the officers of his course; who seems here to be particularly named, as a person then of great note and eminence.

Verses 5, 6. *Jehoiada, a chief priest*—Or rather, a *chief prince*, as the Hebrew word יְהוֹיָדָא, *cohen*, often signifies. For it is certain neither Benaiah nor his father was high-priest or second priest. *In his course was Ammizabad his son*—Who seems to have been his father's lieutenant, because his father was captain of the king's guard, (2 Sam. xviii. 18.) and therefore needed a deputy in the one or other place.

Verse 7. *Asahel the brother of Joab*—As Asahel was killed before all Israel had acknowledged David as king, it is likely that this course was called the course of Asahel, in honour to his memory, it being commanded by his son. Poole, however, thinks that the foundation of this project was laid while David was in Hebron, and that then his forces were divided into twenty-four courses, under twenty-four chief commanders, whereof Asahel was one, only that the number of his forces was then much less than that which is here mentioned: but, he adds, when David was fully settled in his whole kingdom, the design was perfected, and his soldiers were increased to this number. *Zebadiah his son after him*—That is, after his death, of which see 2 Sam. ii. 23. *And in his course were twenty-four thousand*

A. M. 2989. 10 The seventh *captain* for the
B. C. 1015. seventh month was ^e Helez the Pe-
lonite, of the children of Ephraim : and in his
course were twenty and four thousand.

11 The eighth *captain* for the eighth month
was ^f Sibbecai the Hushathite, of the Zar-
hites : and in his course were twenty and four
thousand.

12 The ninth *captain* for the ninth month was
^g Abiezer the Anetothite, of the Benjamites : and
in his course were twenty and four thousand.

13 The tenth *captain* for the tenth month
was ^h Maharai the Netophathite, of the Zar-
hites : and in his course were twenty and four
thousand.

14 The eleventh *captain* for the eleventh
month was ⁱ Benaiah the Pirathonite, of the
children of Ephraim : and in his course were
twenty and four thousand.

15 The twelfth *captain* for the twelfth month
was ^j Heldai the Netophathite, of Othniel : and
in his course were twenty and four thousand.

16 ¶ Furthermore over the tribes of Israel :
the ruler of the Reubenites was Eliezer the son
of Zichri : of the Simeonites, Shephatiah the
son of Maachah :

17 Of the Levites, ^k Hashabiah the son of
Kemuel : of the Aaronites, Zadok :

^a Chap. xi. 27.—^b 2 Sam. xxi. 18 ; Chap. xi. 29.—^c Chap.
xi. 28.—^d 2 Samuel xxiii. 28 ; Chapter xi. 30.—^e Chapter
xi. 31.

—Not Asahel's, for in his time they were not so numer-
ous, but Zebadiah's his son.

Verse 16. *Over the tribes of Israel: the ruler, &c.*
—These were the *princes of the tribes*, the constant
rulers of the tribes; who seem to have had a supe-
rior power to these twenty-four captains, and there-
fore are named before them, being probably the
king's chief counsellors and assistants in the great
affairs of his kingdom.

Verse 22. *Of the tribes of Israel*—Of the most
of the tribes, not of all: for Gad is omitted, probably
because that tribe was joined with the Reubenites
under one prince.

Verse 23. *David took not the number from twenty
years old and under*—But only of those who were
above the age of twenty years, or (which is the same
thing) those that *drew the sword*, 1 Chron. xxi. 5.
Because the Lord had said, &c.—And therefore to
number them all, both above and under twenty
years old, had been both an infinite trouble and a
tempting of God, or a questioning the truth of his
promises.

Verse 24. *Joab began to number*—Namely, all
from twenty years old and upward, as David com-
manded him. *But he finished not*—For Levi and

18 Of Judah, ^l Elihu, *one of the bre-* A. M. 2989.
thren of David : of Issachar, Omri B. C. 1015.
the son of Michael :

19 Of Zebulun, Ishmaiah the son of Oba-
diah : of Naphtali, Jerimoth the son of Azriel :

20 Of the children of Ephraim, Hoshea the
son of Azaziah : of the half-tribe of Manasseh,
Joel the son of Pedaiah :

21 Of the half-*tribe* of Manasseh in Gilead,
Iddo the son of Zechariah : of Benjamin,
Jaasiel the son of Abner :

22 Of Dan, Azareel the son of Jeroham.
These were the princes of the tribes of Israel.

23 ¶ But David took not the number of them
from twenty years old and under : because
^m the LORD had said he would increase Israel
like to the stars of the heavens.

24 Joab the son of Zeruiah began ⁿ About
to number, but he finished not, be- B. C. 1017.
cause ^o there fell wrath for it against Israel ;
neither ^p was the number put in the account of
the chronicles of King David.

25 ¶ And over the king's treasures ^q About
was Azmaveth the son of Adiel : and B. C. 1015.
over the store-houses in the fields, in the cities,
and in the villages, and in the castles, was Je-
honathan the son of Uziah :

26 And over them that did the work of the

^r Or, *Heled*, Chap. xi. 30.—^s Chap. xxvi. 30.—^t 1 Samuel
xvi. 6, *Eliab*.—^u Gen. xv. 5.—^v 2 Sam. xxiv. 15 ; Chapter
xxi. 7.—^w Heb. *ascended*.

Benjamin he counted not, 1 Chron. xxi. 6. *Because
there fell wrath for it against Israel*—While he was
doing the work, which was one reason that made him
desist. The Hebrew however is, *And there fell, &c.*
Though David numbered them with caution and
limitation, as was observed before, yet this did not
hinder God's wrath from falling upon Israel for this
sin. *Neither was the number put in the chronicles
of King David*—An account of the number, as far
as he went, was given by Joab to the king; but the
king, being sensible of his error, would not have it
recorded in the public registers of the kingdom, as
other things of daily occurrence were. Yet the
memory of it is preserved in these books, to teach
all posterity not to put their trust in the arm of flesh.

Verse 25. *Over the king's treasures*—Of gold, or
silver, or other things of great price, which, for
greater security, were kept in Jerusalem, and in the
king's palace; and thither the tribute-money also
was sent, and committed to Azmaveth's care. *Over
the store-houses in the fields*—Of the fruits of the
earth, or that share of them which belonged to the
king, which were laid up in the *fields, or cities, or
villages, or castles*, as there was convenience and
occasion.

A. M. 2999. field for tillage of the ground was
B. C. 1015. Ezri the son of Chelub :

27 And over the vineyards was Shimei the Ramathite: ⁵over the increase of the vineyards for the wine-cellars was Zabdi the Shiphmite :

28 And over the olive-trees and the sycamore-trees that were in the low plains was Baal-hanan the Gederite: and over the cellars of oil was Joash :

29 And over the herds that fed in Sharon was Shitrai the Sharonite: and over the herds that were in the valleys was Shaphat the son of Adlai.

30 Over the camels also was Obil the Ish-

⁵ Heb. over that which was of the vineyards.—⁶ Or, secretary.
⁷ Or, Hachmonite.

Verse 27. *Over the vineyards*—Over the workmen and labourers in the vineyards; as the next officer is over the fruit of the vineyards. In like manner, one man was over the labourers in the fields, (verse 26.) and another over the fruits of the fields put into stores.

Verses 29, 30. *Over the herds that fed in Sharon*—A place famous for its fruitfulness, (see Isa. xxxiii. 9; xxxv. 2,) which lay about Lidda and Joppa. David seems to have kept great store of cattle in his pastures, particularly in this place. *Over the camels was Obil the Ishmaelite*—An Ishmaelite was the fittest person to look after the breed of camels, because that country abounded with them, and they best understood their nature. *And over the asses, &c.*—This was a great part of men's riches in old times.

Verse 31. *All these were the rulers of the substance which was David's*—It is observable, here are no officers for state, none for sport, no master of the ceremonies, or of the hounds, but all for substance, agreeable to the simplicity and plainness of those times. David was a great soldier, a great scholar, and a great prince; and yet a great husband of his

maelite: and over the asses was Jeh- A. M. 2999.
deiah the Meronothite: B. C. 1015.

31 And over the flocks was Jaziz the Hagerite. All these were the rulers of the substance which was King David's.

32 Also Jonathan, David's uncle, was a counsellor, a wise man, and a ⁶scribe: and Jehiel the ⁷son of Hachmoni was with the king's sons :

33 And ⁸Ahithophel was the king's counsellor: and ⁹Hushai the Archite was the king's companion :

34 And after Ahithophel was Jehoiada the son of Benaiah, and ¹⁰Abiathar: and the general of the king's army was ¹¹Joab.

⁸ 2 Sam. xv. 12.—⁹ 2 Sam. xv. 37; xvi. 16.—¹⁰ 1 Kings i. 7.
¹¹ Chap. xi. 6.

estate. Those magistrates who would have their subjects industrious, must themselves be examples of application to business.

Verse 32. *A wise man and a scribe*—Either one learned in the laws of God, which were also the laws of the land, or the king's secretary. *Jehiel was with the king's sons*—As their tutor or governor.

Verses 33, 34. *Ahithophel was the king's counsellor*—The person whose counsel, in matters of state, the king most prized and followed. *Hushai was the king's companion*—Or his friend, (2 Sam. xv. 37,) the person whom he trusted with his secrets, and whose conversation was most pleasant and acceptable to him. Observe, a cunning man was his counsellor: but an honest man was his friend. *After Ahithophel*—After his death, these were his chief counsellors. Much of the wisdom of princes is seen in the choice of their ministry. It appears that those whom David made choice of to attend upon and advise him, were such as were peculiarly eminent for wisdom and integrity. But though he had these trusty counsellors about him, he preferred his Bible before them all, making the Lord's testimonies his delight and his counsellors, Psa. cxix. 24.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

David declares to a general assembly of the states summoned to meet him, that God had appointed Solomon to succeed him, and to build the temple, 1-7. Exhorts the people and Solomon to cleave to God, 8-10. Delivers to him the model and materials for the temple, 11-19. Encourages him to begin and finish the work, 20, 21.

A. M. 2999. AND David assembled all the prin- A. M. 2999.
ces of Israel, ^a the princes of the B. C. 1015.

^a Chap. xxvii. 16.

tribes, and ^b the captains of the compa- A. M. 2999.
nies that ministered to the king by B. C. 1015.

^b Chap. xxvii. 1.

NOTES ON CHAPTER XXVIII.

Verse 1. *David assembled all the princes, &c.*—A great deal of business David had done in his day,

and had served his generation according to the will of God. But now the time draws nigh that he must die, and the nearer he comes to his end, the more

A. M. 2989. course, and the captains over the thou-
B. C. 1015. sands, and captains over the hundreds,
and ° the stewards over all the substance and
¹ possession of the king, ² and of his sons, with
the ³ officers, and with ⁴ the mighty men, and
with all the valiant men unto Jerusalem.

2 Then David the king stood up upon his feet, and said, Hear me, my brethren, and my people: *As for me, ° I had* in my heart to build a house of rest for the ark of the covenant of the LORD, and for ʳ the footstool of our God, and had made ready for the building:

3 But God said unto me, ʳ Thou shalt not build a house for my name, because thou *hast been* a man of war, and hast shed ⁴ blood.

4 Howbeit the LORD God of Israel ʰ chose me before all the house of my father to be king over Israel for ever: for he hath chosen ¹ Judah *to be* the ruler; and of the house of Judah, ² the house of my father; and ¹ among the sons of my father he liked me to make *me* king over all Israel:

5 ʳ And of all my sons, (for the LORD hath given me many sons,) ² he hath chosen Solomon

° Chapter xxvii. 25.—¹ Or, *cattle*.—² Or, *and his sons*.
³ Or, *eunuchs*.—⁴ Chap. xi. 10.—⁵ 2 Samuel vii. 2; Psalm cxxxii. 3, 5.—⁶ Psa. xcix. 5; cxxxii. 7.—⁷ 2 Sam. vii. 5, 13; 1 Kings v. 3; Chap. xvii. 4; xxii. 8.—⁸ Heb. *bloods*.—⁹ 1 Sam. xvi. 7-13.—¹ Gen. xlix. 8; Chap. v. 2; Psa. lx. 7; lxxviii. 69.—² 1 Sam. xxvi. 1.—³ 1 Sam. xvi. 12.

busy he is, and does his work with all his might. He is now recovered from the weakness, mentioned 1 Kings i. 1. He therefore improves his recovery, as giving him an opportunity of doing God and his country a little more service.

Verse 2. *Then the king stood up upon his feet*—Out of reverence to God, and respect to this great and honourable assembly. *And said, Hear me, my brethren*—So he calls the princes and chief rulers, both because they had a share with him, though under him, in the government; and in compliance with the divine command, that *the king should not be lifted up above his brethren*, Deut. xvii. 20. *A house of rest*—A place where it might be fixed, and no more removed from place to place, as it had been. *For the footstool*—A house for the ark is here styled, *a house for the footstool of our God*. Heaven is his throne: the earth and the most magnificent temples thereon are but his footstool. So much difference is there between the manifestations of his glory, in the upper and in the lower world!

Verses 6, 7. *He shall build my house, &c.*—So was he a figure of him that was to come, who is both the founder and the foundation of the gospel temple. *I will establish his kingdom for ever*—This was to have its accomplishment in the kingdom of the Messiah which shall continue in his hands

my son to sit upon the throne of the A. M. 2989.
kingdom of the LORD over Israel. B. C. 1015.

6 And he said unto me, ° Solomon thy son, he shall build my house and my courts: for I have chosen him *to be* my son, and I will be his father.

7 Moreover I will establish his kingdom for ever, ʳ if he be ⁵ constant to do my commandments and my judgments, as at this day.

8 Now therefore in the sight of all Israel, the congregation of the LORD, and in the audience of our God, keep and seek for all the commandments of the LORD your God: that ye may possess this good land, and leave *it* for an inheritance for your children after you for ever.

9 ¶ And thou, Solomon my son, ʳ know thou the God of thy father, and serve him with a perfect heart, and ʳ with a willing mind: for ʳ the LORD searcheth all hearts, and understandeth all the imaginations of the thoughts: ʳ if thou seek him, he will be found of thee; but if thou forsake him, he will cast thee off for ever.

° Chap. iii. 1, &c.; xxiii. 1.—¹ Chap. xxii. 9.—² 2 Sam. vii. 13; Chap. xxii. 9, 10; 2 Chron. i. 9.—³ Chap. xxii. 13. ⁴ Heb. *strong*.—⁵ Jeremiah ix. 24; Hos. iv. 1; John xvii. 3. ⁶ 2 Kings xx. 3; Psa. ci. 2.—⁷ 1 Sam. xvi. 7; 1 Kings viii. 39; Chap. xxix. 17; Psa. vii. 9; cxxxix. 2; Prov. xvii. 3; Jer. xi. 20; xvii. 10; xx. 12; Rev. ii. 23.—⁸ 2 Chron. xv. 2.

through all the ages of time, (Isa. ix. 7; Luke i. 33,) and shall then be delivered up to God, even the Father, with whom, however, he shall continue to reign to all eternity. *If he be constant to do my commandments*—The promise is absolute with regard to the Messiah, but conditional with regard to Solomon. *As at this day*—As he hath begun, and hitherto continued to do, in some good measure. If we are constant in our duty, then, and not otherwise, we may expect the continuance of his favour.

Verse 8. *In the audience of our God*—I exhort and charge you every one, calling God, who is here present, and this congregation, wherein all Israel are present by their representatives, for witnesses against you, if you do not follow my counsel. *Keep and seek for all the commandments of the Lord*—Keep those commands which you know, and seek for or search into what you are yet ignorant of, that you may distinctly understand the whole will of God, and seriously give yourselves to the practice of it. God's commandments cannot be kept without great care. And it concerns those who profess religion, as they regard the favour of God, or even their reputation with men, to be faithful to their profession.

Verse 9. *Know thou the God of thy father*—Thou knowest that there is a God, a living and true God, and that the God of thy father is that God: thou

A. M. 2989. 10 Take heed now; ^u for the LORD
B. C. 1015. hath chosen thee to build a house for
the sanctuary: be strong, and do *it*.

11 ¶ Then David gave to Solomon his son
^r the pattern of the porch, and of the houses
thereof, and of the treasuries thereof, and of the
upper chambers thereof, and of the inner par-

^u Verse 6.—→ Exod. xxv. 40; Verse 19.

knowest not only *that he is*, but *what he is*: that he is a Spirit, an infinite and eternal Spirit, self-existent, and therefore independent of, and supreme over, all other beings, who are only the workmanship of his hands. Thou knowest that he is possessed of all possible perfections, of unsearchable wisdom, of almighty power, of unfathomable goodness, of inviolable truth, of impartial justice, of unspeakable mercy and love: that he is thy Creator, Preserver, and Benefactor, to whom thou art indebted for all thy powers and faculties of body and mind; for thy life, and breath, and all things: that he is thy Redeemer and Saviour, thy Governor and Judge. But know him as he makes himself known to his people when he *gives them a heart to know him*, (Jer. xxiv. 7,) and manifests himself to them as he does not to the world. Know him as a sin-pardoning God, *merciful to thy unrighteousness, and remembering thy sins and iniquities no more*, Jer. xxxi. 34. Know him so as to be *acquainted, intimately acquainted, and at peace with him*, Job xxii. 21; so as to love and live to him: for God is love, and God is holy, and he that *loveth him not, knoweth him not*, 1 John iv. 7, 8; and, *he that saith he knoweth him and loveth him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him*, 1 John ii. 4. And *serve him*—That is, worship and obey him, and endeavour to serve and promote his honour and interest in the world, which is the interest of piety and virtue, of truth and grace. *With a perfect heart*—Not only with a *sincere* and *upright* heart, but with an *entire* and undivided heart, or with thy *whole* heart, being fervent in his love, and zealous in his service, and therefore with a heart entirely changed and made new, Ezek. xxxvi. 26. And *with a willing mind*—Not with reluctance, as if his service were a bondage and drudgery; but with alacrity, delight, and joy, and from a principle of love to him and his service, knowing by experience that it is *perfect freedom*. *For the Lord searcheth all hearts*—And as he has made it the indispensable duty of all ranks and conditions of mankind, of kings as well as their subjects, to know, love, and serve him, in sincerity and truth; so he takes notice, and perfectly knows, whether they do so or not; nor can any one impose on him by false pretences. If thou, Solomon my son, only take up a form or profession of religion to please me and others; or if thy obedience to God be insincere, thou mayest indeed deceive man, but thou canst not deceive him, for he searcheth the desires and designs, the counsels and intentions, nay, the thoughts and imaginations, and all the motions of the heart. If

lours thereof, and of the place of the
mercy-seat, A. M. 2989.
B. C. 1015.

12 And the pattern ⁶ of all that he had by the Spirit, of the courts of the house of the LORD, and of all the chambers round about, ⁷ of the treasuries of the house of God, and of the treasuries of the dedicated things:

⁶ Heb. of all that was with him.—→ Chap. xxvi. 20.

thou seek him—In the way he hath appointed, by prayer, meditation upon, faith in, and obedience to, his word; if thou seek him sincerely, perseveringly, and with all thy heart; *he will be found of thee*—Will manifest himself to thee by his holy and enlightening Spirit, will make himself known to thee as thy friend, and father, and God in covenant: yea, *he that commanded light to shine out of darkness, will shine into thy heart, and give thee the light of the knowledge of his glory*; so that, beholding his glory with open face, thou shalt be changed into his image, and shalt resemble the God thou lovest and servest, 2 Cor. iii. 18. *But if*, after having known, and loved, and begun to serve him aright, *thou forsake him*—Desert his love and service, and turn from following him; *he will cast thee off for ever*—Notwithstanding his promises to me and my seed, and that great honour and favour which he hath showed thee. Reader, observe, this advice and charge, given by David to his son Solomon, is given by the Holy Ghost to thee, and every human creature into whose hands these divine oracles come. O! see that thou attend to it, and make it thy chief care, and the constant business of thy life, to comply with and reduce it to practice.

Verse 10. *A house for a sanctuary*—That is, a sanctuary, or holy place, for the ark to dwell in. *Be strong, and do it*—Take courage and resolution to break through all difficulties, troubles, discouragements, and oppositions, which thou mayest possibly meet with.

Verse 11. *David gave Solomon the pattern of the porch*—To wit, of the temple, which is necessarily to be understood. *And of the houses thereof*—The houses of the temple, namely, of the *holy place*, and the *holy of holies*. *And of the inner parlours thereof*—Those rooms which were made *against the walls of the house round about*, 1 Kings vi. 5. *And of the place of the mercy-seat*—In what particular part of the holy of holies it was to be placed.

Verse 12. *The pattern of all he had by the Spirit*—By the Spirit of God, as is evident from verse 19. All the particulars of the tabernacle built by Moses were suggested to him by God's Spirit, and it is not credible that God would use less care and exactness in the building of this far more glorious and durable work. All this, it seems, was given him in writing, probably by the ministry of an angel. The temple was to be a sacred thing, a type of Christ, of his church, and of heaven. Therefore it was not to be contrived by man's in-

A. M. 2989. 13 Also for the courses of the priests
B. C. 1015.

and the Levites, and for all the work of the service of the house of the LORD, and for all the vessels of service in the house of the LORD.

14 *He gave* of gold by weight for *things* of gold, for all instruments of all manner of service; *silver also* for all instruments of silver by weight, for all instruments of every kind of service:

15 Even the weight for the candlesticks of gold, and for their lamps of gold, by weight for every candlestick, and for the lamps thereof: and for the candlesticks of silver by weight, *both* for the candlestick, and *also* for the lamps thereof, according to the use of every candlestick.

16 And by weight *he gave* gold for the tables of show-bread, for every table: and *likewise* silver for the tables of silver:

17 Also pure gold for the flesh-hooks, and the bowls, and the cups: and for the golden basins *he gave gold* by weight for every basin: and *likewise silver* by weight for every basin of silver:

^a Exodus xxv. 18-22; 1 Samuel iv. 4; 1 Kings vi. 23, &c.
^b Exod. xxv. 40; Verses 11, 12.

vention, but to be framed by divine institution. So Christ the true temple, the church, the gospel temple, and heaven, the everlasting temple, are all framed according to the divine counsels, and the plan laid before the world began. It is supposed, the tabernacle of Moses, with all its utensils, being wanted no more, was laid up here.

Verses 15, 16. *According to the use of every candlestick*—Whether they were to be fixed in one place, whereof there were ten in the holy place, or to be carried from place to place. *Gold for the tables*—There were divers tables to be used about the show-bread; but one of them seems to have been of more eminence than the rest, and therefore it is commonly called *the table of the show-bread*, in the singular number.

Verse 18. *For the altar of incense refined gold*—Purer than any of the rest. For that was typical of the intercession of Christ, than which nothing can be more pure and perfect. *The chariot of the cherubim*—Which Solomon was to make, (for those which were fastened to the mercy-seat were made by Moses long before,) which he fitly compares to a *chariot*, because within them God is said to *sit* and to *dwell*. And because a *chariot* is made to carry a

18 And for the altar of incense re- A. M. 2989.
fined gold by weight: and gold for B. C. 1015.

the pattern of the chariot of the ² cherubims, that spread out *their wings*, and covered the ark of the covenant of the LORD.

19 All *this*, said David, ^a the LORD made me understand in writing by *his hand* upon me, *even* all the works of this pattern.

20 ¶ And David said to Solomon his son, ^b Be strong, and of good courage, and do *it*: fear not, nor be dismayed, for the LORD God, *even* my God, *will be* with thee; ^c he will not fail thee, nor forsake thee, until thou hast finished all the work for the service of the house of the LORD.

21 And behold, ^d the courses of the priests and the Levites, *even they shall be with thee* for all the service of the house of God: and *there shall be* with thee for all manner of workmanship ^e every willing skilful man, for any manner of service: also the princes and all the people *will be* wholly at thy commandment.

^b Deut. xxxi. 7; Josh. i. 6, 9; Chap. xxii. 13.—^c Josh. i. 5.
^d Chap. xxiv.; xxv.; xxvi.—^e Exod. xxxv. 25; xxxvi. 1.

person from place to place, this expression may be used to intimate, that God was not so fixed to them by the building of this temple, but that he would remove from them if they forsook him. *Covered the ark*—Not above it, for that was done by Moses's cherubim, but before it, to keep it from the eyes of the high-priest, when he entered into the most holy place.

Verse 19. *The Lord made me understand in writing*—The meaning is, either, 1st, That God revealed this to Samuel, or Gad, or Nathan, or some other man of God, to be by them put in writing, and communicated to David: or, 2d, That God did, as it were, by his own hand and finger, (wherewith he wrote the ten commandments,) write these things upon the table of his mind.

Verse 20. *The Lord, even my God, will be with thee*—He whom I have chosen and served, who has all along been with me, and prospered me. I recommend thee to him; he will be with thee, to strengthen, direct, and prosper thee. The God that owned our fathers, and carried them through the services of their day, will, in like manner, if we are faithful to him, go along with us in our day, and will never fail us. God never leaves any, unless they first leave him.

CHAPTER XXIX.

David exhorts them to contribute toward building and furnishing the temple, 1-5. They do contribute accordingly, 6-9. He offers up solemn prayers, praises, and sacrifices to God, 10-21. Solomon is enthroned, 22-25. David finishes his course, 26-30.

A. M. 2989.
B. C. 1015. **FURTHERMORE** David the king said unto all the congregation, Solomon my son, whom God alone hath chosen, is yet ^a young and tender, and the work is great; for the palace is not for man, but for the LORD God.

2 Now I have prepared with all my might for the house of my God the gold for *things to be made* of gold, and the silver for *things* of silver, and the brass for *things* of brass, the iron for *things* of iron, and wood for *things* of wood; ^b onyx-stones, and stones to be set, glistening stones, and of divers colours, and all manner of precious stones, and marble stones in abundance.

3 Moreover, because I have set my affection to the house of my God, I have of mine own proper good, of gold and silver, which I have given to the house of my God, over and above all that I have prepared for the holy house.

4 Even three thousand talents of gold, of the gold of ^c Ophir, and seven thousand talents of

refined silver, to overlay the walls of the houses *withal*:
A. M. 2989.
B. C. 1015.

5 The gold for *things* of gold, and the silver for *things* of silver, and for all manner of work to be made by the hands of artificers. And who then is willing ¹ to consecrate his service this day unto the LORD?

6 ¶ Then ^d the chief of the fathers and princes of the tribes of Israel, and the captains of thousands and of hundreds, with ^e the rulers of the king's work, offered willingly,

7 And gave for the service of the house of God of gold five thousand talents and ten thousand drachms, and of silver ten thousand talents, and of brass eighteen thousand talents, and one hundred thousand talents of iron.

8 And they with whom *precious* stones were found gave *them* to the treasure of the house of the LORD, by the hand of ^f Jehiel the Gershonite.

9 Then the people rejoiced, for that they offered willingly, because with perfect heart they ^g offered willingly to the LORD: and David the king also rejoiced with great joy.

^a 1 Kings iii. 7; Chap. xxii. 5; Prov. iv. 3.—^b Isa. liv. 11; Rev. xxi. 18, &c.—^c 1 Kings ix. 28.

¹ Heb. to fill his hand.—^d Chap. xxvii. 1.—^e Chap. xxvii. 25, &c.—^f Chap. xxvi. 21.—^g 2 Cor. ix. 7.

NOTES ON CHAPTER XXIX.

Verse 1. *Furthermore, David said unto all the congregation, &c.*—He excites them to assist his son by divers considerations. 1st, That he was a person chosen by God for this work. 2d, That nevertheless he much needed their help, because he was but a youth. 3d, That the work itself was to be very magnificent, suitable to the Divine Majesty, who was to dwell therein, or to be represented there, by a glorious light and splendour, the symbol of his presence. And the more that was contributed toward the fabric, the more magnificent it would be, and would better answer the end designed. And, 4th, That he had set them an example, and made great preparations for, and given great donations to, the work.

Verses 2-4. *I have prepared with all my might*—He did not intend to throw all the burden upon them, nor that it should be built wholly by the contributions of the people, although intended for their benefit; but he himself contributed to the erection of it to the uttermost of his power. Work for God must be done with all our might, or we shall bring nothing to pass in it. *Onyx-stones, and stones to be set*—Diamonds, or emeralds, or rubies, or any of those precious stones which are usually set in rings

or such things. *Of my own proper good*—Of that which I had reserved as a peculiar treasure for my own use, after I had separated those things which I had devoted to God. *Three thousand talents of the gold of Ophir*—Which was accounted the best and purest gold. By this it appears probable that the hundred thousand talents, mentioned chap. xxii. 14, were of an inferior kind of gold. *To overlay the walls of the house*—The walls of the temple with gold, and of the rooms adjoining to it with silver, beaten out into plates, and put upon the cedar and other materials in different places, as was judged most fit.

Verse 5. *Who then is willing to consecrate to this service?*—To offer an offering, as I have done. Hebrew, *to fill his hand unto the Lord*. They that engage themselves in the service of God will have their hands full: there is work enough for the whole man in that service.

Verse 9. *The people rejoiced*—Because this was both an effect of God's grace in them, an eminent token of God's favour to them, and a pledge that this long-desired work would receive a certain and speedy accomplishment. *David also rejoiced with great joy*—To see the work which his heart was so much set upon likely to go on. It is a great reviving

A. M. 2989. 10 ¶ Wherefore David blessed the
B. C. 1015.

LORD before all the congregation: and David said, Blessed be thou, **LORD** God of Israel our father, for ever and ever.

11 ^h Thine, O **LORD**, is the greatness, and the power, and the glory, and the victory, and the majesty: for all *that is* in the heaven and in the earth *is thine*; thine *is* the kingdom, O **LORD**, and thou art exalted as head above all.

12 ⁱ Both riches and honour *come* of thee, and thou reignest over all; and in thy hand *is* power and might; and in thy hand *it is* to

^h Matt. vi. 13; 1 Tim. i. 17; Rev. v. 13.—ⁱ Romans xi. 36.
² Heb. retain, or, obtain strength.—³ Heb. of thy hand.

to good men, when they are leaving the world, to see those they leave behind them zealous for the work of God.

Verses 10, 11. *David said, Blessed, &c.*—David was now full of days, and near his end, and it well becomes the aged children of God to have their hearts much enlarged in praise and thanksgiving. The nearer we come to the land of everlasting praise, the more we should speak the language and do the work of that world. *Thine is the greatness and the power, &c.*—Thus David praises God with holy awe and reverence, acknowledging and adoring, 1st, His infinite perfections; not only that he is great, powerful, and glorious, &c., but that his is the greatness, power, and glory; that he has these perfections in and of himself, and is the centre and fountain of every thing that is excellent and blessed. 2d, His sovereign dominion, that he is the rightful owner and almighty possessor of all. *All that is in heaven and in earth is thine*—And at thy disposal, by the indisputable right of creation, and as Supreme Ruler and Commander of all. *Thine is the kingdom*—And all kings are thy subjects; and thou art to be exalted and worshipped as head above all—3d, His universal influence and agency. All that are rich and honourable among mankind have their riches and honours from God. This acknowledgment David would have the princes to take notice of, and join in, that they might not think they had merited any thing of God by their generosity; for from God they had had their riches and honour, and what they had returned to him was but a small part of what they had received from him. Whoever are great among men, it is God that makes them so; and whatever strength we have, it is God that gives it us. *Let no flesh, then, glory in his presence; for of him, and through him, and to him, are all things: to whom be glory for ever! Amen.*

Verses 13, 14. *Now therefore, our God, we thank thee*—The more we do for God, the more we are indebted to him for the honour of being employed in his service, and for grace to enable us in any measure to serve him. *Doth he therefore thank that servant?* said Jesus. No: but that servant has a great deal of reason to thank him. *Who am I, and*

make great, and to give strength unto all. A. M. 2989. B. C. 1015.

13 Now therefore, our God, we thank thee, and praise thy glorious name.

14 But who *am I*, and what *is* my people, that we should ² be able to offer so willingly after this sort? for all things *come* of thee, and ³ of thine own have we given thee.

15 For ^k we *are* strangers before thee, and sojourners, as *were* all our fathers: ^l our days on the earth *are* as a shadow, and *there is none* ⁴ abiding.

^k Chap. xxxix. 12; Heb. xi. 13; 1 Peter ii. 11.—^l Job xiv. 2; Psa. xc. 9; cii. 11; cxliv. 4.—⁴ Heb. expectation.

what is my people?—David was the most honourable person, and Israel the most honourable people, then in the world; yet thus he speaks of himself and them, as utterly unworthy of the divine cognizance and favour. David now appeared very great in the eyes of men, presiding in an august assembly, appointing his successor, and making a noble present to the honour of God; and yet, being little and low in his own eyes, he asks, *Who am I, O Lord! that we should be able to offer so willingly*—That thou shouldst give us both riches to make such an offering, and a willing heart to offer them, both which are the gifts and fruits of thy grace and mercy to us. God works in his people both *to will and to do*, and it is a great instance of the power of his grace in us to be able to do his work willingly. *Of thine own have we given thee*—We return only what we have received, and therefore only pay a debt, or rather, the small part of a debt due to thee. Thus we ought to give God all the glory of all the good that is at any time done by ourselves or others. Our own good works must not be the matter of our pride, nor the good works of others of our flattery, but both the matter of our praise; for certainly it is the greatest honour and pleasure in the world faithfully to serve God.

Verse 15. *For we are strangers before thee, &c.*—Poor, despicable creatures. The land which we possess is thine, not ours; we are not the proprietors, but only thy tenants: and as our fathers once were mere strangers in it, even before men, so we at this day are no better before thee, having no absolute right in it, but only to travel through it, and sojourn in it for the short time we live in the world. This is equally true of all men, who on earth are but strangers and sojourners; while angels and saints in heaven are there at home. *Our days on earth are as a shadow*—David's days had as much of substance in them as most men's: for he was upon the whole a good man, a useful man, and now an old man. He lived long, and to good purpose; and yet he puts himself in the front of those who must acknowledge that their *days on the earth are as a shadow*: which speaks our life a vain life, a dark life, a transient life, and a life that will have its

A. M. 2989. 16 O LORD our God, all this store
B. C. 1015. that we have prepared to build thee
a house for thy holy name *cometh* of thy hand,
and is all thine own.

17 I know also, my God, that thou ^atriest
the heart, and ^bhast pleasure in uprightness.
As for me, in the uprightness of my heart I
have willingly offered all these things: and
now have I seen with joy thy people, which
are ^cpresent here, to offer willingly unto thee.

^a 1 Samuel xvi. 7; Chap. xxviii. 9.—^b Prov. xi. 20.—^c Or,
found.

period, either in perfect light or perfect darkness. *And there is none abiding*—Hebrew, כקוה, *mickve, expectation.* We cannot expect much from earth, nor can we expect any long continuance in it. This is mentioned here as that which forbids us to boast of what we give to God and his cause, or to our poor and destitute fellow-creatures, or of the services we perform to him. We only give what we must shortly leave, and what we cannot keep to ourselves: and our services are confined to a mere scantling of time: they are the services of a short, uncertain life. What, therefore, can we pretend to merit by such gifts or services? and what right have we to boast, or think highly of ourselves, on account of them? Surely God does us a great favour that he will accept such offerings and services from us.

Verse 16. *All this store cometh of thy hand, and is all thine*—We have it from thee as a free gift, and therefore are bound to use it for thee; and what we present to thee is but as rent or interest from thine own. In like manner we ought to acknowledge God in all spiritual things; referring every good thought, good desire, and good work to his grace, from which we receive it. *Let him that glorieth, therefore, glory in the Lord.*

Verse 17. *I know also, my God, that thou triest the heart, &c.*—That thou observest with what intention and disposition of mind any offering is made and work performed; *and hast pleasure in uprightness*—Without which the most costly gift, and most laborious services, would be as nothing before thee. And hence it is that I hope thou wilt be pleased to accept what I now present to thee, being conscious that I offer it with a heart devoted to thy love and service, and with an intention to glorify thee. It is a great satisfaction to a good man to know that God *tries the heart, and has pleasure in uprightness*; and that whoever may misinterpret or condemn it, he is acquainted with, and approves, *the way of the righteous.* It was a comfort to David that God knew with what pleasure he both offered his own, and saw the people's offering. *I have seen with joy thy people offer willingly unto thee*—By the largeness of their offering I discern the sincerity, willingness, and generosity of their hearts toward thee: for David judged, as in reason and charity he ought, of

18 O LORD God of Abraham, Isaac, A. M. 2989.
and of Israel, our fathers, keep this B. C. 1015
for ever in the imagination of the thoughts of
the heart of thy people, and ^eprepare their heart
unto thee:

19 And ^ogive unto Solomon my son a perfect
heart, to keep thy commandments, thy testi-
monies, and thy statutes, and to do all *these*
things, and to build the palace, *for the which*
^pI have made provision.

^o Or, *stablish*, Psalm x. 17.—^p Psalm lxxii. 1.—^p Verse 2;
Chap. xxii. 14.

the tree by its fruit, and of their hearts by their actions.

Verse 18. *O Lord God of Abraham, &c.*—A God in covenant with them, and with us for their sakes. *Keep this for ever, &c.*—Since it is from thy grace that thy people have such willing minds, continue that grace to them, that they may persist in the same generous disposition toward thee and thy worship. And grant that by our perseverance in this piety and charity, we may make good our part of the covenant, and so may not forfeit the benefit of it. *And prepare their heart unto thee*—Or rather, as it is in the margin, *stablish or confirm* their heart. Thou, who hast begun a good work, confirm and carry it on by thy grace, otherwise it will languish, and this very people will prove degenerate.

Verse 19. *And give unto Solomon my son a perfect heart*—He had charged Solomon to serve God with a perfect heart, and now he prays to God to give him such a heart. He does not pray that God would make him rich, or great, or learned, but, what is infinitely more important, that he would make him sincerely and decidedly godly and righteous, devoted to God and his service, and steady and faithful therein. *To keep thy commandments*—Which David knew would not, could not, be kept by Solomon or any man, unless his heart was renewed by the grace of God, and made right with him. *And to build the palace, &c.*—Not only to observe the precepts of thy law in general, and do thy will in other respects, but in particular to accomplish thy design in building thee a temple, that he may perform that service with a single eye. *For which I have made provision*—By purchasing the place, (chap. xxi.) and providing for the expenses of the work. From this prayer of David, both for Solomon and the people, we may see, that even in those days, when there was so much of ceremony and external pomp in religion, and when the church of God was in its nonage, as the apostle states, (Gal. iv. 1-3,) and *in bondage under the elements of the world*, yet the *inward grace* of God, or the operation of the Spirit on the human heart, was judged absolutely necessary to enable a man to keep the commandments of God. How much more then is the grace of God necessary to enable a man to walk according to the more pure and spiritual doctrines and precepts of Christianity,

A. M. 2989. B. C. 1015. 20 ¶ And David said to all the congregation, Now bless the LORD your God. And all the congregation blessed the LORD God of their fathers, and bowed down their heads, and worshipped the LORD, and the king.

21 And they sacrificed sacrifices unto the LORD, and offered burnt-offerings unto the LORD, on the morrow after that day, *even* a thousand bullocks, a thousand rams, and a thousand lambs, with their drink-offerings, and sacrifices in abundance for all Israel :

22 And did eat and drink before the LORD on that day with great gladness. And they

¶ 1 Kings i. 35, 39.—Ecclesiastes viii. 2.—⁷ Hebrew, gave the hand under Solomon, Gen. xxiv. 2; xlvii. 29; 2 Chron.

to love and embrace its holy promises, and live up to its more divine and heavenly privileges.

Verse 20. *David said to all the congregation, Now bless the Lord your God*—Adore his divine majesty, and give him thanks for all his benefits, hereby testifying your concurrence with me in what I have done and spoken. *And all the congregation blessed the Lord, &c.*—They did as David desired, *bowing down* their heads in a gesture of adoration. Whoever is the mouth of the congregation to God, only those have the benefit of his ministrations who join with him, not so much by *bowing down the head*, as by *lifting up the heart*. *And worshipped the Lord, and the king*—The Lord with religious, and the king with civil worship.

Verse 21. *They sacrificed sacrifices unto the Lord*—Before the ark which was there. *In abundance for all Israel*—Either, 1st, On behalf of all Israel, to praise God in their names, to procure God's presence and blessing for them all. Or, 2d, So many sacrifices, that the feasts which were, according to custom, made of the remainders of them, were abundantly sufficient for all the Israelites that were then present, and desired to partake of them.

Verse 22. *And did eat and drink before the Lord*—Before the ark, in the courts or places as near to it as they conveniently could: or, as in God's presence, in a solemn and religious manner, praising God for this great mercy, and entreating his blessing on this great affair. *They made Solomon king the second time*—The first time was, when he was made king during Adonijah's conspiracy, (1 Kings i. 34,) on which occasion it was done in great haste, and in the presence of only a few of David's servants; but now in the presence of all the great men of Israel, the princes of the tribes, the captains of thousands and hundreds. *And anointed him to be the chief governor*—After the death of David. Perhaps, however, David now resigned the government of the kingdom to him, as he knew he had not long to live. *And Zadok to be priest*—It must be remembered that the high-priest had his vicegerent who might officiate in his stead. So that this action of theirs, the anointing

made Solomon the son of David king A. M. 2989. B. C. 1015. the second time, and ⁴ anointed *him* unto the LORD *to be* the chief governor, and Zadok *to be* priest.

23 ¶ Then Solomon sat on the throne of the LORD as king instead of David his father, and prospered; and all Israel obeyed him.

24 And all the princes, and the mighty men, and all the sons likewise of King David, ¹ submitted ⁷ themselves unto Solomon the king.

25 And the LORD magnified Solomon exceedingly in the sight of all Israel, and ⁸ bestowed upon him *such* royal majesty as had not been on any king before him in Israel.

xxx. 8; Ezra xvii. 18.—¹ 1 Kings iii. 13; 2 Chronicles i. 12; Ecclesiastes ii. 9.

Zadok, did not actually constitute him high-priest, but only settled the reversion of it upon him and his line after Abiathar's death; even as David's making Solomon king, and their anointing *Solomon to be the chief governor* here, did not put him into actual possession of the kingdom, but only gave him a right to it after the present king's death: hence, notwithstanding this anointing, Abiathar continued to exercise his office till Solomon thrust him out, 1 Kings ii. 27.

Verse 23. *Then Solomon sat on the throne of the Lord*—On the throne of Israel, which is called *the throne of the Lord*, because the Lord himself was, in a peculiar manner, the king and governor of Israel. He had the founding, he had the filling of their throne, by immediate direction.

Verse 24. *And all the sons likewise of David submitted themselves unto Solomon*—Hebrew, gave, or put the hand under Solomon, that is, owned him for their king, and themselves for his subjects, and bound themselves by oath to be true to him, which they possibly did, according to the ancient ceremony used in swearing, mentioned Gen. xxiv. 2, and xlvii. 29; or rather, the thing is signified by a phrase, taken from that practice formerly used, though now neglected: it being usual in all nations and languages to express present things by phrases taken from ancient customs. Though, by seniority, the title of David's other sons to the crown was prior to that of Solomon, and they might think themselves wronged by his advancement; yet, because God was pleased to make him king, and had qualified him for that high office, they all submitted themselves to him, God doubtless inclining their hearts to do so, that Solomon's reign might from the first be peaceable.

Verse 25. *The Lord magnified Solomon exceedingly*—Gave him great honour and reputation, together with riches and power, and all such things as render a king great and glorious. *Bestowed upon him such royal majesty as had not been on any king of Israel*—Either on David or Saul, or any of the former governors of Israel. None of his predecessors possessed such dignity and authority,

A. M. 2989. 26 ¶ Thus David the son of Jesse
B. C. 1015. reigned over all Israel.

27 † And the time that he reigned over Israel was forty years; † seven years reigned he in Hebron, and thirty and three years reigned he in Jerusalem.

28 And he † died in a good old age, † full of days, riches, and honour: and Solomon his son reigned in his stead.

† 2 Sam. v. 4; 1 Kings ii. 11.—‡ 2 Sam. v. 5.—§ Genesis xxv. 8.

or lived in such splendour and magnificence as he did.

Verse 26. *Thus David reigned, &c.*—This sacred writer, having mentioned the anointing of Solomon, and, upon that occasion, proceeded to give a further account of Solomon's actual settlement in his kingdom, returns to his main business, to give an account of the close of David's reign and life. He here brings him to the end of his day, leaves him asleep, and draws the curtains about him.

Verse 28. *Full of days*—Fully satisfied with the days which God had given him, having had the happiness of seeing his beloved son Solomon settled in his throne. *Riches and honour*—He had enough of this world, and of the riches and honour of it; and he knew when he had enough. He was satisfied, and very willing to go to a better place.

Verse 29. *They are written in the book of Samuel the seer*—In the two books of Samuel, as they are now called, which were written in part by Samuel

29 Now the acts of David the king, A. M. 2989.
first and last, behold, they are written B. C. 1015.
in the †book † of Samuel the seer, and in the book of Nathan the prophet, and in the book of Gad the seer,

30 With all his reign and his might, † and the times that went over him, and over Israel, and over all the kingdoms of the countries.

† Chapter xxiii. 1.—‡ Or, history.—§ Hebrew, words.
* Dan. ii. 21.

while he lived, and continued after his death by Nathan and Gad. *And in the book of Nathan, and the book of Gad*—In the public registers, or chronicles of the kingdom, which were written by Nathan and Gad, who were not only prophets, but historiographers, out of which, either they or some other prophets took, by the direction of God's Spirit, such passages as were most important and useful for the churches in succeeding ages.

Verse 30. *The times that went over him*—The transactions of his reign, and the changes that befell him; both his troubles and successes, the word *time* or *times* being often put for things done or happening in them. *And over all the kingdoms of the countries*—Those countries which bordered upon, or were not far distant from the land of Canaan, the history of which was in part connected with that of the Israelites. For the sketch of the character of David, we refer our readers to our notes on 2 Sam. xxiv. 25.

T. 17

SECOND BOOK

OF

THE CHRONICLES.

ARGUMENT.

THE argument of the former book will, in a great measure, serve for this. Some things recorded in the two books of Kings are omitted in this book; and several things are contained in it, of which no mention is made there; particularly in the history of Jehoshaphat and Hezekiah. And many other things there mentioned are here more fully and clearly explained, as will be observed in the acts of Abijah, Asa, Joash, and other kings of Judah. Upon which account, St. Jerome says, this book is such, and of so great use, that he who without it will pretend to understand the prophets, will expose himself to scorn.

This book begins where the former left off, with the reign of Solomon, from the death of David, and continues the history of the kings of Judah to the captivity, and concludes with the fall of that illustrious monarchy, and the destruction of the temple. That monarchy, as it was prior in time, so it was in dignity, to the four which Nebuchadnezzar dreamed of. The Babylonian began in Nebuchadnezzar himself, and lasted about seventy years: the Persian monarchy, in several families, about a hundred and thirty: the Grecian, in its several branches, about three hundred: and three hundred more went far with the Roman. Whereas the monarchy of Judah continued considerable in a lineal descent, between four and five hundred years. We had the story of the house of David before, intermixed with that of the kings of Israel; but here we have it entire: much is repeated here which we had before; yet many passages are enlarged on, and divers added, which we had not before, especially relating to religion; the reign of Solomon we have, chap. i.—ix. That of Rehoboam, chap. x.—xii. The short reign of Abijah, chap. xiii. The long reign of Asa, chap. xiv.—xvi. The reign of Jehoshaphat, chap. xvii.—xx. Of Jehoram and Ahaziah, chap. xxi., xxii. Of Joash and Amaziah, chap. xxiii., xxiv. Of Uzziah, chap. xxvi. Of Jotham, chap. xxvii. Of Ahaz, chap. xxviii. Of Hezekiah, chap. xxix.—xxxii. Of Manasseh and Amon, chap. xxxiii. Of Josiah, chap. xxxiv., xxxv. Of his sons, chap. xxxvi.

CHAPTER I.

Solomon's sacrifices, 1-6. His prayer, and God's answer, 7-12. The strength, wealth, and trade of Israel, 13-17.

<p>A. M. 2989. AND ^a Solomon the son of David B. C. 1015. was strengthened in his king- dom, and ^b the LORD his God <i>was</i> with him, and ^c magnified him exceedingly.</p>	<p>2 Then Solomon spake unto all Is- A. M. 2989. rael, to ^d the captains of thousands and B. C. 1015. of hundreds, and to the judges, and to every governor in all Israel, the chief of the fathers.</p>
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^a 1 Kings ii. 46.—^b Gen. xxxix. 2.

^c 1 Chron. xxix. 25.—^d 1 Chron. xxvii. 1.

NOTES ON CHAPTER I.

Verses 1, 2. *Solomon was strengthened in his kingdom*—Or, *established*, after his seditious brother Adonijah and his partisans were suppressed; and he was received with the universal consent and joy of his princes and people. *Solomon spake unto all Israel*—Namely, concerning his intention of going to Gibeon, and that they should attend him

thither, as the next verse shows. Authority and interest are well bestowed on those that will thus use them for the glory of God, and the promotion of religion. But it is the duty of all men to engage all they have any influence upon in the solemnities of religion, and very desirable to have many to join with them therein: the more the better: it makes these solemnities the more like heaven.

A. M. 2939. 3 So Solomon, and all the congregation with him, went to the high place that *was* at °Gibeon; for there was the tabernacle of the congregation of God, which Moses the servant of the LORD had made in the wilderness.

B. C. 1045. 4 ^f But the ark of God had David brought up from Kirjath-jearim to the place which David had prepared for it: for he had pitched a tent for it at Jerusalem.

5 Moreover, ^g the brazen altar, that ^h Bezaleel the son of Uri, the son of Hur, had made, ⁱ he put before the tabernacle of the LORD: and Solomon and the congregation sought unto it.

6 And Solomon went up thither to the brazen altar before the LORD, which *was* at the tabernacle of the congregation, and ⁱ offered a thousand burnt-offerings upon it.

7 ¶ ^k In that night did God appear unto Solomon, and said unto him, Ask what I shall give thee.

8 And Solomon said unto God, Thou hast

showed great mercy unto David my father, and hast made me ^l to reign in his stead. A. M. 2959. B. C. 1045.

9 Now, O LORD God, let thy promise unto David my father be established: ^m for thou hast made me king over a people ⁿ like the dust of the earth in multitude.

10 ^o Give me now wisdom and knowledge, that I may ^o go out and come in before this people: for who can judge this thy people, *that is so great?*

11 ^p And God said to Solomon, Because this was in thy heart, and thou hast not asked riches, wealth, or honour, nor the life of thine enemies, neither yet hast asked long life; but hast asked wisdom and knowledge for thyself, that thou mayest judge my people, over whom I have made thee king:

12 Wisdom and knowledge *is* granted unto thee; and I will give thee riches, and wealth, and honour, such as ^q none of the kings have had that *have been* before thee, neither shall there any after thee have the like.

* 1 Kings iii. 4; 1 Chronicles xvi. 39; xxi. 29.—^f 1 Sam. vi. 2. 17; 1 Chronicles xv. 1.—^g Exodus xxvii. 1; xxxviii. 1. 2.—^h Exodus xxxi. 2.—ⁱ Or, *was there*.—^j 1 Kings iii. 4. ^k 1 Kings iii. 5.

^l 1 Chronicles xxviii. 5.—^m 1 Kings iii. 7.—ⁿ Heb. *much as the dust of the earth*.—^o 1 Kings iii. 9.—^p Numbers xxvii. 17; Deut. xxxi. 2.—^q 1 Kings iii. 11.—^r 1 Chron. xxix. 25; Chap. ix. 22; Eccles. ii.

Verse 3, 4. *Solomon, &c., went to the high place at Gibeon*—Upon which the tabernacle was placed; whence it is called the great high place, 1 Kings iii. 4. *But the ark, &c.*—David had separated the ark from the tabernacle, and brought it to Jerusalem, because there he intended to build a far more noble and lasting habitation for it.

Verse 5. *The brazen altar he put before the tabernacle, &c.*—He continued it there, and did not remove it, as he did the ark, from the tabernacle. *Solomon and the congregation sought unto it*—Sought the Lord and his favour by hearty prayers and sacrifices in the place which God had appointed for that work, Lev. xvii. 3, 4.

Verse 6. *To the brazen altar before the Lord*—It is said to be *before the Lord*, though the ark was not there, because God was pleased graciously to accept the sacrifices offered before the place, though wanting the token of his glorious presence. *And offered a thousand burnt-offerings upon it*—Namely, by the ministry of the priests. He probably offered as many *peace-offerings*, on which he and his company *feasted before the Lord*; unless, as Pellicanus thinks, burnt-offerings here signify peace-offerings, the general name being put for the special.

Verse 7. *In that night*—After those sacrifices were offered; *did God appear to Solomon* in a dream—Of which see the notes on 1 Kings iii. 5. *And said, Ask what I shall give thee*—God bid him ask what he would; not only that he might put him in

the right way to obtain the favours which were intended him, *Ask, and ye shall receive*; but that he might try him how he stood affected, and give him an opportunity of knowing and manifesting what was in his heart. For men's characters appear in their desires and choices. What wouldst thou have? tries a man as much as, What wouldst thou do?

Verse 8. *And hast made me to reign*—Give me the spirit of my father David, that Israel may not suffer by the change. The eminence of those that went before us, and the obligation that lies upon us to keep and carry on the good work they were engaged in, should quicken our prayers for wisdom and grace, that we may do the work of God in our day as faithfully as they did in theirs.

Verse 10. *Give me now wisdom and knowledge*—Like a genuine son of David and Abraham, he chose spiritual blessings rather than temporal. *That I may go out and come in before this people*—This is a proverbial speech for governing the people both at home and abroad, in peace and war. See Num. xxvii. 17; Deut. xxxi. 2. *For who can judge this thy people, that is so great?*—Among such a numerous people he knew there would be so many, and so various, and, many times, difficult cases brought before him, that it would be impossible for him to hear them and judge aright, without wisdom more than human. See note on 1 Kings iii. 9.

Verse 12. *And I will give thee riches and wealth, &c.*—Those that make this world their end, come

A. M. 2959. 13 ¶ Then Solomon came *from his* journey to the high place that *was* at Gibeon to Jerusalem, from before the tabernacle of the congregation, and reigned over Israel.

14 ^a And Solomon gathered chariots and horsemen: and he had a thousand and four hundred chariots, and twelve thousand horsemen, which he placed in the chariot-cities, and with the king at Jerusalem.

15 ^a And the king ^a made silver and gold at Jerusalem *as plenteous as stones, and cedar-*

^a 1 Kings iv. 26; x. 26, &c.; Chap. ix. 25.—^b 1 Kings x. 27; Chap. ix. 27; Job xxii. 24.—^c Heb. gave.

short of the other, and frequently of this too. But those who make the other world their end shall not only obtain that, but shall have as much as is convenient of this world in their way,

trees made *he* as the sycamore-trees that *are* in the vale, for abundance.

16 ^a And ^b Solomon had horses brought out of Egypt, and linen yarn: the king's merchants received the linen yarn at a price.

17 And they fetched up, and brought forth out of Egypt a chariot for six hundred *shekels* of silver, and a horse for a hundred and fifty; and so brought they out *horses* for all the kings of the Hittites, and for the kings of Syria, ^a by their means.

^a 1 Kings x. 28; Chapter ix. 28.—^b Heb. the going forth of the horses which was Solomon's.—^c Heb. by their hand.

Verse 14. *And Solomon gathered chariots and horsemen, which he placed in the chariot-cities, and with the king at Jerusalem*—Of this and the three following verses, see the notes on 1 Kings x. 26, &c.

CHAPTER II.

Solomon appoints men to build the temple and his own house, 1, 2. His message to Hiram, 3-10. Hiram's obliging answer, 11-16.

A. M. 2959. B. C. 1045. **AND** Solomon ^a determined to build a house for the name of the LORD, and a house for his kingdom.

2 And ^b Solomon told out threescore and ten thousand men to bear burdens, and fourscore thousand to hew in the mountain, and three thousand and six hundred to oversee them.

3 ¶ And Solomon sent to ^c Hiram the king of Tyre, saying, ^d As thou didst deal with David my father, and didst send him cedars to build him a house to dwell therein, *even so deal with me.*

^a 1 Kings v. 5.—^b 1 Kings v. 15; Verse 18.—^c Or, Hiram, 1 Kings v. 1.—^d 1 Chron. xiv. 1.—^e Verse 1.—^f Exodus xxx. 7.—^g Heb. incense of spices.

NOTES ON CHAPTER II.

Verse 1. *And a house for his kingdom*—A royal palace for himself and his successors. The substance of this whole chapter is contained in 1 Kings v., and is explained in the notes there, and the seeming differences between the contents of this and it reconciled.

Verse 3. *And Solomon sent to Hiram*—Or *Hiran*, as he is called in the first book of Kings, where we learn that he first sent to Solomon to congratulate him on his accession to the throne, and then Solomon sent to him.

Verse 4. *To dedicate it to him*—To his honour and worship. *For the continual show-bread*—So called here and Num. iv. 7, because it stood before the Lord continually, by a constant succession of

4 Behold, ^d I build a house to the name of the LORD my God, to dedi-

cate *it* to him, *and* ^e to burn before him ^f sweet incense, and for ^g the continual show-bread, and for ^h the burnt-offerings morning and evening, on the sabbaths, and on the new-moons, and on the solemn feasts of the LORD our God. *This is an ordinance* for ever to Israel.

5 And the house which I build *is great*: for ^b great *is* our God above all gods.

6 ⁱ But who ^j is able to build him a house,

^f Exod. xxv. 30; Lev. xxiv. 8.—^g Numbers xxviii. 3, 9, 11. ^h Psa. cxxxv. 5.—ⁱ 1 Kings viii. 27; Chap. vi. 18; Isa. lxvi. 1. ^j Heb. hath retained, or, obtained strength.

new bread, when the old was removed. See Exod. xxv. 30; Lev. xxiv. 8.

Verse 5. *The house which I build is great*—Though the temple, strictly so called, was small, yet the buildings belonging to it were large and numerous. *For great is our God above all gods*—Above all idols, above all princes. Idols are nothing, princes are little, and both are under the control of the God of Israel. Therefore the house must be great; not indeed in proportion to the greatness of that God to whom it is to be dedicated, for between finite and infinite there can be no proportion; but in some proportion to the exalted conceptions we have of him, and the great esteem we have for him.

Verse 6. *But who is able to build him a house*—

A. M. 2959. B. C. 1045. seeing the heaven and heaven of heavens cannot contain him? who am I then that I should build him a house, save only to burn sacrifice before him?

7 Send me now therefore a man cunning to work in gold, and in silver, and in brass, and in iron, and in purple, and crimson, and blue, and that can skill to grave with the cunning men that are with me in Judah and in Jerusalem, whom David my father did provide.

8 ¹ Send me also cedar-trees, fir-trees, and ²algum-trees out of Lebanon; (for I know that thy servants can skill to cut timber in Lebanon;) and behold, my servants shall be with thy servants,

9 Even to prepare me timber in abundance: for the house which I am about to build shall be ⁶ wonderful great.

10 ² And behold, I will give to thy servants, the hewers that cut timber, twenty thousand measures of beaten wheat, and twenty thousand

¹ Heb. to grave groavings.—¹ 1 Chron. xxii. 15.—¹ 1 Kings v. 6.—² Or, almuggim, 1 Kings x. 11.—³ Heb. great and wonderful.—⁴ 1 Kings v. 11.—⁵ 1 Kings x. 9; Chap. ix. 8.

No house, be it ever so great, can be a habitation for him. Behold, the heaven, and the heaven of heavens cannot contain him—Nor does he, like the gods of the nations, dwell in temples made with hands. When, therefore, I speak of building a great house for the great God, let none be so foolish as to imagine that I mean to include or comprehend God within it, for he is infinite. *Who am I, then, that I should build him a house*—He looked upon himself, though a mighty prince, as utterly unworthy of the honour of being employed in this great work. *Save only to burn sacrifice before him*—As if he had said, We have not such low notions of our God as to suppose we can build a house that will contain him: we only intend it for the convenience of his priests and worshippers, that they may have a suitable place wherein to assemble and offer sacrifices and prayers, and perform other religious duties to him. Thus Solomon guards Hiram against any misapprehension concerning God, which his speaking of building him a house might otherwise have occasioned. And it is one part of the wisdom wherein we ought to walk toward them that are without, in a similar manner carefully to guard against all misapprehension which anything we may say or do may occasion concerning any truth or duty of religion.

Verse 7. *Send me therefore a man cunning to work in gold, &c.*—There were admirable artists, in all the works here referred to, at Tyre; some of whom Solomon desired to be sent to him, that they might assist those whom David had provided, but who were not so skilful as those of Tyre.

measures of barley, and twenty thousand baths of wine, and twenty thousand baths of oil.

11 ¶ Then Hiram the king of Tyre answered in writing, which he sent to Solomon, ² Because the LORD hath loved his people, he hath made thee king over them.

12 Hiram said moreover, ⁰ Blessed be the LORD God of Israel, ² that made heaven and earth, who hath given to David the king a wise son, ⁷ endued with prudence and understanding, that might build a house for the LORD, and a house for his kingdom.

13 And now I have sent a cunning man, endued with understanding, of Hiram my father's,

14 ⁴ The son of a woman of the daughters of Dan, and his father was a man of Tyre, skilful to work in gold, and in silver, in brass, in iron, in stone, and in timber, in purple, in blue, and in fine linen, and in crimson; also to

⁰ 1 Kings v. 7.—¹ Gen. i. ii.; Psa. xxxiii. 6; cii. 25; cxxiv. 8; cxxxvi. 5; Acts iv. 24; xiv. 15; Rev. x. 6.—² Heb. knowing prudence and understanding.—³ 1 Kings vii. 13.

Verse 10. *Behold, I will give thy servants twenty thousand measures of beaten wheat, &c.*—Solomon would not feed his workmen with bread and water, but with plenty of provisions, and of the best kind. They that employ labourers ought to take care that they be not only well paid, but well provided for, with sufficient of that which is wholesome and proper for them. Let rich masters do for their poor servants and workmen as they would be done by if the tables were turned.

Verse 11. *Hiram answered, Because the Lord loved his people, &c.*—Thus he congratulates the happiness of Israel in having such a king as Solomon was. And certainly a wise and good government is a great blessing to a people, and may well be accounted a singular token of God's favour. He does not say, *Because he loved thee he made thee king*, (though that also was true,) but *because he loved his people*. Princes must look upon themselves as preferred for the public good, not for their own personal satisfaction, and should rule so as to evidence they were given to their people in love, not in anger.

Verse 12. *Blessed be the Lord that made heaven and earth*—It seems Hiram was not only a friend to the Jewish nation, but a proselyte to their religion, and that he worshipped Jehovah, the God of Israel, (who was now known by that name to the neighbour nations,) as *the God that made heaven and earth*, and the fountain of power as well as of being.

Verse 14. *The son of a woman—of Dan, and his father a man of Tyre*—A good omen of uniting

A. M. 2959. grave any manner of graving, and to
B. C. 1045. find out every device which shall be
put to him, with thy cunning men, and with
the cunning men of my lord David thy father.

15 Now therefore the wheat, and the barley,
the oil, and the wine, which ^r my lord hath
spoken of, let him send unto his servants;

16 ^a And we will cut wood out of Lebanon,
^b as much as thou shalt need: and we will
bring it to thee in floats by sea to ^c Joppa; and
thou shalt carry it up to Jerusalem.

^r Verse 10.—^a 1 Kings v. 8.—^b Heb. according to all thy need.
^c Heb. Japho, Josh. xix. 46; Acts ix. 36.

Jew and Gentile in the gospel temple. *With the cunning men of my lord David*—So he calls David here, and Solomon in the next verse, either out of singular respect to their greatness and worth, or because he was indeed tributary to them: or, at least, his country was nourished by their country, as it was afterward, Acts xii. 20.

Verse 17. *Solomon numbered all the strangers*—For David had not only numbered his own people, but afterward the strangers, that Solomon might

17 ¶ ^t And Solomon numbered all A. M. 2959.
¹⁰ the strangers that *were* in the land B. C. 1045.
of Israel, after the numbering wherewith ^a David
his father had numbered them; and they were
found a hundred and fifty thousand and three
thousand and six hundred.

18 And he set ^x threescore and ten thousand
of them *to be* bearers of burdens, and fourscore
thousand *to be* hewers in the mountain, and
three thousand and six hundred overseers to set
the people a work.

^t Verse 2; 1 Kings v. 13, 15; ix. 20; Chap. viii. 7.—¹⁰ Heb. the men the strangers.—^a 1 Chron. xxii. 2.—^x Verse 2.

have a true account of them, and employ them about his buildings. Yet Solomon numbered them again, because death might have made a considerable alteration among them since David's numbering.

Verse 18. *To be hewers in the mountain*—He would not employ the free-born Israelites in this drudgery, but the strangers that were proselytes, who, having no lands, applied themselves to trades, and got their living by their industry or ingenuity.

CHAPTER III.

The place and time of building the temple, 1, 2. The dimensions and ornaments of it, 3-9. The cherubim in the most holy place, 10-13. The veil, 14. The two pillars, 15-17.

A. M. 2992. **T**HEN ^a Solomon began to build the
B. C. 1012. house of the LORD at ^b Jerusalem
in mount Moriah, ¹ where *the LORD* appeared
unto David his father, in the place that David

had prepared in the thrashing-floor A. M. 2992.
² of ^c Ornan ² the Jebusite. B. C. 1012.

2 And he began to build in the second day of the second month, in the fourth year of his reign.

^a 1 Kings vi. 1, &c.—^b Gen. xxii. 2, 14.—¹ Or, which was seen of David his father.

^c 1 Chronicles xxi. 18; xxii. 1.—² Or, Araunah, 2 Samuel xxiv. 18.

NOTES ON CHAPTER III.

Verse 1. *In mount Moriah*—Part of this mountain was in the tribe of Judah, and part of it in the tribe of Benjamin: so that the temple is ascribed to them both. To Judah, Psa. lxxvii. 68, 69, and to Benjamin, Deut. xxxiii. 12. For the greatest part of the courts were in the tribe of Judah; but the altar, the porch, the most holy part of the temple, where the ark and the cherubim were, in the tribe of Benjamin. It was the belief of the ancient Jews, that the temple was built on the very spot where Abraham offered up Isaac. So the Jewish Targum (a paraphrase on the books of Moses, in the Chaldee language) says expressly, adding, *But he (Isaac) was delivered by the word of the Lord, and a ram provided in his place.* That offering of Isaac was typical of Christ's sacrifice of himself: therefore fitly was the temple built there, which

was also a type of him. *Where the Lord appeared unto David*—That is, which place the Lord had consecrated by his gracious appearance there, 1 Chron. xxi. 26. *The place that David had prepared*—Which he had not only purchased with his money, but which he had pitched upon by divine direction, and made ready for the purpose by pulling down the buildings that were upon it or near it, by levelling the ground, and possibly by marking it out for the temple and courts, the dimensions whereof he probably very particularly and exactly understood by the Spirit of God. *In the thrashing-floor of Ornan*—In that place where the thrashing-floor formerly was.

Verse 2. *He began to build in the second day, &c.*—Concerning the contents of this verse, and the rest of the chapter, see notes on 1 Kings vi.

A. M. 2992. B. C. 1012. 3 ¶ Now these are the things wherein Solomon was instructed for the building of the house of God. The length by cubits after the first measure was threescore cubits, and the breadth twenty cubits.

4 And the porch that was in the front of the house, the length of it was according to the breadth of the house, twenty cubits, and the height was a hundred and twenty: and he overlaid it within with pure gold.

5 And the greater house he ceiled with fir-tree, which he overlaid with fine gold, and set thereon palm-trees and chains.

6 And he garnished the house with precious stones for beauty: and the gold was gold of Parvaim.

7 He overlaid also the house, the beams, the posts, and the walls thereof, and the doors thereof, with gold; and graved cherubims on the walls.

8 ¶ And he made the most holy house, the length whereof was according to the breadth

A. M. 2992. B. C. 1012. of the house, twenty cubits, and the breadth thereof twenty cubits: and he overlaid it with fine gold, amounting to six hundred talents.

9 And the weight of the nails was fifty shekels of gold. And he overlaid the upper chambers with gold.

10 ¶ And in the most holy house he made two cherubims of image-work, and overlaid them with gold.

11 And the wings of the cherubims were twenty cubits long: one wing of the one cherub was five cubits, reaching to the wall of the house: and the other wing was likewise five cubits, reaching to the wing of the other cherub.

12 And one wing of the other cherub was five cubits, reaching to the wall of the house: and the other wing was five cubits also, joining to the wing of the other cherub.

13 The wings of these cherubims spread themselves forth twenty cubits: and they stood on their feet, and their faces were inward.

4 1 Kings vi. 2.—5 Hebrew, founded.—6 1 Kings vi. 3. 1 Kings vi. 17.—7 Heb. covered.

8 1 Kings vi. 23, &c.—9 Or, as some think, of moveable work. 10 Or, toward the house.

Verses 3-5. These are the things wherein Solomon was instructed—By David his father, and by the Spirit of God. After the first measure threescore cubits—According to the measure which was first fixed. The porch, the height was a hundred and twenty—This being a kind of turret to the building. How this may be reconciled with 1 Kings vi. 3, see the notes there. The breadth of it, here omitted, is there said to be ten cubits. The greater house he ceiled with fir-tree—Namely, the holy place, which was twice as large as the lesser house, or the holy of holies, which is called the most holy house, verse 8. The outward part of the former was of fir-tree, to bear the weather better; but the inside was lined with cedar, overlaid with gold, and figures, or sculptures, of palm-trees, chains, and other ornaments.

Verses 6, 7. He garnished the house with precious stones for beauty—A great many precious stones were dedicated to God 1 Chron. xxix. 2, 8, and these were set here and there where they would show to the best advantage. And the gold was gold of Parvaim—That is, of Taprobana, or Ceylon, as Bochart hath satisfactorily proved. See note on 1 Kings ix. 28. With this gold, which was deemed the best, Solomon overlaid even the beams, the posts, the walls, and the doors, graving also cherubim on the walls—The finest houses now pretend to no better garnishing than good paint on the doors, posts, and walls: but the ornaments of the temple were more substantially rich. For it

was to be a type of the New Jerusalem, which has therefore no temple in it, because it is all temple, and the walls, gates, and foundations of it are said to be precious stones and pearls.

Verses 8-10. Fine gold amounting to six hundred talents—That is, upward of three millions forty-five thousand pounds sterling. This vast sum was expended on the holy of holies alone, a room only ten yards square. The weight of the nails—That is, of each of the nails, screws, or pins, by which the golden plates were fastened to the walls that were overlaid with them, was fifty shekels of gold—The meaning seems to be, that each weighed or was worth that sum, workmanship and all. Two cherubims of image-work—Or, sculpture-work. And overlaid them with gold—For they were made of olive-wood, and were not, like those of Moses, of beaten gold. Nor were they fixed, as his were, to the mercy-seat, but appeared in a moving posture.

Verses 11-13. The wings of the cherubims were twenty cubits long—Which was just the breadth of the most holy place. And they stood on their feet—As servants, being designed, it seems, to represent the angels, those ministers of God who do his pleasure, Psa. ciii. 21, and who always attend the Divine Majesty. And their faces were inward—Toward the ark, that it might appear they were not set there to be adored, for then they would have been formed as sitting on a throne, and their faces would have been toward their worshippers.

A. M. 2992. 14 ¶ And he made the ^h veil of blue, B. C. 1012. and purple, and crimson, and fine linen, and ⁷ wrought cherubims thereon.

15 ¶ Also he made before the house ¹ two pillars of thirty and five cubits ^o high, and the chapter that *was* on the top of each of them *was* five cubits.

16 And he made chains, *as* in the oracle,

^h Exod. xxvii. 31; Matt. xxvii. 51; Heb. ix. 3.—⁷ Heb. *caused to ascend*.—¹ 1 Kings vii. 15-21; Jer. lii. 21.

Verse 14. *And he made the veil, &c.*—The inner veil, which parted between the holy and the most holy place. This denoted the darkness of that dispensation, and the distance at which the worshippers were kept. But at the death of Christ this veil was rent; for through him we are brought nigh, and have *boldness*, or *παρρησία*, *liberty*, Heb. x. 19, not only to *look*, but to *enter into the holiest*. *And wrought cherubims thereon*—Hebrew, *בָּרָא*, *vajagnal*, *he caused to ascend*; that is, they were made in raised work, embossed, and appeared probably on the wing, in an ascending posture, to remind the worshippers to raise their thoughts and affec-

and put *them* on the heads of the A. M. 2992. pillars; and made ^k a hundred pome- B. C. 1012. granates, and put *them* on the chains.

17 And he ¹ reared up the pillars before the temple, one on the right hand, and the other on the left; and called the name of that on the right hand ^o Jachin, and the name of that on the left ¹⁰ Boaz.

^o Heb. *long*.—^k 1 Kings vii. 20.—¹ 1 Kings vii. 21.—^o That is, *he shall establish*.—¹⁰ That is, *in it is strength*.

tions to God, and to soar upward in their devotions.

Verses 15, 16. *He also made before the house*—That is, before the *holy house*, or temple, as it is explained verse 17; *two pillars of thirty and five cubits high*—Namely, both taken together, being each near eighteen cubits, 1 Kings vii. 15. *He made chains as in the oracle*—Like unto those which he made in the oracle, of which see 1 Kings vi. 21. *And made a hundred pomegranates*—In each row, or two hundred in all, as it is said 1 Kings vii. 20. These pillars, according to the signification of their names, *Jachin* and *Boaz*, mean *establishment* and *strength*. See the margin.

CHAPTER IV.

The brazen altar, sea, and lavers, 1-6. The golden candlesticks and tables, 7, 8. The doors overlaid with brass, the vessels of the altar, and other brass work, 9-18. The golden altar of incense, with its appurtenances, 19-23.

A. M. 2992. MOREOVER he made ^a an altar B. C. 1012. of brass, twenty cubits the length thereof, and twenty cubits the breadth thereof, and ten cubits the height thereof.

2 ¶ ^b Also he made a molten sea of ten cubits ¹ from brim to brim, round in compass, and five cubits the height thereof; and a line of thirty cubits did compass it round about.

3 ^o And under it *was* the similitude of oxen, which did compass it round about: ten in a cubit, compassing the sea round about. Two rows of oxen *were* cast, when it was cast.

4 It stood upon twelve oxen, three looking toward the north, and three looking toward

the west, and three looking toward A. M. 2992. the south, and three looking toward B. C. 1012. the east: and the sea *was set* above upon them, and all their hinder parts *were* inward.

5 And the thickness of it *was* a hand-breadth, and the brim of it like the work of the brim of a cup, ² with flowers of lilies; and it received and held ^d three thousand baths.

6 ¶ He made also ^o ten lavers, and put five on the right hand, and five on the left, to wash in them: ³ such things as they offered for the burnt-offering they washed in them; but the sea *was* for the priests to wash in.

7 ^f And he made ten candlesticks of gold ^e according to their form, and set *them* in the

^a Exodus xxvii. 1, 2; 2 Kings xvi. 14; Ezekiel xlvi. 13, 16. ^b 1 Kings vii. 23.—¹ Heb. *from his brim to his brim*.—^c 1 Kings vii. 24, 26.

² Or, *like a lily-flower*.—^d 1 Kings vii. 26.—^o 1 Kings vii. 38.—³ Hebrew, *the work of burnt-offering*.—^f 1 Kings vii. 49. ^e Exod. xxv. 31, 40; 1 Chron. xxviii. 12, 19.

NOTES ON CHAPTER IV.

Verses 1, 2. *Ten cubits the height thereof*—This was too high for the priests to lay the victims on it, without going up some kind of ascent; but as it was expressly commanded (Exod. xx. 26) that they should not *go up by steps* unto God's altar, they

doubtless ascended in some other way. *Also he made a molten sea of ten cubits*—This and the following verses are explained 1 Kings vii. 23, &c.

Verse 7. *According to their form*—The old form which God prescribed to Moses, Exod. xxv. 31, &c. And this seems to be mentioned here, because in

A. M. 2992. temple, five on the right hand, and
B. C. 1012. five on the left.

8 ^b He made also ten tables, and placed *them* in the temple, five on the right side, and five on the left. And he made a hundred ^c basins of gold.

9 ¶ Furthermore ^d he made the court of the priests, and the great court, and doors for the court, and overlaid the doors of them with brass.

10 And ^e he set the sea on the right side of the east end, over against the south.

11 ¶ And ^f Hiram made the pots, and the shovels, and the ^g basins. And Hiram ^h finished the work that he was to make for King Solomon for the house of God;

12 *To wit*, the two pillars, and ⁱ the pommels, and the chapters *which were* on the top of the two pillars, and the two wreaths to cover the two pommels of the chapters *which were* on the top of the pillars;

13 And ^j four hundred pomegranates on the two wreaths; two rows of pomegranates on each wreath, to cover the two pommels of the chapters *which were* ^k upon the pillars.

14 He made also ^l bases, and ^m lavers made he upon the bases;

^b 1 Kings vii. 48.—^c Or, bowls.—^d 1 Kings vi. 36.—^e 1 Kings vii. 39.—^f 1 Kings vii. 40.—^g Or, bowls.—^h Heb. finished to make.—ⁱ 1 Kings vii. 41.—^j 1 Kings vii. 20.
^k Heb. upon the face.—^l 1 Kings vii. 27, 43.—^m Or, caldrons.
ⁿ 1 Kings vii. 14, 45.

many other things there was a great variation from the old form; as in the posture of the cherubim, the height of the altar, and divers other things.

Verse 8. *He made also ten tables*—Whereon the *show-bread was set*, verse 19. Perhaps each of these had twelve loaves on it. As the house was enlarged, so was the provision.

Verse 16. *Hiram his father*—He is so called, because Solomon, it seems, usually called him by that name, out of that great respect which he bare to him

15 One sea, and twelve oxen under it. A. M. 2992. B. C. 1012.

16 The pots also, and the shovels, and the flesh-hooks, and all their instruments, did ⁿ Hiram his father make to King Solomon for the house of the LORD, of ^o bright brass.

17 ^p In the plain of Jordan did the king cast them, in the ^q clay ground between Succoth and Zeredathah.

18 ^r Thus Solomon made all these vessels in great abundance: for the weight of the brass could not be found out.

19 ¶ And ^s Solomon made all the vessels that *were for* the house of God, the golden altar also, and the tables whereon ^t the show-bread was set;

20 Moreover the candlesticks with their lamps, that they should burn ^u after the manner before the oracle, of pure gold;

21 And ^v the flowers, and the lamps, and the tongs, *made he of* gold, *and that* ^w perfect gold;

22 And the snuffers, and the ^x basins, and the spoons, and the censers, *of* pure gold: and the entry of the house, the inner doors thereof for the most holy *place*, and the doors of the house of the temple, *were of* gold.

^o Hebrew, made bright, or, scoured.—^p 1 Kings vii. 46.
^q Hebrew, thicknesses of the ground.—^r 1 Kings vii. 47.
^s 1 Kings vii. 48, 50.—^t Exodus xxv. 30.—^u Exodus xxvii. 20.—^v Exodus xxv. 31, &c.—^w Heb. perfections of gold.
^x Or, bowls.

for his excellent art, and the service which he did for him; it being usual to call great artists and inventors of things by this name. See Genesis iv. 20, 21.

Verses 20-22. *That they should burn after the manner*—According to the prescription of God to them by Moses. *The doors of the house were of gold*—To wit, in part. For they were not entirely of massy gold, but wood covered with plates of gold, 1 Kings vi. 31-35, and 2 Kings xviii. 16.

CHAPTER V.

Solomon brings the dedicated treasures into the house, and the ark into the sanctuary, 1-10. While the priests and Levites sing praise, the glory of God fills the house, 11-14.

A. M. 2999. **THUS** ^a all the work that Solomon
B. C. 1005. made for the house of the LORD

^a 1 Kings

was finished: and Solomon brought A. M. 2999. B. C. 1005.
in all the things that David his father

vii. 51.

NOTES ON CHAPTER V.

Verses 1, 2. *Solomon brought in all the things that David his father had dedicated*—What re-

mained of the things that David had provided, Solomon would not employ to his own use, but laid them up in the treasures of the temple. *And the silver*

A. M. 2999. had dedicated; and the silver, and
B. C. 1005. the gold, and all the instruments, put
he among the treasures of the house of God.

B. C. 1004. 2 ¶ ^b Then Solomon assembled the
elders of Israel, and all the heads of
the tribes, the chief of the fathers of the children
of Israel, unto Jerusalem, to bring up the ark
of the covenant of the LORD ^c out of the city of
David, which is Zion.

3 ^d Wherefore all the men of Israel assembled
themselves unto the king ^e in the feast which
was in the seventh month.

4 And all the elders of Israel came; and the
Levites took up the ark.

5 And they brought up the ark, and the ta-
bernacle of the congregation, and all the holy
vessels that were in the tabernacle, these did the
priests and the Levites bring up.

6 Also King Solomon, and all the congrega-
tion of Israel that were assembled unto him
before the ark, sacrificed sheep and oxen, which
could not be told nor numbered for multitude.

7 And the priests brought in the ark of the
covenant of the LORD unto his place, to the
oracle of the house, into the most holy place,
even under the wings of the cherubims:

8 For the cherubims spread forth their wings
over the place of the ark, and the cherubims
covered the ark, and the staves thereof above.

9 And they drew out the staves of the ark,
that the ends of the staves were seen from the

ark before the oracle; but they were ^{A. M. 3000.}
not seen without. And ^{B. C. 1004.} there it is
unto this day.

10 *There was* nothing in the ark save the two
tables which Moses ^f put therein at Horeb,
^g when the LORD made a covenant with the
children of Israel, when they came out of
Egypt.

11 ¶ And it came to pass, when the priests
were come out of the holy place: (for all the
priests that were ^h present were sanctified, and
did not then wait by course:

12 ⁱ Also the Levites which were the singers,
all of them of Asaph, of Heman, of Jeduthun,
with their sons and their brethren; being ar-
rayed in white linen, having cymbals, and
psalteries, and harps, stood at the east end of
the altar, ^j and with them a hundred and twenty
priests sounding with trumpets:)

13 It came even to pass, as the trumpeters
and singers were as one, to make one sound to
be heard in praising and thanking the LORD;
and when they lifted up their voice with the
trumpets, and cymbals, and instruments of
music, and praised the LORD, saying, ^k For he
is good; for his mercy endureth for ever: that
then the house was filled with a cloud, even the
house of the LORD;

14 So that the priests could not stand to minis-
ter by reason of the cloud: ^l for the glory of
the LORD had filled the house of God.

^b 1 Kings viii. 1, &c.—^c 2 Sam. vi. 12.—^d 1 Kings viii. 2.
^e Chapter vii. 8, 9, 10.—^f Or, they are there, 1 Kings viii. 8.
^g Deut. x. 2, 5; Chap. vi. 11.

^h Or, where.—ⁱ Hebrew, found.—^j 1 Chronicles xxv. 1.
^k 1 Chronicles xv. 24.—^l Psa. cxxxvi.; 1 Chron. xvi. 34, 41.
^m Exod. xl. 35; Chap. vii. 2.

and the gold—The remainder of those vast sums,
mentioned 1 Chron. xxii. 14. Solomon assembled
the elders of Israel—Of this and the following
verses, see notes on 1 Kings viii. 1, &c.

Verse 5. *They brought up the ark*—The ark was
a type of Christ, and a token of the presence of God.
That gracious promise, *Lo, I am with you always,
even unto the end of the world*, does in effect bring
the ark into our religious assemblies, if we claim it
by faith and prayer. And this we should be earnest
for: the temple itself, if Christ leave it, is a desolate
place. *These did the priests bring in, &c.*—As
many of them as were fit for use, it is probable, were
still used. The rest were carefully laid up, as mon-
uments of antiquity.

Verse 9. *There it is unto this day*—When these
records were first written, not when they were re-
viewed and copied by Ezra: for neither the ark nor
the staves were seen or remained after the captivity.

Verse 11. *The priests did not then wait by course*
—According to David's appointment, (1 Chron. xxiv.

and xxv.,) which was only for the ordinary service:
but in extraordinary solemnities, such as this, they
all came together.

Verse 13. *To make one sound*—They sung and
sounded their trumpets all so exactly in time, and in
the same note, that it seemed but as one sound.
For he is good; for his mercy endureth for ever—
Probably they sung the whole of Psa. cxxxvi., which
begins thus, *O give thanks unto the Lord, for he is
good, &c., &c.*; every verse of which ends with,
*For his mercy endureth for ever. The house was
filled with a cloud*—That is, with such a cloud as
had formerly been in the most holy place of the ta-
bernacle, and was the token of the gracious presence
and blessing of the Divine Majesty among them.

Verse 14. *The priests could not stand to minister
by reason of the cloud*—This wonderful cloud of the
divine glory was a grand distinguishing particular
between the Jews and other nations, and an indubit-
able testimony that God did indeed reveal himself
to them, and took them under his protection and

care. Other nations had temples dedicated to their gods; but the records of none of them signify, or give any the least intimation, that there was ever any such appearance among them publicly, or in the sight of all the people, as this which is here spoken of, and represented as a convincing token that God was among them, accepted their offerings, and took

possession of the house which they had erected for his service. *The glory of the Lord had filled the house*—And this beautified it more than all the gold with which it was overlaid, or the precious stones with which it was garnished. Yet even that was no glory, in comparison of the glory of the gospel dispensation.

CHAPTER VI.

Solomon declares his intent in building the house, 1–11. His prayer of dedication, 12–42.

A. M. 3000.
B. C. 1034.

THEN ^asaid Solomon, The LORD hath said that he would dwell in the ^bthick darkness.

2 But I have built a house of habitation for thee, and a place for thy dwelling for ever.

3 And the king turned his face, and blessed the whole congregation of Israel: and all the congregation of Israel stood.

4 And he said, Blessed *be* the LORD God of Israel, who hath with his hands fulfilled *that* which he spake with his mouth, to my father David, saying,

5 Since the day that I brought forth my people out of the land of Egypt I chose no city among all the tribes of Israel to build a house in, that my name might be there; neither chose I any man to be a ruler over my people Israel:

6 ^cBut I have chosen Jerusalem, that my name might be there; and ^dhave chosen David to be over my people Israel.

7 Now ^eit was in the heart of David my father to build a house for the name of the LORD God of Israel;

8 But the LORD said to David my father, Forasmuch as it was in thy heart to build a house

^a 1 Kings viii. 12, &c.—^b Leviticus xvi. 2.—^c Chap. xii. 13.
^d 1 Chron. xxviii. 4.

NOTES ON CHAPTER VI.

Verse 1. *The Lord hath said he would dwell in the thick darkness*—He has made darkness his pavilion; but let this house be the residence of that darkness. For it is in the upper world that he dwells in light, such as no eye can approach.

Verse 2. *I have built a house of habitation for thee*—It is of great consequence in all our religious actions that we design well, and that our eye be single. If Solomon had built this temple in the pride of his heart, as Ahasuerus made his feast, only to show the riches of his kingdom, and the honour of his majesty, it would neither have glorified God nor

A. M. 3000.
B. C. 1004.

for my name, thou didst well in that it was in thy heart:

9 Notwithstanding, thou shalt not build the house; but thy son which shall come forth out of thy loins, he shall build the house for my name.

10 The LORD therefore hath performed his word that he hath spoken: for I am risen up in the room of David my father, and am set on the throne of Israel, as the LORD promised, and have built the house for the name of the LORD God of Israel.

11 And in it have I put the ark, ^fwherein is the covenant of the LORD, that he made with the children of Israel.

12 ¶ ^gAnd he stood before the altar of the LORD in the presence of all the congregation of Israel, and spread forth his hands:

13 (For Solomon had made a brazen scaffold, of five cubits ¹long, and five cubits broad, and three cubits high, and had set it in the midst of the court: and upon it he stood, and kneeled down upon his knees before all the congregation of Israel, and spread forth his hands toward heaven,)

^e 2 Samuel vii. 2; 1 Chron. xvii. 1; xxviii. 2.—^f Chap. v. 10.
^g 1 Kings viii. 22.—^h Heb. *the length thereof*, &c.

have turned to his own advantage. But he here declares on what inducements he undertook it, and they are such as not only justify, but magnify the undertaking: the reader will recollect that this whole prayer occurs 1 Kings viii., and that it has been explained at large in the notes there.

Verse 9. *Thy son, he shall build the house, &c.*—Thus one sows and another reaps: and one age begins that which the next brings to perfection. And let not the wisest of men think it any disparagement to them to pursue the good designs which those that went before them had formed, and to build on their foundation.

A. M. 3000. 14 And said, O LORD God of Israel, B. C. 1004. ^b *there is* no God like thee in the heaven, nor in the earth; which keepest covenant, and *showest* mercy unto thy servants, that walk before thee with all their hearts:

15 ⁱ Thou which hast kept with thy servant David my father that which thou hast promised him; and spakest with thy mouth, and hast fulfilled *it* with thy hand, as *it is* this day.

16 Now therefore, O LORD God of Israel, keep with thy servant David my father that which thou hast promised him, saying, ^k There ² shall not fail thee a man in my sight to sit upon the throne of Israel; ¹ yet so that thy children take heed to their way to walk in my law, as thou hast walked before me.

17 Now then, O LORD God of Israel, let thy word be verified, which thou hast spoken unto thy servant David.

18 But will God in very deed dwell with men on the earth? ^m Behold, heaven and the heaven of heavens cannot contain thee; how much less this house which I have built!

19 Have respect therefore to the prayer of thy servant, and to his supplication, O LORD my God, to hearken unto the cry and the prayer which thy servant prayeth before thee:

20 That thine eyes may be open upon this house day and night, upon the place whereof thou hast said, that thou wouldst put thy name there; to hearken unto the prayer which thy servant prayeth ³ toward this place.

21 Harken therefore unto the supplications of thy servant, and of thy people Israel, which they shall ⁴ make toward this place: hear thou from thy dwelling-place, *even* from heaven; and when thou hearest, forgive.

¹ Exodus xv. 11; Deut. iv. 39; vii. 9.—¹ 1 Chron. xxii. 9.
² 2 Samuel vii. 12, 16; 1 Kings ii. 4; vi. 12; Chapter vii. 18.
³ Heb. *There shall not a man be cut off.*—¹ Psalm cxxxii. 12.
^m Chap. ii. 6; Isa. lxvi. 1; Acts vii. 49.

Verse 14. *O Lord God of Israel, &c.*—Solomon, in the foregoing verses, had signed and sealed, so to speak, the deed of dedication, by which the temple was appropriated to the honour and service of God. Now here in the prayer by which it was, as it were, consecrated, it is made a figure of Christ, the great Mediator, through whom we are to offer up all our prayers, and to expect all God's favours, and to whom we are to have an eye in every thing wherein we have to do with God.

Verse 21. *Harken to the supplication of thy people, &c.*—He asks not that God would help them

22 ¶ If a man sin against his neighbour, ⁵ and an oath be laid upon him ^{A. M. 3000 B. C. 1004.} to make him swear, and the oath come before thine altar in this house;

23 Then hear thou from heaven, and do, and judge thy servants, by requiting the wicked, by recompensing his way upon his own head: and by justifying the righteous, by giving him according to his righteousness.

24 ¶ And if thy people Israel ⁶ be put to the worse before the enemy, because they have sinned against thee; and shall return and confess thy name, and pray and make supplication before thee ⁷ in this house;

25 Then hear thou from the heavens, and forgive the sin of thy people Israel; and bring them again unto the land which thou gavest to them and to their fathers.

26 ¶ When the ⁸ heaven is shut up, and there is no rain, because they have sinned against thee; *yet* if they pray toward this place, and confess thy name, and turn from their sin, when thou dost afflict them;

27 Then hear thou from heaven, and forgive the sin of thy servants, and of thy people Israel, when thou hast taught them the good way wherein they should walk; and send rain upon thy land, which thou hast given unto thy people for an inheritance.

28 ¶ If there ⁹ be dearth in the land, if there be pestilence, if there be blasting, or mildew, locusts, or caterpillars; if their enemies besiege them ⁶ in the cities of their land; whatsoever sore, or whatsoever sickness *there be*:

29 *Then* what prayer, or what supplication soever shall be made of any man, or of all thy people Israel, when every one shall know his

⁵ Or, *in this place.*—⁶ Heb. *pray.*—⁶ Heb. *and he require an oath of him.*—⁶ Or, *be smitten.*—⁷ Or, *toward.*—¹ 1 Kings xvii. 1.—⁸ Chapter xx. 9.—⁹ Hebrew, *in the land of their gates.*

without their praying for themselves, but that God would help them in answer to their prayers. Even Christ's intercession does not supersede, but encourages our supplications.

Verse 22. *And the oath come before thine altar*—By this it appears that the man who was to clear himself of any trespass, whereof he was accused, against his neighbour, by an oath, was to do it at the temple, before the altar of that God from whom he looked for the remission of his sins.

Verse 27. *When thou hast taught them the good way*—Or, seeing thou hast taught them the good

A. M. 3000. own sore, and his own grief, and shall
B. C. 1004. spread forth his hands ⁹ in this house ;

30 Then hear thou from heaven thy dwelling-place, and forgive, and render unto every man according unto all his ways, whose heart thou knowest ; (for thou only ⁹ knowest the hearts of the children of men ;)

31 That they may fear thee, to walk in thy ways, ¹⁰ so long as they live ¹¹ in the land which thou gavest unto our fathers.

32 ¶ Moreover, concerning the stranger, ⁹ which is not of thy people Israel, but is come from a far country for thy great name's sake, and thy mighty hand, and thy stretched-out arm ; if they come and pray in this house ;

33 Then hear thou from the heavens, *even* from thy dwelling-place, and do according to all that the stranger calleth to thee for ; that all people of the earth may know thy name, and fear thee, as *doth* thy people Israel, and may know that ¹² this house which I have built is called by thy name.

34 ¶ If thy people go out to war against their enemies by the way that thou shalt send them, and they pray unto thee toward this city which thou hast chosen, and the house which I have built for thy name ;

35 Then hear thou from the heavens their prayer and their supplication, and maintain their ¹³ cause.

36 ¶ If they sin against thee, (for *there is* ¹⁴ no

⁹ Or, *toward this house*.—¹ 1 Chron. xxviii. 9.—¹⁰ Heb. *all the days which*.—¹¹ Heb. *upon the face of the land*.—¹² John xii. 20 ; Acts viii. 27.—¹³ Heb. *thy name is called upon this house*.—¹⁴ Or, *right*.—¹ Proverbs xx. 9 ; Eccles. vii. 20 ; James iii. 2 ;

way, or instructed them in the knowledge of thyself, and of the worship and service in which thou delightest.

Verse 33. *May know that this house is called by thy name*.—That it is truly the house of the Almighty Jehovah. Solomon knew that the goodness of God was so immense, that the extending it, how much soever, toward other people, neither would nor could lessen the exercise of it toward Israel.

Verse 40. *Now, my God, &c.*—Solomon sums up all in beseeching God, that the prayers which should be presented there, for any blessing, of what sort soever it was, might be graciously accepted and answered by him.

Verse 41. *Arise, O Lord, into thy resting-place, &c.*—Thus he concludes his prayer with some expressions borrowed from one of his father's Psalms, namely, Psa. cxxxii. The whole word of God in general, and the Psalms in particular, are of use to direct us in prayer: and how can we express our-

man which sinneth not,) and thou ¹⁵ be angry with them, and deliver them ¹⁶ over before *their* enemies, and ¹⁴ they carry them away captives unto a land far off or near ;

37 Yet *if* they ¹⁵ bethink themselves in the land whither they are carried captive, and turn and pray unto thee in the land of their captivity, saying, We have sinned, we have done amiss, and have dealt wickedly ;

38 If they return to thee with all their heart and with all their soul in the land of their captivity, whither they have carried them captives, and pray toward their land which thou gavest unto their fathers, and *toward* the city which thou hast chosen, and toward the house which I have built for thy name ;

39 Then hear thou from the heavens, *even* from thy dwelling-place, their prayer and their supplications, and maintain their ¹⁶ cause, and forgive thy people which have sinned against thee.

40 Now, my God, let, I beseech thee, thine eyes be open, and *let* thine ears *be* attent ¹⁷ unto the prayer *that is made* in this place.

41 Now ¹⁸ therefore arise, O LORD God, into thy ¹⁹ resting-place, thou, and the ark of thy strength: let thy priests, O LORD God, be clothed with salvation, and let thy saints ²⁰ rejoice in goodness.

42 O LORD God, turn not away the face of thine anointed: ²¹ remember the mercies of David thy servant.

1 John i. 8.—¹⁴ Heb. *they that take them captives carry them away*.—¹⁵ Heb. *bring back to their heart*.—¹⁶ Or, *right*.—¹⁷ Heb. *to the prayer of this place*.—¹⁸ Psa. cxxxii. 8, 9, 10, 16.—¹⁹ 1 Chron. xxviii. 2.—²⁰ Neh. ix. 25.—²¹ Psa. cxxxii. 1 ; Isa. lv. 3.

selves in better language to God, than in that of his own Spirit? But these words were peculiarly proper and suitable to be expressed now, because they had a reference to this very occasion on which Solomon used them. And, in quoting them, he prays that God would take and keep possession of the temple for himself, and make it, as it were, his resting-place, where he would continue to dwell. *Thou, and the ark of thy strength*—Thou, in and by the ark, which is the sign and instrument of thy great power, put forth from time to time in behalf of thy people. *Let thy priests be clothed with salvation*—Let them be saved from their sins, restored to thy favour and image, and be encompassed on every side with thy protection and benediction. *And let thy saints rejoice in goodness*—Let them have cause of rejoicing and thanksgiving for the effects of thy goodness imparted to them.

Verse 42. *O Lord, turn not away the face of thine anointed*—Of me, who by thy command was anoint-

ed the king and ruler of thy people: do not deny my request, nor send me from the throne of thy grace with a dejected countenance. *Remember the mercies of David*—Those which thou hast promised to David, and to his house for ever. And thus may we plead, with an eye to Christ, who is called David,

Hos. iii. 5. Lord, remember his merits, and accept of us on the account of them. Remember the promises of the everlasting covenant, which are called *the sure mercies of David*, Isa. lv. 3. This must be all our desire, all our hope, all our prayer, and all our plea; for it is all our salvation.

CHAPTER VII.

God answers by fire, the people worship, 1-3. Solomon's sacrifices, 4-7. After keeping the feast he sends the people away, 8-11. God appears to him in a vision, 12-22.

A. M. 3000. B. C. 1004. **N**OW ^a when Solomon had made an end of praying, the ^b fire came down from heaven, and consumed the burnt-offering and the sacrifices; and ^c the glory of the LORD filled the house.

2 ^d And the priests could not enter into the house of the LORD, because the glory of the LORD had filled the LORD's house.

3 And when all the children of Israel saw how the fire came down, and the glory of the LORD upon the house, they bowed themselves with their faces to the ground upon the pavement, and worshipped, and praised the LORD, ^e say-

ing, For he is good; ^f for his mercy ^g endureth for ever. A. M. 3000. B. C. 1004.

4 ¶ ^h Then the king and all the people offered sacrifices before the LORD.

5 And King Solomon offered a sacrifice of twenty and two thousand oxen, and a hundred and twenty thousand sheep. So the king and all the people dedicated the house of God.

6 ^h And the priests waited on their offices: the Levites also with instruments of music of the LORD, which David the king had made to praise the LORD, because his mercy *endureth* for ever, when David praised ⁱ by their minis-

^a 1 Kings viii. 54.—^b Lev. ix. 24; Judges vi. 21; 1 Kings xviii. 38; 1 Chron. xxi. 26.—^c 1 Kings viii. 10, 11; Chap. v. 13, 14; Ezra x. 3, 4.

^d Chap. v. 14.—^e Chap. v. 13; Psa. cxxxvi. 1.—^f 1 Chron. xvi. 41; Chap. xx. 21.—^g 1 Kings viii. 62.—^h 1 Chronicles xv. 16.—ⁱ Heb. *by their hand*.

NOTES ON CHAPTER VII.

Verse 1. *The fire came down from heaven, and consumed the burnt-offering, &c.*—This circumstance is added to what is recorded in the first book of Kings. Hereby, and by the cloud filling the whole house, was shown God's gracious acceptance of Solomon's prayer and sacrifices; and an assurance was given that he would be present in this place, and grant all their lawful petitions. By the former of these, it is generally thought, the first sacrifice that we read of in Scripture, that of Abel, was declared to be acceptable to God. And when the tabernacle was erected and dedicated, and Aaron was consecrated, there was the same testimony given of God's presence there as here, Exod. xl. 34, 35; Lev. ix. 24. The surest evidence of God's acceptance of our prayers is, the descent of his holy fire of love upon us. And the heart which is filled with a holy awe and reverence of the divine majesty, (as the glory of the Lord filled this house,) the heart to which God manifests his greatness, and (what is no less his glory) his goodness, is thereby owned as his living temple.

Verse 3. *The glory of the Lord upon the house*—The cloud first came down upon the house, and then entered into the house, and was seen both within it by the priests, and without it by the people; who by this evident token of the divine presence, and the sudden and miraculous descent of the fire, were fully satisfied that it was God's house, and that he would

accept their sacrifices offered there, hear their prayers, and bestow his blessings upon them. *They bowed themselves with their faces to the ground upon the pavement*—Fell prostrate upon the ground, thus expressing their awful dread of the divine majesty, their cheerful submission to the divine authority, and the sense they had of their utter unworthiness to enter into his presence. *And worshipped and praised the Lord*—As they had great reason to do, having seen such manifest tokens of his presence among them. *Saying, For he is good, &c.*—Thus using the same words in which the priests had just before praised him: a song never out of season, and for which our hearts and tongues should never be out of tune.

Verses 4, 5. *Then the king and all the people offered sacrifices*—They had offered sacrifices before; but now they renewed them, and offered more, in acknowledgment of these new assurances of God's love to them. *Twenty and two thousand oxen, and a hundred and twenty thousand sheep*—It is probable that many of these sacrifices were burned in all the courts of the temple, and in different places upon the mount, as it was scarce possible that they should all be consumed upon one altar.

Verse 6. *Instruments of music of the Lord*—So called, because David had made them to praise the Lord withal. See 1 Chron. xv. 16. *When David praised by their ministry*—For David composed the

A. M. 3000. try; and ¹ the priests sounded trumpets before them, and all Israel stood.

7 Moreover ¹ Solomon hallowed the middle of the court that *was* before the house of the LORD: for there he offered burnt-offerings, and the fat of the peace-offerings, because the brazen altar which Solomon had made was not able to receive the burnt-offerings, and the meat-offerings, and the fat.

8 ¶ ¹ Also at the same time Solomon kept the feast seven days, and all Israel with him, a very great congregation, from the entering in of Hamath unto ² the river of Egypt.

9 And in the eighth day they made ² a solemn assembly: for they kept the dedication of the altar seven days, and the feast seven days.

10 And ² on the three and twentieth day of the seventh month he sent the people away into their tents, glad and merry in heart for the goodness that the LORD had showed unto David, and to Solomon, and to Israel his people.

11 Thus ² Solomon finished the house of the

¹ Chapter v. 12.—² 1 Kings viii. 64.—³ 1 Kings viii. 65. —⁴ Joshua xiii. 3.—⁵ Heb. a restraint.—⁶ 1 Kings viii. 66. —⁷ 1 Kings ix. 1, &c.—⁸ Deut. xii. 5.—⁹ Chap. vi. 26, 28.

psalms or hymns, and appointed them to be sung by the Levites, and instruments of music to be joined to their voices.

Verse 10. *On the three and twentieth day of the seventh month, he sent the people away*—They kept the feast of the dedication of the altar seven days, from the second to the ninth; the tenth day was the day of atonement, when they were to afflict their souls for sin, and that was not unseasonable in the midst of their rejoicings: then on the fifteenth began the feast of tabernacles, which continued to the twenty-second, and thus they continued to be employed in sacred services, and did not part till the twenty-third. We ought never to grudge the time that we spend in the worship of God, and in communion with him, nor think it long, or grow weary of it. *Glad and merry in heart for the goodness, &c.*—That is, according to the Targum, “for the goodness of the Lord shown unto David, in opening the doors of the sanctuary; and unto Solomon, whose prayer God had accepted, and had honoured with his presence in the house which he had built; and unto his people Israel, in his acceptance of their sacrifices, and sending down fire from heaven to consume them.”

Verse 12. *The Lord appeared to Solomon, and said, I have heard thy prayer*—That God had accepted his prayer was shown by his sending fire from heaven. But a prayer may be accepted, and yet not answered in the letter of it. God therefore

LORD, and the king's house: and all that came into Solomon's heart to make in the house of the LORD, and in his own house, he prosperously effected.

12 ¶ And the LORD appeared to Solomon by night, and said unto him, I have heard thy prayer, ² and have chosen this place to myself for a house of sacrifice.

13 ¶ If I shut up heaven that there be no rain, or if I command the locusts to devour the land, or if I send pestilence among my people;

14 If my people, ³ which are called by my name, shall ² humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; ⁴ then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land.

15 Now ⁴ mine eyes shall be open, and mine ears attent ⁴ unto the prayer *that is made* in this place.

16 For now have ⁴ I chosen and sanctified this house, that my name may be there for ever: and mine eyes and my heart shall be there perpetually.

¹ Hebrew, upon whom my name is called.—² James iv. 10. —³ Chap. vi. 27, 30.—⁴ Chap. vi. 40.—⁵ Heb. to the prayer of this place.—⁶ 1 Kings ix. 3; Chap. vi. 6.

appeared to him in the night, as he had done once before, (chap. i. 7,) and gave him a particular answer to his prayer. See notes on 1 Kings ix. 2-9.

Verse 13. *If I command the locusts to devour the land*—That is, use my authority and power over them to cause them to do so. A metaphor elsewhere used in reference to irrational animals, as 1 Kings xvii. 4, Amos ix. 3, which are not properly capable of receiving a command, or of paying obedience to it. Other national judgments are here supposed, such as famine, war, and the ravages of savage beasts.

Verse 14. *If my people shall humble themselves, and pray, &c.*—Thus national repentance and reformation are required. God expects, that if his people, who are called by his name, have dishonoured his name by their iniquity, they should honour it by accepting the punishment of their iniquity. They must humble themselves under his hand, must pray for the removal of the judgment, must seek his face and favour: and yet all this will not be sufficient, unless they turn from their wicked ways, and return to him from whom they have revolted. National mercy is then promised, *Then will I hear from heaven, &c.*—God will first forgive their sin, which brought the judgment upon them, and then will heal their land, and redress their grievances.

Verses 15, 16. *My eyes shall be open, &c., unto the prayer that is made in this place*—Or, that

A. M. 3000. 17 * And as for thee, if thou wilt
B. C. 1004. walk before me, as David thy father
walked, and do according to all that I have
commanded thee, and shalt observe my sta-
tutes and my judgments :

18 Then will I establish the throne of thy
kingdom according as I have covenanted with
David thy father, saying, † There ‡ shall not fail
thee a man *to be* ruler in Israel.

19 * But if ye turn away, and forsake my sta-
tutes and my commandments, which I have set
before you, and shall go and serve other gods,
and worship them ;

20 Then will I pluck them up by the roots
out of my land which I have given them ; and

* 1 Kings ix. 4, &c.—† Chapter vi. 16.—‡ Heb. *There shall
not be cut off to thee.*

shall be made in, or toward, this place ; for he
speaks of the answers which he would give to the
prayers which should afterward be made there.
For now have I chosen and sanctified this house,
&c.—There will I make myself known, and there
will I be called upon.

Verses 17, 18. *If thou wilt walk before me, &c.*
—He promises to establish and perpetuate Solo-
mon's kingdom, on condition that he persevered in
his duty ; assuring him, that if he hoped for the
benefit of God's covenant with David, he must imi-
tate the example of David.

Verse 19. *But if ye turn away*—Thou or thy
seed, *and forsake my statutes, &c.*—Thus God sets
before him *death* as well as *life*, the *curse* as well
as the *blessing*. He supposes it possible, that though
they had this temple built to the honour of God, yet

this house, which I have sanctified A. M. 3000.
for my name, will I cast out of my B. C. 1004.
sight, and will make it *to be* a proverb and a
by-word among all nations.

21 And this house, which is high, shall be an
astonishment to every one that passeth by it ;
so that he shall say, * Why hath the LORD
done thus unto this land, and unto this
house ?

22 And it shall be answered, Because they
forsook the LORD God of their fathers, which
brought them forth out of the land of Egypt,
and laid hold on other gods, and worshipped
them, and served them : therefore hath he
brought all this evil upon them.

* Lev. xxvi. 14, 38 ; Deut. xxviii. 15, 36.—† Deut. xxix. 24 ;
Jer. xxii. 8, 9.

they might be drawn aside to worship other gods.
For he knew how prone they were to backslide
into that sin. And he threatens, if they did so, it
would certainly be the ruin of both church and
state. That though they had been long in that
good land, and had taken deep root in it, he would
pluck them up by the roots, would extirpate their
whole nation, as men pluck up weeds in a garden,
and throw them out upon the dunghill. And that
this sanctuary would be no sanctuary to them to
protect them from the judgments of God, as they
imagined ; but that this house, which was so high,
not only for the magnificence of its structure, but
for the intended ends and uses of it, should be
brought down, laid in ruins, and made a cause of
wonder and astonishment to every one that passed
by, and to all the neighbouring nations.

CHAPTER VIII.

Solomon's buildings, 1-6. His workmen and officers, 7-10. He settles his wife, 11. Fixes the method of the temple-ser-
vice, 12-16. His trade, 17, 18.

A. M. 3012. AND * it came to pass at the end
B. C. 992. of twenty years, wherein Solo-
mon had built the house of the LORD, and his
own house,

2 That the cities which Hiram had restored
to Solomon, Solomon built them, and caused
the children of Israel to dwell there.

* 1 Kings ix. 10, &c.

NOTES ON CHAPTER VIII.

Verse 2. *The cities which Hiram had restored*
—Which Solomon gave to Hiram, but which, not
being pleased with them, he restored to him
again, 1 Kings ix. 12. *Solomon built them*—That

314

3 And Solomon went to Hamath- A. M. 3012.
zobah, and prevailed against it. B. C. 992.

4 † And he built Tadmor in the wilderness, and
all the store-cities, which he built in Hamath.

5 Also he built Beth-horon the upper, and
Beth-horon the nether, fenced cities, with walls,
gates, and bars ;

† 1 Kings ix. 17, &c.

is, rebuilt them, and placed his own subjects in
them.

Verse 4. *He built Tadmor*—For the explanation
of this and the following verses, see notes on
1 Kings ix. 17, 18, &c.

2

A. M. 3012. B. C. 992. 6 And Baalath, and all the store-cities that Solomon had, and all the chariot-cities, and the cities of the horsemen, and ¹ all that Solomon desired to build in Jerusalem, and in Lebanon, and throughout all the land of his dominion.

7 ¶ ^c As for all the people that were left of the Hittites, and the Amorites, and the Perizzites, and the Hivites, and the Jebusites, which were not of Israel,

8 But of their children, who were left after them in the land, whom the children of Israel consumed not, them did Solomon make to pay tribute until this day.

9 But of the children of Israel did Solomon make no servants for his work ; but they were men of war, and chief of his captains, and captains of his chariots and horsemen.

10 And these were the chief of King Solomon's officers, even ^d two hundred and fifty, that bare rule over the people.

11 ¶ And Solomon ^e brought up the daughter of Pharaoh out of the city of David unto the house that he had built for her : for he said, My wife shall not dwell in the house of David king of Israel, because the places are ² holy, whereunto the ark of the LORD hath come.

12 ¶ Then Solomon offered burnt-offerings unto the LORD on the altar of the LORD, which he had built before the porch,

13 Even after a certain rate ^f every day,

¹ Heb. all the desire of Solomon which he desired to build. * 1 Kings ix. 20, &c. — ^d 1 Kings ix. 23. — ^e 1 Kings iii. 1 ; vii. 8 ; ix. 24. — ² Heb. holiness. — ^f Exod. xxix. 38 ; Num. xxviii. 3, 9, 11, 26 ; xxix. 1, &c. — ^g Exod. xxiii. 14 ; Deut. xvi. 16.

Verse 11. *Unto the house which he had built*—This house he had built for her, because the ark was now in the house of David, which therefore ought to be kept pure and free from every danger and appearance of pollution. For though Pharaoh's daughter was proselyted to the Jewish religion, and had renounced idolatry, it is not likely that both she and all her servants had embraced the whole law of Moses ; and therefore they might many ways defile a place made sacred by that symbol of the divine presence.

Verse 14. *So had David the man of God commanded*—David is here called the man of God, as Moses had been, because he was a prophet divinely inspired, and was both instructed and authorized of God to make these establishments. Hence his commands are represented as being the commands of

offering according to the commandment of Moses, on the sabbaths, and on the new-moons, and on the solemn feasts, ³ three times in the year, even in the feast of unleavened bread, and in the feast of weeks, and in the feast of tabernacles.

14 ¶ And he appointed, according to the order of David his father, the ^b courses of the priests to their service, and ¹ the Levites to their charges, to praise and minister before the priests, as the duty of every day required : the ² porters also by their courses at every gate : for ³ so had David the man of God commanded.

15 And they departed not from the commandment of the king unto the priests and Levites concerning any matter, or concerning the treasures.

16 ¶ Now all the work of Solomon was prepared unto the day of the foundation of the house of the LORD, and until it was finished. So the house of the LORD was perfected.

17 ¶ Then went Solomon to ¹ Ezion-geber, and to ⁴ Eloth, at the sea-side in the land of Edom.

18 ^m And Hiram sent him by the hands of his servants, ships, and servants that had knowledge of the sea ; and they went with the servants of Solomon to Ophir, and took thence four hundred and fifty talents of gold, and brought them to King Solomon.

^b 1 Chron. xxiv. 1. — ¹ 1 Chron. xxv. 1. — ^k 1 Chron. ix. 17 ; xxvi. 1. — ³ Heb. so was the commandment of David the man of God. — ¹ 1 Kings ix. 26. — ⁴ Or, Elath, Deut. ii. 8 ; 2 Kings xiv. 22. — ^m 1 Kings ix. 27 ; Chap. ix. 10, 13.

God. And Solomon, though a wise and great man, and the builder of the temple, did not attempt to amend, alter, or add to, what the man of God had commanded in God's name, but closely adhered to it, and used his authority to have it duly observed.

Verses 15, 16. *They departed not from the commandment of the king*—He obeyed God's commands enjoined by David, in God's name, and by inspiration of God's Spirit, and therefore all obeyed his orders. *Now all the work of Solomon was prepared*—All the materials were procured, and in all points fitted and completed beforehand. *So the house of God was perfected*—This is now said, because the service of the temple was now put into this good order. The work was the main matter, not the place : the temple was unfinished till all this was done.

CHAPTER IX.

The queen of Sheba visits Solomon, 1-12. The riches and splendour of his court, 13-28. The conclusion of his reign, 29-31.

A. M. 3012. B. C. 992. **AND** when the queen of Sheba heard of the fame of Solomon, she came to prove Solomon with hard questions at Jerusalem, with a very great company, and camels that bare spices, and gold in abundance, and precious stones: and when she was come to Solomon, she communed with him of all that was in her heart.

2 And Solomon told her all her questions: and there was nothing hid from Solomon which he told her not.

3 And when the queen of Sheba had seen the wisdom of Solomon, and the house that he had built,

4 And the meat of his table, and the sitting of his servants, and the attendance of his ministers, and their apparel; his ¹cup-bearers also, and their apparel; and his ascent by which he went up into the house of the LORD; there was no more spirit in her.

5 And she said to the king, *It was* a true ²report which I heard in mine own land of thine ³acts, and of thy wisdom:

6 Howbeit, I believed not their words, until I came, and mine eyes had seen *it*: and behold, the one half of the greatness of thy wisdom was not told me: *for* thou exceedest the fame that I heard.

7 Happy *are* thy men, and happy *are* these thy servants, which stand continually before thee, and hear thy wisdom.

8 Blessed be the LORD thy God, which delighted in thee to set thee on his throne, *to be* king for the LORD thy God: because thy God loved Israel, to establish them for ever, therefore made he thee king over them, to do judgment and justice.

¹ 1 Kings x. 1, &c.; Matt. xii. 42; Luke xi. 31.—² Or, butlers.—³ Heb. word.—³ Or, sayings.

NOTES ON CHAPTER IX.

Verse 1. There is little in this chapter but what is related in 1 Kings x.; in the notes on which the reader will find it explained at large.

Verse 8. *To set thee on his throne, to be king for the Lord thy God*—In the Lord's name and stead, in a special manner, because he sat in God's own throne, and ruled over God's peculiar people, and did, in an eminent manner, maintain the honour of God in his land, and in the eyes of all the world. Those mercies are doubly sweet, in which we

9 And she gave the king a hundred and twenty talents of gold, and of spices great abundance, and precious stones: neither was there any such spice as the queen of Sheba gave King Solomon.

10 And the servants also of Hiram, and the servants of Solomon, ^bwhich brought gold from Ophir, brought ^calgum-trees and precious stones.

11 And the king made *of* the algum-trees ⁴terraces⁵ to the house of the LORD, and to the king's palace, and harps and psalteries for singers: and there were none such seen before in the land of Judah.

12 And King Solomon gave to the queen of Sheba all her desire, whatsoever she asked, besides *that* which she had brought unto the king. So she turned, and went away to her own land, she and her servants.

13 ¶ Now the weight of gold that came to Solomon in one year was six hundred and threescore and six talents of gold;

14 Besides *that which* chapmen and merchants brought. And all the kings of Arabia and ⁶governors of the country brought gold and silver to Solomon.

15 ¶ And King Solomon made two hundred targets *of* beaten gold: six hundred *shekels* of beaten gold went to one target.

16 And three hundred shields *made he of* beaten gold: three hundred *shekels* of gold went to one shield. And the king put them in the house of the forest of Lebanon.

17 ¶ Moreover, the king made a great throne of ivory, and overlaid it with pure gold.

18 And *there were* six steps to the throne, with a footstool of gold, *which were* fastened

^b Chap. viii. 18.—^c 1 Kings x. 11, *almug-trees*.—^d Or, *stays*.
^e Heb. *highways*.—^f Or, *captains*.

can taste the kindness and good-will of God as our God.

Verse 9. *She gave the king a hundred and twenty talents of gold, &c.*—This was indeed a royal gift, for the gold alone amounted to more than sixty-nine thousand pounds sterling.

Verse 12. *Besides that which she had brought unto the king*—Over and above that which was an equivalent for the presents she had made him. See note on 1 Kings x. 13.

Verse 18. *With a footstool of gold*—This is not

A. M. 3012. to the throne, and ⁷stays on each
B. C. 992. side of the sitting-place, and two lions
standing by the stays:

19 And twelve lions stood there on the one side and on the other upon the six steps. There was not the like made in any kingdom.

20 ¶ And all the drinking-vessels of King Solomon were of gold, and all the vessels of the house of the forest of Lebanon were of ⁶pure gold: ⁹none were of silver; it was not any thing accounted of in the days of Solomon.

21 For the king's ships went to Tarshish with the servants of Hiram: every three years once came the ships of Tarshish, bringing gold, and silver, ¹⁰ivory, and apes, and peacocks.

22 And King Solomon passed all the kings of the earth in riches and wisdom.

23 ¶ And all the kings of the earth sought the presence of Solomon, to hear his wisdom, that God had put in his heart.

24 And they brought every man his present, vessels of silver, and vessels of gold, and raiment, harness, and spices, horses, and mules, a rate year by year.

25 ¶ And Solomon ^dhad four thousand stalls

⁷ Heb. hands.—⁸ Heb. shut up.—⁹ Or, there was no silver in them.—¹⁰ Or, elephants' teeth.—^d 1 Kings iv. 26; x. 26; Chapter i. 14.—^e 1 Kings iv. 21.—^f Genesis xv. 18; Psalm lxxii. 8.

mentioned in the parallel passage in 1 Kings x. 18, where see the note.

Verse 23. *All the kings of the earth sought the presence of Solomon*—All in those parts of the world. *To hear his wisdom*—Either his knowledge of the works of God in creation and providence, or his skill in physic, or his state-policy, or his rules of prudence for the conduct of human life, or perhaps the principles of his religion, and the evidences of it. *That God put in his heart*—Which was God's supernatural gift to him, in answer to his prayer. The application which they then made, with such eagerness, to Solomon, to hear his wisdom, will aggravate, shame, and condemn men's general contempt of Christ and his gospel, in which are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge; but which none of the princes of this world

for horses and chariots, and twelve ^{A. M. 3012.}
thousand horsemen; whom he be- ^{B. C. 992.}
stowed in the chariot-cities, and with the king at Jerusalem.

26 ¶ ^eAnd he reigned over all the kings ^ffrom the ¹¹river even unto the land of the Philistines, and to the border of Egypt.

27 ^gAnd the king ¹²made silver in Jerusalem as stones, and cedar-trees made he as the sycamore-trees that are in the low plains in abundance.

28 ^hAnd they brought unto Solomon horses out of Egypt, and out of all lands.

29 ¶ ⁱNow the rest of the acts of Solomon, first and last, are they not written in the ¹³book of Nathan the prophet, and in the prophecy of ^kAhijah the Shilonite, and in the visions of ¹Iddo the seer against Jeroboam the son of Nebat?

30 ^mAnd Solomon reigned in Jerusalem over all Israel forty years.

31 And Solomon slept with his fa- ^{About}
thers, and he was buried in the city ^{B. C. 975.}
of David his father: and Rehoboam his son reigned in his stead.

¹¹ That is, Euphrates.—^g 1 Kings x. 27; Chapter i. 15.
¹² Heb. gave.—^h 1 Kings x. 28; Chap. i. 16.—ⁱ 1 Kings xi. 41.—¹³ Heb. words.—^k 1 Kings xi. 29.—^l Chapter xii. 25; xiii. 22.—^m 1 Kings xi. 42, 43.

desire to know, for they are foolishness to them, 1 Cor. ii. 8, 14.

Verse 29. *In the visions of Iddo the seer*—Mentioned also chap. xii. 15, and supposed by some to be the same person who is called *Obed*, chap. xv. 1. This and the other prophets here mentioned were also historians, and wrote annals of their times, out of which these sacred books were taken, either by these or other prophets.

Verse 31. *And Solomon slept with his fathers*—We have here Solomon in his throne, and Solomon in his grave; for the throne could not secure him from the grave. Here is he stripped of his pomp, and leaving all his wealth and power, not to one whom he knew not whether he would be a wise man or a fool, but one he knew would be a fool! This was not only vanity, but vexation of spirit.

CHAPTER X.

The people request Rehoboam to ease their grievances, 1-5. Rehoboam, rejecting the old men's counsel, by the advice of the young men, answers them roughly, 6-15. Ten tribes revolt, 16-19.

A. M. 3029. **AND** ^aRehoboam went to Shechem: for to Shechem were all Israel come to make him king.

2 And it came to pass, when Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who *was* in Egypt, ^bwhither he had fled from the presence of Solomon the king, heard *it*, that Jeroboam returned out of Egypt.

3 And they sent and called him. So Jeroboam and all Israel came and spake to Rehoboam, saying,

4 Thy father made our yoke grievous: now therefore ease thou somewhat the grievous servitude of thy father, and his heavy yoke that he put upon us, and we will serve thee.

5 And he said unto them, Come again unto me after three days. And the people departed.

6 ¶ And King Rehoboam took counsel with the old men that had stood before Solomon his father while he yet lived, saying, What counsel give ye *me* to return answer to this people?

7 And they spake unto him, saying, If thou be kind to this people, and please them, and speak good words to them, they will be thy servants for ever.

8 But he forsook the counsel which the old men gave him, and took counsel with the young men that were brought up with him, that stood before him.

9 And he said unto them, What advice give ye, that we may return answer to this people, which have spoken to me, saying, Ease somewhat the yoke that thy father did put upon us?

10 And the young men that were brought up with him, spake unto him, saying, Thus shalt thou answer the people that spake unto thee, saying, Thy father made our yoke heavy, but make thou *it* somewhat lighter for us; thus

shalt thou say unto them, My little ^{A. M. 3029.} *finger* shall be thicker than my father's loins. ^{B. C. 975.}

11 For whereas my father ¹put a heavy yoke upon you, I will put more to your yoke: my father chastised you with whips, but I *will chastise you* with scorpions.

12 ¶ So Jeroboam and all the people came to Rehoboam on the third day, as the king bade, saying, Come again to me on the third day.

13 And the king answered them roughly; and King Rehoboam forsook the counsel of the old men,

14 And answered them after the advice of the young men, saying, My father made your yoke heavy, but I will add thereto: my father chastised you with whips, but I *will chastise you* with scorpions.

15 So the king hearkened not unto the people: ^cfor the cause was of God, that the LORD might perform his word, which he spake by the ^dhand of Ahijah the Shilonite to Jeroboam the son of Nebat.

16 ¶ And when all Israel *saw* that the king would not hearken unto them, the people answered the king, saying, What portion have we in David? and *we have* none inheritance in the son of Jesse: every man to your tents, O Israel: *and* now, David, see to thine own house. So all Israel went to their tents.

17 But *as for* the children of Israel that dwelt in the cities of Judah, Rehoboam reigned over them.

18 Then King Rehoboam sent Hadoram that *was* over the tribute; and the children of Israel stoned him with stones that he died. But King Rehoboam ²made speed to get him up to *his* chariot, to flee to Jerusalem.

19 ^eAnd Israel rebelled against the house of David unto this day.

^a 1 Kings xii. 1, &c.—^b 1 Kings xi. 40.—^c Hebrew, *laded*.
^d 1 Sam. ii. 25; 1 Kings xii. 15, 24.

^d 1 Kings xi. 29.—^e Heb. *strengthened himself*.—^f 1 Kings xii. 19.

NOTES ON CHAPTER X.

Verse 1. *Rehoboam went to Shechem, &c.*—See 1 Kings xii., where this chapter is explained, so that little need be added here.

Verse 3. *And they sent and called him*—Or rather, as the Targum properly translates it, *For they sent*, assigning a reason why he returned from Egypt.

Verse 4. *Thy father made our yoke grievous*—It is probable, when Solomon had declined from God, that God left him to himself to act thus impolitically.

Verse 7. *If thou be kind to this people*—Moderate counsels are generally best. Gentleness will do what violence will not do. Good words cost nothing but a little self-denial, and yet they purchase great things.

Verse 16. *Now, David, see to thine own house*—When public affairs are in a ferment, violent proceedings do but make ill worse. Many have been driven to the mischief they did not intend, by being too severely dealt with.

CHAPTER XI.

Rehoboam is forbidden to fight against Israel, 1-4. He secures the two tribes, 5-12. The priests and Levites resort to him, 13-17. His wives and children, 18-23.

A. M. 3029.
B. C. 975. **AND** when Rehoboam was come to Jerusalem, he gathered of the house of Judah and Benjamin a hundred and fourscore thousand chosen *men* which were warriors, to fight against Israel, that he might bring the kingdom again to Rehoboam.

2 But the word of the LORD came ^b to She-maiah the man of God, saying,

3 Speak unto Rehoboam the son of Solomon, king of Judah, and to all Israel in Judah and Benjamin, saying,

4 Thus saith the LORD, Ye shall not go up, nor fight against your brethren: return every man to his house: for this thing is done of me. And they obeyed the words of the LORD, and returned from going against Jeroboam.

5 ¶ And Rehoboam dwelt in Jerusalem, and built cities for defence in Judah.

6 He built even Beth-lehem, and Etam, and Tekoa,

7 And Beth-zur, and Shoco, and Adullam,

^a 1 Kings xii. 21, &c.—^b Chapter xii. 15.—^c Heb. *presented themselves to him.*

NOTES ON CHAPTER XI.

Verse 3. *Speak unto Rehoboam the son of Solomon*—Intimating that this was determined for the sin of Solomon, and therefore could not be reversed. But for an explanation of this paragraph, see notes on 1 Kings xii. 21-24.

Verse 5. *Rehoboam built cities for defence in Judah*—That is, repaired, enlarged, and fortified them: for these cities, or divers of them, were built before, as appears from Josh. x. 10, and xii. 15, and xv. 24, 33-58, and xix. 42.

Verse 13. *The priests and Levites resorted to him out of all their coasts*—So the tribe of Levi was added to the tribe of Judah; though not the cities, in general, wherein they dwelt, which they were forced to leave when they would not conform to the idolatrous worship which Jeroboam had set up. The tribe of Simeon, likewise, was so intermixed with Judah, that, in all probability, many cities thereof, if not all, became one body with it, which made Judah a very powerful kingdom.

Verse 14. *For Jeroboam and his sons cast them off*—They would not suffer them to instruct the Israelites in the worship of God, nor to go up to Jerusalem to worship in their courses: and these priests would not join with them in the worship of the calves, as they were commanded by Jeroboam to do; and therefore they willingly forsook all their patri-monies and possessions for God's sake. No secular advantages whatsoever should detain us there, where

8 And Gath, and Mareshah, and Ziph, A. M. 3029.
B. C. 975.

9 And Adoraim, and Lachish, and Azekah,
10 And Zorah, and Ajalon, and Hebron, which *are* in Judah and in Benjamin, fenced cities.

11 And he fortified the strong holds, and put captains in them, and store of victual, and of oil and wine.

12 And in every several city *he put* shields and spears, and made them exceeding strong, having Judah and Benjamin on his side.

13 ¶ And the priests and the Levites that *were* in all Israel ¹resorted to him ^{About} ^{B. C. 974.} out of all their coasts.

14 (For the Levites left ^c their suburbs and their possession, and came to Judah and Jerusalem: for ^d Jeroboam and his sons had cast them off from executing the priest's office unto the LORD:

15 ^e And he ordained him priests for the high

^c Num. xxxv. 2.—^d Chapter xiii. 9.—^e 1 Kings xii. 31; xiii. 33; xiv. 9; Hos. xiii. 2.

we are in danger of making shipwreck of faith and a good conscience. It was a mercy to these priests and Levites that they had a place of refuge to flee to; and that, when Jeroboam cast them off, there were those so near that would receive and bid them welcome; and that they were not forced to flee into the lands of the heathen. And it was an evidence that they loved their work better than their maintenance, in that they *left their suburbs and possessions* in the country, where they might have lived at ease upon their own property, because they were restrained from serving God there, and in that, casting themselves upon God's providence, and the charity of their brethren, they came where they might have the full enjoyment of God's ordinances, according to his own institution. They judged that poverty, in the way of duty, was to be chosen, rather than plenty, in the way of sin; and that it was better to live upon alms, or die in a prison, with a good conscience, than roll in wealth and pleasure with a prostituted one. At the same time, it was the wisdom and praise of Rehoboam and his people, that they bid them welcome, though they probably in-commoded themselves to make room for them. Conscientious refugees bring a blessing along with them to the countries that entertain them, as they leave a curse behind them with those that expel them.

Verse 15. *For the high places, and for devils*—Or, *for the high places, both for devils*, (the Baals, or false gods, which divers of his people worshipped,

A. M. 3030. places, and for ^fthe devils, and for
B. C. 974. ^sthe calves which he had made.)

16 ^hAnd after them out of all the tribes of Israel, such as set their hearts to seek the LORD God of Israel came to Jerusalem, to sacrifice unto the LORD God of their fathers.

17 So they ⁱstrengthened the kingdom of Judah, and made Rehoboam the son of Solomon strong, three years: for three years they walked in the way of David and Solomon.

18 ¶ And Rehoboam took him Mahalath the daughter of Jerimoth the son of David to wife, and Abihail the daughter of Eliab the son of Jesse;

19 Which bare him children, Jeush, and Shamariah, and Zaham.

^f Lev. xvii. 7; ¹ Cor. x. 20.—^s 1 Kings xii. 28.—^h Chapter xv. 9; xxx. 11, 18.—ⁱ Chapter xii. 1.—^k 1 Kings xv. 2.

whom he encouraged to do so, giving them liberty to do any thing but to serve God at Jerusalem,) and for the calves—So he erected two sorts of high places, some for Baal, and some for the true God, whom he pretended to worship in and by the calves.

Verse 16. *And after them such as set their hearts to seek the Lord God of Israel*—All the devout, pious Israelites, of every tribe, followed the priests and Levites: all who feared and loved God in sincerity and truth, and were determined to serve him. All such left the inheritances of their fathers, and went and took houses in or near Jerusalem, that they might have free access to the altar and temple of God, and be out of the way of the temptation to worship the calves. Thus the best of the Israelites united themselves to the tribe of Judah, and would have great influence in preserving that tribe from the idolatry into which the ten tribes were fallen. "That is best for us," says Henry, "which is best for our souls; and in all our choices, advantages for religion must take place of all outward conveniences. Where God's faithful priests are, his faithful people should be. If Jeroboam cast off God's ministers, every true-born Israelite will think himself obliged to own them, and stand by them." Reader, when the ark removes, do you remove and go after it.

Verse 17. *So they strengthened the kingdom of Judah*—Not only by the addition of so many per-

20 And after her he took ^kMaachah ^{A. M. 3030.}
the daughter of Absalom; which bare ^{B. C. 974.}
him Abijah, and Attai, and Ziza, and Shelomith.

21 And Rehoboam loved Maachah the daughter of Absalom above all his wives and his concubines: (for he took eighteen wives, and threescore concubines; and begat twenty and eight sons, and threescore daughters.)

22 And Rehoboam ^lmade Abijah the son of Maachah the chief, to be ruler among his brethren; for *he thought* to make him king.

23 And he dealt wisely, and dispersed of all his children throughout all the countries of Judah and Benjamin, unto every fenced city: and he gave them victual in abundance. And he desired ²many wives.

She is called Michaiah the daughter of Uriel, chapter xiii. 2. ¹ Deut. xxi. 15, 17.—² Heb. a multitude of wives.

sons to it, who probably brought what they could of their property with them, but by their piety and prayers they procured a blessing upon the kingdom which was a sanctuary to them, Zech. xii. 5. It is the interest of any nation to protect and encourage religion and religious people, and adds, more than any thing, to its strength. They made him and his people strong three years—For so long they walked in the way of David and Solomon—Their good way; but when they forsook that, and so threw themselves out of God's favour and protection, the best friends they had could no longer help to strengthen them. This honourable mention of Solomon, as a pattern of piety, is a considerable evidence of his true repentance before his death.

Verse 22. *Rehoboam made Abijah ruler among his brethren*—He declared him his successor, and gave him the dominion over his brethren.

Verse 23. *He dealt wisely, and dispersed his children, &c.*—Either, 1st, Lest his other sons should, after his death, unite together against Abijah; or rather, 2d, Because he could repose confidence in them, for the preservation of the public peace and safety, and could trust them with the fenced cities, which he took care to have well victualled, that they might be a defence to the country in case of an invasion. Thus he that dealt foolishly at first, dealt wisely afterward in his affairs.

CHAPTER XII.

Rehoboam, forsaking God, is oppressed by Shishak, 1-4. He humbles himself, and is preserved in his kingdom, but spoiled of his treasures, 5-12. His character and death, 13-16.

A. M. 3032. B. C. 972. **AND** * it came to pass, when Rehoboam had established the kingdom, and had strengthened himself, ^b he forsook the law of the LORD, and all Israel with him.

B. C. 971. **2** ° And it came to pass, *that* in the fifth year of King Rehoboam, Shishak king of Egypt came up against Jerusalem, because they had transgressed against the LORD,

3 With twelve hundred chariots, and three-score thousand horsemen: and the people *were* without number that came with him out of Egypt; ^d the Lubims, the Sukkiims, and the Ethiopians.

4 And he took the fenced cities which *pertained* to Judah, and came to Jerusalem.

* Chapter xi. 17.—^b 1 Kings xiv. 22, 24.—^c 1 Kings xiv. 24, 25.—^d Chap. xvi. 8.—^e Chap. xi. 2.

NOTES ON CHAPTER XII.

Verse 1. *When Rehoboam had established the kingdom*—Israel was very much disgraced and weakened by being divided into two kingdoms; yet the kingdom of Judah, having both the temple and the royal city, both the house of David and the house of Aaron, might have done very well if they had continued in the way of their duty: but here we have all out of order there. For Rehoboam forsook the law of the Lord, and all Israel with him—That is, all his people, all Judah, here called Israel, because they walked in the evil ways into which Rehoboam had drawn the kingdom of Israel. Of this defection from God and his service, see 1 Kings xiv. 22–24. Observe, reader; as long as he thought his throne in an insecure state, he kept to his duty, that he might make God his friend; but when he judged that he was established in his kingdom, he acted as if he thought he had no more occasion for religion. Thus the prosperity of fools destroys them.

Verse 2. *In the fifth year Shishak came up against Jerusalem*—Presently after the apostasy of the king and people, which was in the fourth year. As this great calamity came upon them so soon after they began to desert the worship of God, and by a hand they had so little reason to suspect, having had a great deal of friendly correspondence with Egypt in the last reign; and as it came with so much violence, that all the fenced cities of Judah, which Rehoboam had lately fortified and garrisoned, and on which he relied much for the safety of his kingdom, fell into the hands of the enemy without making any resistance, it plainly appeared that the Lord had sent it, because they had transgressed against him. And doubtless God brought this unexpected trouble upon them so soon after their departure from him, not only to manifest his displeasure at, and to punish them for, their crime, but also and especially to recover them to repentance before their hearts were hardened.

Verse 3. *The Lubims*—The people of Lybia, a

5 ¶ Then came ° Shemaiah the prophet to Rehoboam, and to the princes of Judah, that were gathered together to Jerusalem because of Shishak, and said unto them, Thus saith the LORD, ^f Ye have forsaken me, and therefore have I also left you in the hand of Shishak.

6 Whereupon the princes of Israel and the king ° humbled themselves; and they said, ^h The LORD is righteous.

7 And when the LORD saw that they humbled themselves, ⁱ the word of the LORD came to Shemaiah, saying, They have humbled themselves; *therefore* I will not destroy them, but I will grant them ^j some deliverance; and

^f Chap. xv. 2.—^g James iv. 10.—^h Exod. ix. 27.—ⁱ 1 Kings xxi. 28, 29.—^j Or, a little while.

famous country of Africa, adjoining to Egypt. And the Sukkiims were the Troglodytes, a people who lived on the western side of the Red sea, and had that name from their dwelling in dens and caves of the earth, which is also the meaning of the Hebrew word סׁׁׁׁ, *succhiim*, here used. As for the people called Cush, which we translate Ethiopians, they were either those to the south of Egypt, or the Scenitæ in Arabia.

Verse 5. *Then came Shemaiah the prophet to Rehoboam and the princes of Judah*—Lest they should not readily or rightly understand the meaning of this providence, God sends a prophet to explain it, namely, the same Shemaiah that had brought them an injunction from God not to fight against the ten tribes, who plainly tells them, that the reason why Shishak prevailed against them was, not because they had been impolitic in the management of their affairs, but because they had forsaken God.

Verse 6. *Whereupon the princes and the king humbled themselves*—They penitentially acknowledged their sin, and patiently accepted the punishment of it, saying, *The Lord is righteous*—We have none to blame but ourselves: let God be clear when he is judged. Thus it becomes us, when we are under the rebukes of divine providence, to justify God, and judge ourselves. “Even princes and kings,” says Henry, “must either bend or break; either be humbled or ruined.”

Verse 7. *They have humbled themselves*—Which though they did by constraint and with reluctance, yet God was pleased so far to regard it, as to mitigate their calamity. *I will not destroy them*—Such a vast, and now victorious army as Shishak had, having made themselves masters of all the fenced cities, what else could be expected, but that the whole country, and even Jerusalem itself, would in a little time be theirs? But when God says, *Here shall the proud waves be stayed*, the most threatening force strangely dwindles, and be-

A. M. 3033. my wrath shall not be poured out
B. C. 971. upon Jerusalem by the hand of
Shishak.

8 Nevertheless ^k they shall be his servants ;
that they may know ^l my service, and the ser-
vice of the kingdoms of the countries.

9 ^m So Shishak king of Egypt came up
against Jerusalem, and took away the trea-
sures of the house of the LORD, and the trea-
sures of the king's house ; he took all : he car-
ried away also the shields of gold which Solo-
mon had ⁿ made.

10 Instead of which, King Rehoboam made
shields of brass, and committed *them* ^o to the
hands of the chief of the guard, that kept the
entrance of the king's house.

11 And when the king entered into the house
of the LORD, the guard came and fetched them,

^k Isaiah xxvi. 13.—^l Deut. xxviii. 47, 48.—^m 1 Kings xiv. 25, 26.—ⁿ 1 Kings x. 16, 17 ; Chap. ix. 15, 16.—^o 2 Samuel viii. 18.

comes impotent. *I will grant them some deliverance*—I will give some stop to the course of my wrath, which was ready to be poured forth upon them to their utter destruction. Those who acknowledge God is righteous in afflicting them, shall find him gracious. They that humble themselves before him, shall find favour with him. So ready is the God of mercy to take the first occasion to show mercy. Reader, if thy heart be humbled, and made contrite under humbling and distressing providences, the affliction has done its work, and it shall either be removed, or the property of it altered.

Verse 8. *They shall be his servants*—That is, they shall be much at his mercy, and put under contribution by him, and some of them taken prisoners, and held in captivity by him: *that they may know my service, and the service of the kingdoms, &c.*—That they may experimentally know the difference between my yoke, and the yoke of a foreign and idolatrous prince. The more God's service is compared with other services, the more reasonable and easy it will appear. And, whatever difficulties or hardships we may imagine there are in the way of obedience, it is better, a thousand times, to go through them, than to expose ourselves to the punishment of disobedience. Are the laws of temperance thought hard? The effects of intemperance will be much harder. The service of virtue is *perfect liberty*, the service of vice *perfect slavery*.

Verses 9, 10. *Shishak took away the treasures of the house of the Lord, and of the king's house*—He plundered both the temple and the exchequer, the treasures of both which Solomon had left full. David and Solomon, who walked in the ways of God, filled the treasures, one by war, and the other by merchandise ; but Rehoboam, who forsook these ways, emptied them. Respecting the taking away

and brought them again into the guard-chamber. A. M. 3033
B. C. 971.

12 And when he humbled himself, the wrath of the LORD turned from him, that he would not destroy *him* altogether : ² and also in Judah things went well.

13 ¶ So King Rehoboam strengthened himself in Jerusalem, and reigned : for ^p Rehoboam was one and forty years old when he began to reign, and he reigned seventeen years in Jerusalem, ^q the city which the LORD had chosen out of all the tribes of Israel, to put his name there. And his mother's name was Naamah an Ammonitess.

14 And he did evil, because he ^r prepared not his heart to seek the LORD.

15 Now the acts of Rehoboam, first and last, are they not written in the ^s book of Shemaiah

² Or, and yet in Judah there were good things, Gen. xviii. 24 ; 1 Kings xiv. 13 ; Chap. xix. 3.—^p 1 Kings xiv. 21.—^q Chap. vi. 6.—^r Or, fixed.—^s Heb. words.

of the golden shields, and substituting brazen ones in their place, see notes on 1 Kings xiv. 25–28.

Verse 12. *In Judah things went well*—Hebrew, *There were good things*. The meaning is either, 1st, Though there were many corruptions in Judah, yet there were also divers good things there, which were not in Israel, as the word, and ordinances, and pure worship of God, prophets and ministers of God's appointment, and divers truly religious people. And thus, this was an additional reason why God would not destroy them. Or, 2d, Notwithstanding this loss, they began to recruit themselves, and to regain some degree of their former prosperity. In Judah, things went ill when all the fenced cities were taken ; but when they repented, the posture of the affairs altered, and things went well. If at any time things do not go so well as we could wish, yet we have reason to take notice of it with thankfulness, if they go better than they have done, and better than we expected or deserved, and to own God's goodness, if he do but grant us some deliverance.

Verse 13. *King Rehoboam strengthened himself in Jerusalem*—He recovered so much strength that he reigned with some authority : or, finding that his fenced cities of Judah did not answer his expectation, he now made it his business to fortify Jerusalem, and render that impregnable. *And there he reigned seventeen years, in the city which the Lord had chosen to put his name there.*

Verse 14. *He prepared not his heart, &c.*—Directed not, or settled not, &c. That is, although he humbled himself, and seemed penitent for a season, and professed the true religion and worship of God ; yet he quickly relapsed into his former sins, because he was not sincere and serious in his actions, and his heart was not right with God. *To seek the Lord*

A. M. 3033. the prophet, ^rand of Iddo the seer
B. C. 971. concerning genealogies? ^sAnd there
were wars between Rehoboam and Jeroboam
continually.

^r Chap. ix. 29; xiii. 22.—^s 1 Kings xiv. 30.

—He did not serve the Lord, because he did not seek the Lord. He did not pray to the Lord, as Solomon did, for wisdom and grace. Or he did not consult the word of God, did not seek to that as his oracle. Hence, what little goodness he had, passed away like the morning cloud, and he did evil because he was not fully determined for that which was good.

16 And Rehoboam slept with his A. M. 3033.
fathers, and was buried in the city B. C. 971.
of David: and ^tAbijah his son reigned in his
stead.

^t 1 Kings xiv. 31, Abijah.

Those are easily drawn aside to evil by Satan, who are wavering and inconstant in that which is good, and are not persuaded to make religion their business.

Verse 15. *Of Iddo the seer concerning genealogies*—In an historical account, written by him, of the genealogies and actions of the kings of Judah.

CHAPTER XIII.

Abijah sets the battle in array against Jeroboam, 1–3. He declares the justice of his cause, 4–12. Trusts in God and gains the victory, 13–20. His wives and children, 21, 22.

A. M. 3047. **NOW** ^ain the eighteenth year of
B. C. 957. King Jeroboam began Abijah to
reign over Judah.

B. C. 957. **2** He reigned three years in Jerusa-
lem. His mother's name also was
^bMichaiah, the daughter of Uriel of Gibeah.
And there was war between Abijah and Jero-
boam.

3 And Abijah ¹set the battle in array with
an army of valiant men of war, *even* four hun-
dred thousand chosen men: Jeroboam also set
the battle in array against him with eight hun-
dred thousand chosen men, *being* mighty men
of valour.

^a 1 Kings xv. 1, &c.—^b Chap. xi. 20.—¹ Heb. bound together.
^c Josh. xviii. 22.

NOTES ON CHAPTER XIII.

Verse 2. *His mother's name was Michaiah, the daughter of Uriel*—Called *Maachah, the daughter of Absalom*, 1 Kings xv. 2. She might be daughter to one, and grand-daughter to the other: or the proper and natural daughter of the one, and the other's daughter by adoption.

Verse 3. *Abijah set the battle in array*—Namely, against Jeroboam, having, no doubt, God's authority to engage with him in battle. It is probable, indeed, that Jeroboam was the aggressor, and that what Abijah did was in his own necessary defence.

Verse 4. *Abijah stood upon mount Zemaraim*—Some commodious place whence his words might be heard by Jeroboam, and some of his army, who possibly were pitched in the valley. Or, the two armies being pitched near each other, Abijah desired a parley before they fought, to see if they could accommodate matters without shedding blood. Whereupon Jeroboam and some of his commanders and

4 ¶ And Abijah stood up upon A. M. 3047.
mount ^oZemaraim, which is in B. C. 957.
mount Ephraim, and said, Hear me, thou
Jeroboam, and all Israel;

5 Ought ye not to know that the LORD God
of Israel ^dgave the kingdom over Israel to Da-
vid for ever, *even* to him and to his sons ^eby a
covenant of salt?

6 Yet Jeroboam the son of Nebat, the servant
of Solomon the son of David, is risen up, and
hath ^frebelled against his lord.

7 And there are gathered unto him ^gvain men,
the children of Belial, and have strengthened
themselves against Rehoboam the son of Solo-

^d 2 Sam. vii. 12, 16.—^e Num. xviii. 19.—^f 1 Kings xi. 26;
xii. 20.—^g Judg. ix. 4.

soldiers probably drew near to him, and stood below at the bottom of the hill, from whence they could hear him. And this, it is likely, Jeroboam was the more willing to do, that in the mean time he might cause an ambushment to come behind Abijah and his army, as he did, (verse 13,) while he was quietly standing before them, and seemed to hearken to any terms of accommodation which were offered.

Verse 5. *By a covenant of salt*—A perpetual covenant. The reason of this mode of expression seems to arise from the preserving nature of salt; which, therefore, was made a symbol of friendship and fidelity. It is most likely, that in all solemn covenants which were confirmed by sacrifice, it was an ancient custom to offer salt with the sacrifice, to denote the faith and perpetuity of the covenant; so that, in this view, a *covenant of salt* will signify a covenant confirmed by sacrifice. See note on Num. xviii. 19.

Verse 7. *Vain men, children of Belial*—Such as

A. M. 3047. mon, when Rehoboam was young
B. C. 957. and tender-hearted, and could not
withstand them.

8 And now ye think to withstand the kingdom of the LORD in the hand of the sons of David; and ye be a great multitude, and there are with you golden calves, which Jeroboam^h made you for gods.

9¹ Have ye not cast out the priests of the LORD, the sons of Aaron, and the Levites, and have made you priests after the manner of the nations of other lands? ²so that whosoever cometh² to consecrate himself with a young bullock and seven rams, the same may be a priest of them that are no gods.

10 But as for us, the LORD is our God, and

^h 1 Kings xii. 28; xiv. 9; Hos. viii. 6.—¹ Chapter xi. 14, 15.
^k Exodus xxix. 35.—² Heb. to fill his hand, Exodus xxix. 1;

have cast off the yoke and the obedience which they owed both to God and to their king. *When Rehoboam was young*—Not in age, for he was then forty-one years old, but in his kingdom, which he had but newly obtained, and in experience in politics, and especially in military affairs, to which he was, indeed, wholly a stranger, having been born and brought up in a time of great peace and security.

Verse 8. *Ye think to withstand the kingdom of the Lord*—That kingdom which was not set up by vain men, in pursuance of their own ambition and discontent, as yours was, but ordained and established by God himself in the house of David. *And ye be*—Or, because ye be, a great multitude—This he mentions, as being both the ground of their confidence, namely, that they had more tribes, and a greater host; and also a presage of their downfall, which their trusting to the arm of flesh was. *And there are with you golden calves*—Or, *But there are, &c.* There is that among you which may damp your courage and confidence: you worship those images which God abhors. *Which Jeroboam made you for gods*—Or, for God, as that plural word is most commonly used: that is, instead of God, to give them the name of God, and that worship which is peculiar to him.

Verse 9. *Have ye not cast out the priests of the Lord?*—The house of Aaron, whom God appointed to minister in holy things. *And have made you priests, after the manner of the nations?*—In conformity to the custom of the idolatrous nations. *So that whosoever cometh to consecrate himself with a young bullock*—To make himself a priest, Lev. vii. 3. Whosoever desires to be in the office, and will be at the charge of his consecration, though ever so much a scandal to the character; the same may be a priest of them that are no gods—That have nothing of the nature or power of gods, though you give them that name. Such, however, though very unfit to be priests, were most fit of all others to be their priests.

we have not forsaken him; and the A. M. 3047
priests, which minister unto the LORD, B. C. 957.
are the sons of Aaron, and the Levites wait upon their business:

11¹ And they burn unto the LORD every morning and every evening burnt-sacrifices and sweet incense: the^m show-bread also set they in order upon the pure table; and the candlestick of gold with the lamps thereofⁿ to burn every evening: for we keep the charge of the LORD our God; but ye have forsaken him.

12 And behold, God himself is with us for our captain,^o and his priests with sounding trumpets to cry alarm against you. O children of Israel, ^pfight ye not against the LORD God of your fathers; for ye shall not prosper.

Lev. viii. 2.—¹ Chap. ii. 4.—^m Lev. xxiv. 6.—ⁿ Exod. xxvii. 20; Lev. xxiv. 2, 3.—^o Num. x. 8.—^p Acts v. 39.

For what could be more suitable to gods that were no gods, than priests that were no priests?

Verse 10. *But the Lord is our God*—Hebrew, *Jehovah*, the only true and great God. *And we have not forsaken him*—We maintain his honour and worship, which you have ungratefully rejected. And he is able to protect us and give us success.

Verse 11. *The show-bread upon the pure table*—So called, because it was made of pure gold, Exod. xxv. 23, 24. He saith, table and candlestick, though there were ten of each, because ordinarily there was but one of each used at a time. *We keep the charge of the Lord our God*—We worship no images, have no priests but those whom he has ordained, no rites of worship but what he has prescribed. Both the temple-service and the temple-furniture are of his appointing: his appointment we abide by, and neither add nor diminish. Perhaps he flattered himself that his keeping up the external worship of God would make satisfaction for the errors of his life. Or he said this, that he might thereby encourage his own soldiers, and convince or terrify his enemies.

Verse 12. *Behold, God himself is with us for our captain*—Here in our camp. We may be sure he is with us, because we are with him. And as a token of his presence we have here with us his priests, sounding his trumpets—According to the law, as a testimony against you, and an assurance to us, that in the day of battle we shall be remembered before the Lord our God, and saved from our enemies. See Num. x. 9, where this sacred signal is thus explained. Nothing is so effectual to imbolden men, and give them courage and fortitude in the day of battle, as to have an assurance that God is with them, and fighteth for them. *Fight ye not against the God of your fathers*—It is folly to fight against the God of almighty power; but it is treachery, and base ingratitude, to fight against your fathers' God, and you cannot expect to prosper. Thus he concludes with giving them fair warning.

A. M. 3047. 13 ¶ But Jeroboam caused an am-
B. C. 957. bushment to come about behind them :
so they were before Judah, and the ambush-
ment *was* behind them.

14 And when Judah looked back, behold, the
battle *was* before and behind : and they cried
unto the LORD, and the priests sounded with
the trumpets.

15 Then the men of Judah gave a shout : and
as the men of Judah shouted, it came to pass,
that God ^s smote Jeroboam and all Israel before
Abijah and Judah.

16 And the children of Israel fled before Judah :
and God delivered them into their hand.

17 And Abijah and his people slew them with
a great slaughter : so there fell down slain of
Israel five hundred thousand chosen men.

18 Thus the children of Israel were A. M. 3047.
brought under at that time, and the B. C. 957.
children of Judah prevailed, ^r because they re-
lied upon the LORD God of their fathers.

19 And Abijah pursued after Jeroboam, and
took cities from him, Beth-el with the towns
thereof, and Jeshanah with the towns thereof,
and ^r Ephraim with the towns thereof.

20 Neither did Jeroboam recover strength
again in the days of Abijah : and the LORD
^r struck him, and ^r he died.

21 ¶ But Abijah waxed mighty, and married
fourteen wives, and begat twenty and two sons,
and sixteen daughters.

22 And the rest of the acts of Abijah, and his
ways, and his sayings, *are* written in the ^r story
of the Prophet ^r Iddo.

¶ Chap. xiv. 12.—^r 1 Chron. v. 20 ; Psa. xxii. 5.—^r Joshua
xv. 9.

¶ 1 Samuel xxv. 38.—^r 1 Kings xiv. 20.—^r Or, commentary.
^r Chap. xii. 15.

Verse 13. *But Jeroboam caused an ambushment to come behind*—While Abijah was discoursing, he took the advantage thus afforded him of sending a party of soldiers privately to lie in ambush, and attack Abijah's army behind, while he continued to face them with his main body. It does not appear that he made any answer to Abijah's speech. The longest sword, he thinks, must determine the matter, not the better cause.

Verse 14. *Behold, the battle was before and behind*—Thus Judah was unexpectedly brought into a great strait, and put into great fear. A good cause, and one which is designed to be victorious, may be involved in difficulty and distress. *And they cried unto the Lord*—For when danger was on every side, which way should they look but upward for deliverance? It is an unspeakable comfort, that no enemy, not the most powerful or politic, and no stratagem or ambushment, can cut off our communication with heaven. Our way thitherward is always open. We may hope they cried unto the Lord before they engaged in this war; but the distress they were in made them renew their prayers, and quickened them to be more importunate. God brings his people into straits, that he may teach them to cry unto him.

Verse 15. *Then the men of Judah gave a shout*—In confidence of victory, the priests animating them by sounding the trumpets, and giving them assurance of God's presence with them. To the cry of prayer they added the shout of faith, and so became more than conquerors. *God smote Jeroboam and all Israel*—He struck him and his army with such terror and amazement, that, it appears, they could not strike a stroke, but fled with the greatest precipitation imaginable, and the conquerors gave no quarter; so that they put to the sword five hundred thousand chosen men; more (it is said) than ever we read of in any history to have been killed in one battle. But the battle was the Lord's, who would thus chastise

the idolatry of Israel, and own the house of David. But see the sad effects of division! It was the blood of Israelites which was thus shed like water by Israelites, while the heathen, their neighbours, to whom the name of Israel had formerly been a terror, cried, *Aha, so would we have it.*

Verse 18. *Thus the children of Israel were brought under at that time*—And had not the determinate counsel of God been otherwise, surely so great a blow would have brought them back to the house of David. *And Judah prevailed, because they relied on the God of their fathers*—It was not by their own valour that they obtained this great victory, but by their relying on God, their depending on his power to help them, and their committing themselves and their cause to him.

Verse 19. *Abijah took cities from him, Beth-el, &c.*—Which, however, Jeroboam recovered afterward, as appears by the course of the history. What became of the golden calf at Beth-el, when that place came thus into the hands of the king of Judah, we are not told. Probably when Jeroboam's host was discomfited, and he expected that Abijah would pursue his victory, he removed the golden calf from thence to some safer place. *And Ephraim*—A city so called, possibly the same which is mentioned John xi. 54; or that which is called Ophra, Judg. viii. 27.

Verse 20. *The Lord struck him*—Either with vexation and horror of mind, or with some painful and lingering, but incurable disease, like that of Jehoram, which tormented him two years together, and at last killed him, 2 Chron. xxi. 19. *And he died*—Not immediately, but a year or two after this time. He escaped the sword of Abijah; but there is no escaping God's sword.

Verse 21. *Abijah married fourteen wives*—Not now after this victory, for he died soon after it; but in the whole time of his life, before he was king, and afterward.

CHAPTER XIV.

The piety of Asa, 1-5. His policy, 6-8. His victory over the Ethiopians, 9-15.

A. M. 3053. **SO** Abijah slept with his fathers,
B. C. 951. and they buried him in the city
of David: and ^aAsa his son reigned in his
stead. In his days the land was quiet ten
years.

2 And Asa did *that which was good and right*
in the eyes of the LORD his God :

B. C. 951. 3 For he took away the altars of
the strange *gods*, and ^bthe high
places, and ^cbrake down the ¹images, ^dand
cut down the groves :

4 And commanded Judah to seek the LORD
God of their fathers, and to do the law and the
commandment.

5 Also he took away out of all the cities of
Judah the high places and the ²images: and
the kingdom was quiet before him.

^a 1 Kings xv. 8, &c.—^b 1 Kings xv. 14; Chapter xv. 17.
^c Exod. xxxiv. 13.

NOTES ON CHAPTER XIV.

Verse 1. *In his days the land was quiet ten years*
—There was no war with the kingdom of Israel,
which did not recover the blow given in the last
reign for a great while. Abijah's victory, which
was owing, under God, to his courage and bravery,
laid a foundation for Asa's peace, which was the re-
ward of his piety, and the reformation he effected.
Though Abijah had little religion himself, he was
instrumental in preparing the way for one that had
much. If Abijah had not done what he did to quiet
the land, Asa could not have done what he did to re-
form it.

Verse 2. *Asa did that which was good and right*
in the eyes of the Lord—Happy they that walk by
this rule; that do not only that which is right in *their*
own eyes, or in the eyes of the *world*, but which is
so in *God's eyes*. Asa saw that God's eye was al-
ways upon him, and therefore he kept his eye al-
ways upon God, studied to approve himself to him,
and endeavoured in all things to please him.

Verse 3. *He took away the altars of the strange*
gods—Since the time when Solomon admitted idol-
atry, in the latter end of his reign, it appears, nothing
had been done till now to suppress it; so that it may
be presumed it had gained ground. Strange gods
were worshipped, and had their altars, images, and
groves; and the temple-service, though kept up by
the priests, was neglected by many of the people.
As soon as Asa had power in his hands, he made it
his business to destroy those idolatrous altars and
images, they being a great provocation to the jealous
God, and a great temptation to a careless and un-
thinking people. He hoped, by destroying the idols,
to reform the idolaters, which he had in view, and
not their destruction.

6 ¶ And he built fenced cities in ^{A. M. 3053.}
Judah: for the land had rest, and he ^{B. C. 951.}
had no war in those years; because the LORD
had given him rest.

7 Therefore he said unto Judah, Let us build
these cities, and make about *them* walls and
towers, gates and bars, *while* the land is yet
before us; because we have sought ^dthe LORD
our God, we have sought *him*, and he hath
given us rest on every side. So they built and
prospered.

8 ¶ And Asa had an army of *men* that bare
targets and spears, out of Judah three hundred
thousand; and out of Benjamin, that bare
shields and drew bows, two hundred and four-
score thousand: all these *were* mighty men of
valour.

¹ Hebrew, *statues*.—^d 1 Kings xi. 7.—² Hebrew, *sun-images*.
⁴ Psa. cv. 3, 4; Jer. xxix. 13.

Verses 4, 5. *He commanded Judah to seek the Lord*
—By his royal edicts he commanded them to wor-
ship God, and him only. *And to do the law, and the*
commandment—To observe all divine institutions,
which many had neglected, and to practise all that
the law of Moses required of them. *And the king-
dom was quiet before him*—Though, it is probable,
they were much in love with their idols, and very
loath to part with them; yet the convictions of their
consciences sided with the commands of Asa, and
they could not, for shame, but comply with them.
They that have power in their hands, and will use it
vigorously for the suppression of profaneness, and
the reformation of manners, will, in general, not
meet with so much difficulty and opposition as, per-
haps, they might expect. Vice is a mean and base
thing, and carries its own shame and condemnation
on the face of it; while virtue has always reason
enough on its side to make *iniquity stop her mouth*,
Psalm cvii. 42.

Verses 6, 7. *He built fenced cities in Judah: for*
the land had rest—He wisely provided for war in
the time of peace. *The Lord had given him rest*
—Those have rest indeed to whom God gives rest;
peace indeed to whom Christ gives peace. Asa takes
notice of the rest they had as the gift of God, and
the happy consequence of their seeking the Lord.
Because we have sought the Lord, he hath given us
rest on every side—Whatever rest we enjoy, whether
of body or mind, of our family or country, God
ought to be acknowledged with thankfulness as the
author of it. For as the frowns and rebukes of Pro-
vidence should be observed as a check to us in an
evil way, so the smiles of Providence should be taken
notice of for our encouragement in that which is
good. We find by experience that it is good to *seek*

A. M. 3053. 9 ¶ And there came out against them Zerah the Ethiopian, with a host of a thousand thousand, and three hundred chariots; and came unto ¹Mareshah.

10 Then Asa went out against them, and they set the battle in array in the valley of Zephathah at Mareshah.

11 And Asa ²cried unto the LORD his God, and said, LORD, *it is* ³nothing with thee to help, whether with many, or with them that have no power: help us, O LORD our God; for we rest on thee, and ⁴in thy name we go against this multitude. O LORD, thou *art* our God; let not ⁵man prevail against thee.

12 So the LORD ⁶smote the Ethiopians before

* Chap. xvi. 8.—¹Josh. xv. 44.—²Exod. xiv. 10; Chap. xiii. 14; Psa. xxii. 5.—³1 Sam. xiv. 6.—⁴1 Sam. xvii. 45; Prov. xviii. 10.

the Lord; it gives us rest. While we pursue the world, we meet with nothing but vexation.

Verse 9. *There came out against them Zerah the Ethiopian*—Or, the Arabian, as the Hebrew word *Cush* is frequently used, and must necessarily be understood, chap. xxi. 16, and 2 Kings xix. 9. The Arabians were much nearer to Asa than the Ethiopians, who could not have come to attack him but through Egypt, which probably the king of Egypt would not have permitted them to do. *And came unto Mareshah*—A city upon and within the borders of Judah, Josh. xv. 44. Though Asa and his people still sought the Lord, yet he suffered this immense force, of a *thousand thousand men*, to come against them, that their faith in him might be tried, and that he might have an opportunity of doing great things for them.

Verse 11. *Asa cried unto the Lord his God*—He that sought God in the time of his peace and prosperity, could, with holy boldness, cry to God in the day of his trouble, and call him his God. *Lord, it is nothing with thee to help, &c.*—There is no difference or difficulty with thee, to help or save by many or few, by those that are mighty, or by them that have no power—Thus he gives the glory of his almighty power to him, who works in his own strength, not in the strength of instruments: nay, whose glory it is to help the most helpless, and perfect strength in the weakness of his people. *Help us, O Lord our God, for we rest on thee*—He was well prepared for this attack, having of Judah three hundred thousand, and of Benjamin two hundred and eighty thousand, all well armed, and mighty men of valour, verse 8; yet he trusted not to his preparations, but relied on the Lord. *In thy name we go against this great multitude*—That is, by thy commission, in

Asa, and before Judah; and the Ethiopians fled. A. M. 3053. B. C. 951.

13 And Asa and the people that *were* with him pursued them unto ¹Gerar: and the Ethiopians were overthrown, that they could not recover themselves; for they were ²destroyed before the LORD, and before his host; and they carried away very much spoil.

14 And they smote all the cities round about Gerar; for ³the fear of the LORD came upon them: and they spoiled all the cities; for there was exceeding much spoil in them.

15 They smote also the tents of cattle, and carried away sheep and camels in abundance, and returned to Jerusalem.

¹Or, mortal man.—²Chapter xiii. 15.—³Genesis x. 19, xx. 1.—⁴Hebrew, broken.—⁵Genesis xxxv. 5; Chapter xvii. 10.

confidence of thy assistance, and for the maintenance of thy honour, and service, and people. *Let not man prevail against thee*—Hebrew, שונוא, *enosh*, mortal man. If he prevail against us, it will be said that he prevails against thee; because thou art our God, and we rest on thee, and go forth in thy name, which thou hast encouraged us to do. The enemy is a mortal man; make it appear what an unequal match he is for an immortal God! Maintain, Lord, thine own honour.

Verses 12, 13. *So the Lord smote the Ethiopians*—Smote them with terror, and an unaccountable consternation, so that they fled, and knew not why or whither. *Asa and the people pursued them unto Gerar*—A city of the Philistines, who probably were confederate with them in this design. *They were destroyed before the Lord*—For who can stand before him? *And before his host*—The host of Israel, called *God's host*, because owned by him as his people. *They carried away very much spoil*—From the slain, together with the plunder of their camp.

Verses 14, 15. *They smote all the cities round about Gerar*—Partly because they had joined with Zerah in this war, and partly because the Ethiopians had sheltered a great part of the remains of their army in them. *For the fear of the Lord came upon them*—That is, God struck them with such a fear, that they had no heart to withstand, or even to make any resistance against the conquerors. *They smote also the tents of cattle*—That is, the dwellers in tents, who were either a part of Zerah's company, or joined with them, or had come along with them, to furnish that great host with necessary provisions. *And carried away sheep and camels*—Fetched them away out of the enemy's country in vast numbers.

CHAPTER XV.

God's message to Asa, 1-7. Idols removed, and the spoil dedicated to God, 8-11. Judah makes a covenant with God, 12-15. Asa removes his mother, destroys her idol, and brings the dedicated things into the temple, 16-19. He has great peace, 19

A. M. 3063. **AND** ^a the Spirit of God came upon Azariah the son of Oded:

2 And he went out to ¹ meet Asa, and said unto him, Hear ye me, Asa, and all Judah and Benjamin; ^b The LORD is with you, while ye be with him; and ^c if ye seek him, he will be found of you; but ^d if ye forsake him, he will forsake you.

3 Now ^e for a long season Israel hath been

^a Numbers xxiv. 2; Judges iii. 10; Chapter xx. 14; xxiv. 20. ^b Heb. before Asa. ^c James iv. 8. ^d Verses 4, 15; 1 Chron. xxviii. 9; Chap. xxxiii. 12; Jer. xxix. 13; Matt. vii. 7.

NOTES ON CHAPTER XV.

Verses 1, 2. *The Spirit of God came upon Azariah*—Both to instruct him what to say, and to enable him to say it plainly and boldly. *And he went out to meet Asa*—Now returning victorious, with his army, from the war with the Ethiopians. *And he said unto him, Hear ye me, Asa and all Judah, &c.*—He does not come out to meet them in order to compliment them, or congratulate their success, but to excite them to their duty: which is the proper business of God's ministers, even with princes and the greatest men. *The Lord is with you*—To defend you against all your enemies, as ye now have seen, and may hereafter expect; *while ye be with him*—While ye persist in that good course upon which you have entered. For the continuance of his presence with you depends upon your perseverance in the way of your duty. *If you seek him he will be found of you*—If you sincerely desire his favour, and seek it in the way he hath appointed, especially by prayer and supplication, and complying with his will in all things, you shall obtain it: *but if you forsake him*—And his commandments and ordinances of worship; *he will forsake you*—And then you will be undone, and will find that your present triumphs were no security to you. Let not this victory, then, make you presumptuous, or self-confident: for you are upon your good behaviour; and if you leave God, he will leave and destroy you, after he has done you all this good.

Ver. 3, 4. *For a long season Israel hath been, &c.*—Hebrew, *many days have been to Israel without the true God, &c.*—The prophet's design here is evidently to set before them the miserable consequences of forsaking God and his ordinances, and that if they should forsake him, there would be no way of having their grievances redressed, but by repenting and returning to him. In proof of this point he argues from facts, and observes, that in time past, when Israel forsook their duty, they were overrun with a deluge of atheism, impiety, irreligion, and all irregularities; and were continually embarrassed with vexations, and destructive wars, foreign

without the true God, and without ^f a teaching priest, and without law. A. M. 3063. B. C. 941.

4 But ^g when they in their trouble did turn unto the LORD God of Israel, and sought him, he was found of them.

5 And ^h in those times *there was no peace to him that went out, nor to him that came in, but great vexations were upon all the inhabitants of the countries.*

^g Chap. xxiv. 20.—^h Hos. iii. 4.—^f Lev. x. 11.—^e Deut. iv. 29.—^b Judg. v. 6.

and domestic. But when their troubles drove them to God, they found it not in vain to seek him. He seems to refer especially to the times of the judges. For then they were frequently, though not wholly and universally, yet in a very great measure, without God and his law, and teaching priests: and then, indeed, they were brought to suffer all the exigencies and calamities here mentioned. They were harassed by grievous wars, both foreign and domestic, and frequently oppressed by one enemy or other, as by the Moabites, Midianites, Ammonites, and other neighbouring nations, and were vexed with all adversity, verse 6; yet when, in their perplexity, they turned to God by repentance, prayer, and reformation, he raised up deliverers for them. Thus that maxim, that *God is with us, while we are with him*, was often verified in those times. This seems to be the most obvious sense of the passage, taking Israel for the whole nation, and not for the ten tribes merely, who had revolted under Jeroboam, to whom part of the prophet's speech is not at all applicable; for it could not with truth be said of them, that *when they were in trouble they turned unto the Lord, and sought him, and he was found of them*. Some think, among whom is Houbigant, that the whole passage is prophetic, and looks forward to future times; and that it ought to be read in the future tense, thus: *Now, for a long season, Israel shall be without the true God, &c. But when, in their trouble, they shall turn unto the Lord God of Israel, and seek him, he will be found of them*: see Hos. iii. 4. But the former explication seems to be more agreeable, both to the Hebrew text, and to the context preceding and following, and to be much more suitable to the design of the prophet, as stated above.

Verse 5. *In those times*—When Israel lived in the gross neglect of God and his law; *there was no peace to him that went out, &c.*—Men could not go abroad about their private business without great danger; as it was in the days of Shamgar, the events of which time are a good comment on this text, Judg. v. 6. *Great vexations were upon all the inhabitants of the countries*—Hebrew, *Of these*

A. M. 3063. 6 ¹ And nation was ² destroyed of
B. C. 941. nation, and city of city: for God did
vex them with all adversity.

7 Be ye strong therefore, and let not your
hands be weak; for your work shall be re-
warded.

8 ¶ And when Asa heard these words, and
the prophecy of Oded the prophet, he took
courage, and put away the ³ abominable idols
out of all the land of Judah and Benjamin, and
out of the cities ⁴ which he had taken from
mount Ephraim, and renewed the altar of the
LORD, that was before the porch of the LORD.

9 And he gathered all Judah and Benjamin,
and ¹ the strangers with them out of Ephraim
and Manasseh, and out of Simeon: for they

¹ Matt. xxiv. 7.—² Heb. *beaten in pieces*.—³ Heb. *abominations*.
⁴ Chap. xiii. 19.—¹ Chap. xi. 16.—⁴ Heb. *in that day*.

countries: that is, the various parts of the land of
Israel, both within and without Jordan.

Verse 6. *Nation was destroyed of nation*—One
part of the people of Israel destroyed the other by
civil wars; of which see instances, Judg. ix. 23, &c.,
and xii. 1, &c. As all Israel, so the several tribes
of them are sometimes called nations.

Verse 7. *Be ye strong therefore*—Go on resolute-
ly to maintain God's worship, and to root out idola-
try, as you have begun to do; for this is the only
method of preserving yourselves from such calami-
ties as your predecessors have felt. *And let not
your hands be weak*—Be not discouraged with the
opposition which you may possibly meet with. *For
your work shall be rewarded*—What you do for
God, and for his honour and service, shall not be
overlooked, or go unrequited.

Verse 8. *When Asa heard these words of Oded
the prophet*—Of Azariah, the son of Oded, who
was also called by his father's name; *he took cour-
age*—For it required great courage to put away all
the idols, to which so great a number of his people
were still attached, and among others Maachah, the
queen, his mother, whom, for this reason, he de-
posed, 1 Kings xv. 13. *And out of the cities which
he had taken*—Or, *which had been taken*, namely,
by Abijah his father. *And renewed the altar of the
Lord*—Which had been either decayed by time and
long use of it, or broken by his idolatrous mother's
means. Or the expression may signify, *He conse-
crated, or dedicated, the altar, &c.*, which, possibly,
had been polluted by idolaters, and now needed
some purification.

Verse 9. *And out of Simeon*—For the generality
of this tribe, though they had their inheritance out
of the portion of Judah, revolted to Jeroboam with
the other tribes, as appears from many passages of
Scripture. This they might conveniently do, be-
cause, as their portion bordered, on one side, on the
tribe of Judah, so, on the other, it touched on that

fell to him out of Israel in abundance, A. M. 3063.
when they saw that the LORD his ¹ God was with him. B. C. 941.

10 So they gathered themselves together at
Jerusalem in the third month, in the fifteenth
year of the reign of Asa.

11 And they offered unto the LORD ⁴ the
same time, of ² the spoil which they had
brought, seven hundred oxen and seven thou-
sand sheep.

12 And they ^o entered into a covenant to seek
the LORD God of their fathers with all their
heart and with all their soul;

13 ^p That whosoever would not seek the
LORD God of Israel ^q should be put to death,
whether small or great, whether man or woman.

^a Chap. xiv. 13.—^o 2 Kings xxiii. 3; Chap. xxxiv. 31; Neh.
x. 29.—^p Exod. xxii. 20.—^q Deut. xiii. 5, 9, 15.

of Dan, and therefore could easily join with the
one or the other. *For they fell to him out of Israel
in abundance*—Namely, from the king of Israel.

Verse 10. *They gathered themselves at Jerusa-
lem, in the third month*—Namely, of the sacred
year, in which month the feast of weeks, or of pen-
tecost fell; *in the fifteenth year of Asa*—Asa had
peace ten years, (chap. xiv. 1,) after which, probably,
there were some bickerings and skirmishes, which
seem to have been composed; and after that, Zerah
came against him and was discomfited. Upon this
great success, many of the Israelites fell to him,
and in the fifteenth year he called this assembly.

Verses 11, 12. *They offered of the spoil which
they had brought*—Taken from Zerah, and his army
and allies. *They entered into a covenant, &c.*—
Repenting that they had violated their engagements
to God, and resolving to attend to, and endeavour to
fulfil them in future. The matter of this covenant
was nothing but what they were before obliged to.
And though no promise could lay any higher obli-
gation upon them than they were already under,
yet it would help to increase their sense of the ob-
ligation, and to arm them against temptations: and,
by joining all together in this, they strengthened
the hands of each other. *To seek the God of their
fathers*—In the way their fathers had sought him,
and in dependance on the promise made to their fa-
thers; *with all their heart, and with all their soul*
—For only those seek God acceptably and success-
fully, who seek him thus. God demands all the
heart: and when such an inestimable blessing as
the divine favour is to be found, it is proper that
the whole heart should be engaged in the pursuit
of it.

Verse 13. *That whosoever would not seek the
Lord God of Israel*—Would either worship other
gods, or refuse to join with them in the worship of
the true God; that was either an obstinate idolater,
or an obstinate atheist, *should be put to death*—

A. M. 3063. 14 And they sware unto the LORD
B. C. 941. with a loud voice, and with shouting,
and with trumpets, and with cornets.

15 And all Judah rejoiced at the oath: for they had sworn with all their heart, and sought him with their whole desire; and he was found of them: and the LORD gave them rest round about.

16 ¶ And also concerning ^aMaachah the ^bmother of Asa the king, he removed her from being queen, because she had made an ^cidol

^r Ver. 2.—^s 1 Kings xv. 13.—^t That is, grandmother, 1 Kings

Which was not a new law of their own making, but an order to put in execution the law of God to this purpose, contained Deut. xviii. 2, &c., which, if it had been duly executed in former times, would have kept the land clear of those many abominable idols which were found in and brought God's wrath upon it: compare Hebrews x. 28. But though they might do well in executing the sentence of the law upon idolaters, this ought not to be pleaded by any persons professing Christianity as a precedent for persecuting any of their fellow-Christians, much less for putting them to death who may happen to differ from them in any point of doctrine, or mode of worship; because all Christians, as such, however they may disagree as to some lesser points, yet worship one and the same living and true God; and, added to this, the spirit of the gospel is very different from that of the Jewish law: see Luke ix. 55. Nor may we, under our mild dispensation, attempt to compel by force any man to become religious. *For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal.*

in a grove: and Asa cut down her A. M. 3063.
idol, and stamped it, and burnt it at B. C. 941.
the brook Kidron.

17 But ^tthe high places were not taken away out of Israel: nevertheless the heart of Asa was perfect all his days.

18 ¶ And he brought into the house of God the things that his father had dedicated, and that he himself had dedicated, silver, and gold, and vessels.

19 And there was no more war unto the five and thirtieth year of the reign of Asa.

xv. 2, 10.—^u Heb. horror.—^v Ch. xiv. 3, 5; 1 Kings xv. 14, &c.

Verse 15. *And all Judah rejoiced at the oath*—That is, a great number of the people; as such general expressions are frequently to be understood: for, doubtless, there were many dissemblers, and ungodly men, at this time among them. *For they had sworn with all their heart, and sought him with their whole desire*—They professed to do so, and, no doubt, many of them did at this time, though afterward they apostatized from his love and service. Thus the times of renewing our covenant with God should be times of rejoicing. It is an honour and happiness to be in bonds with God, and the closer the better. It was an extraordinary good frame that Judah was now in: O that there had always been such a heart in them!

Verse 16. *And also concerning Maachah*—Of this and the following verses, see on 1 Kings xv. 13–15.

Verse 19. *There was no more war unto the five and thirtieth year of Asa*—No open, general war, though there were constant bickerings between Judah and Israel upon the frontiers, 1 Kings xv. 16. National piety procures national blessings.

CHAPTER XVI.

Asa, with the treasures of the house of the Lord, hires the Syrians to invade Israel, 1–6. Puts the prophet, who reproves him for it, in prison, 7–10. In his sickness seeks to physicians and not to God, 12. His death and burial, 13, 14.

A. M. 3064. IN the six and thirtieth year of the
B. C. 940. reign of Asa, ^aBaasha king of Israel came up against Judah, and built Ramah,

^a 1 Kings xv. 17, &c.

^b to the intent that he might let A. M. 3064.
none go out or come in to Asa king B. C. 940.
of Judah.

^b Chap. xv. 9.

NOTES ON CHAPTER XVI.

Verse 1. *In the six and thirtieth year of the reign of Asa*—This date disagrees so much with what is said 1 Kings xv. 33, that there seems to be no other way of reconciling the two passages, but allowing that a trivial mistake has been made by the transcribers here, and that instead of the *thirty-sixth*, we ought to read here the *twenty-sixth*. This reading is approved by Houbigant, and is evi-

dently adopted by Josephus, lib. 8, cap. 6. Baasha began his reign in the third year of Asa, and reigned no more than twenty-four years. He was, therefore, dead nine years, at least, before the *thirty-sixth* year of Asa. *Baasha came up against Judah, and built Ramah*—That is, made a wall about it, and fortified it. The late defection of so many of his subjects to the house of David was the occasion of his fortifying this place, designing hereby both to prevent

A. M. 3064. 2 Then Asa brought out silver and gold out of the treasures of the house of the LORD and of the king's house, and sent to Ben-hadad king of Syria, that dwelt at ¹ Damascus, saying,

3 *There is a league between me and thee, as there was between my father and thy father: behold, I have sent thee silver and gold; go, break thy league with Baasha king of Israel, that he may depart from me.*

4 And Ben-hadad hearkened unto King Asa, and sent the captains of ² his armies against the cities of Israel; and they smote Ijon, and Dan, and Abel-maim, and all the store-cities of Naphtali.

5 And it came to pass, when Baasha heard it, that he left off building of Ramah, and let his work cease.

6 Then Asa the king took all Judah; and they carried away the stones of Ramah, and the timber thereof, wherewith Baasha was

building, and he built therewith Geba and Mizpah. A. M. 3064. B. C. 940.

7 ¶ And at that time, ^o Hanani the seer came to Asa king of Judah, and said unto him, ^d Because thou hast relied on the king of Syria, and not relied on the LORD thy God, therefore is the host of the king of Syria escaped out of thy hand. B. C. 941.

8 Were not ^e the Ethiopians and ^f the Lubims ³ a huge host, with very many chariots and horsemen? yet, because thou didst rely on the LORD, he delivered them into thy hand.

9 ^g For the eyes of the LORD run to and fro throughout the whole earth, ⁴ to show himself strong in the behalf of *them* whose heart is perfect toward him. Herein ^h thou hast done foolishly: therefore from henceforth ⁱ thou shalt have wars.

10 Then Asa was wroth with the seer, and ^k put him in a prison-house; for *he was* in a rage with him because of this *thing*. And Asa

^a Heb. *Darmesek*.—^b Heb. *which were his*.—^c 1 Kings xvi. 1; Chap. xix. 2.—^d Isa. xxxi. 1; Jer. xvii. 5.—^e Chap. xiv. 9. ^f Chap. xii. 3.—^g Heb. *in abundance*.—^h Job xxxiv. 21; Prov.

v. 21; xv. 3; Jer. xvi. 17; xxxii. 19; Zech. iv. 10.—ⁱ Or, *strongly to hold with them*. &c.—^j 1 Sam. xiii. 13.—^k 1 Kings xv. 32.—^l Chap. xviii. 26; Jer. xx. 2; Matt. xiv. 3.

others of them from revolting, and to hinder Asa's subjects from coming into his dominions to seduce his people from their obedience to him.

Verse 7. *At that time Hanani the seer came to Asa, &c.*—Here follows, in addition to what is recorded concerning Asa in the first book of Kings, a remarkable history, which relates his great weakness in his declining years, and God's displeasure on account of it. *Because thou hast relied on the king of Syria, and not on the Lord thy God*—It is a great weakness in our nature, which cannot be too much guarded against, to be ever prone to forego our confidence in God for human means; or to put a greater and more assured trust in them, than in the power, love, and faithfulness of God. *Therefore is the host of the king of Syria escaped out of thy hand*—And so reserved to be a scourge to thy kingdom and posterity: whereas, if the Syrians had continued their league with Baasha, and joined him against thee, thou shouldest have overthrown both them and Baasha as thou didst the Ethiopians, and thereby have prevented all the mischiefs which the king of Syria will do to thy family.

Verse 8. *And the Lubims*—Either the Libyans in Africa, or another people possibly descended from them, but now seated in some part of Arabia. See on chap. xii. 3.

Verse 9. *The eyes of the Lord run to and fro throughout the whole earth*—He governs the world in infinite wisdom, the creatures, and all their actions, are continually under his eye, and he exercises a most watchful providence over all those who sincerely commit themselves to his care, and depend

upon him in well-doing, and will not fail to protect them. *To show himself strong in behalf of them whose heart is perfect, &c.*—Upright and sincere; who truly desire and endeavour to know and do his will in all things. Such may be sure of his protection and aid, and have all the reason in the world to depend thereon. A firm and lively faith in this brings us near to God, and unites us to him: but a practical disbelief of it produces the contrary effect, and is at the bottom of all our departures from God, and double dealing with him. Asa could not trust God, and therefore made court to Ben-hadad, in which, as the prophet here tells him, he did *foolishly*, both acting against his own interest, and incurring God's displeasure, who pronounced that from henceforth he should have wars, as a chastisement of his folly. It is, indeed, a foolish thing to lean on a broken reed, when we have the Rock of ages to rely on. Here we learn in what sense we are to understand this sacred writer, when he says, (chap. xv. 17.) *that the heart of Asa was perfect all his days*: he was perfect and sincere in the things there spoken of, in the establishment of the outward worship of God; but not in the inward worship of him, trusting in, fearing, and loving him with all his heart. Or, he was upright and sincere in the general course of his life, though in some particulars, whereof this was one, his heart did not perfectly cleave to God as it should have done.

Verse 10. *Asa was wroth with the seer*—Though the reproof came from God by one that was known to be his messenger; though it was just, and the reasoning fair, and all intended for his good, yet he

A. M. 3090. ⁵ oppressed *some* of the people the
B. C. 914. same time.

11 ¶ ¹ And behold, the acts of Asa, first and last, lo, they *are* written in the book of the kings of Judah and Israel.

12 And Asa in the thirty and ninth year of his reign was diseased in his feet, until his disease was exceeding *great*: yet in his disease he ^m sought not to the LORD, but to the physicians.

^a Hebrew, *crushed*.—¹ 1 Kings xv. 23.—^m Jeremiah xvii. 5.
¹ 1 Kings xv. 24.

was *wroth* with the prophet; nay, he was *in a rage with him*, for telling him of his folly. Is this Asa? Is this he whose heart is said to have been perfect with the Lord? How needful that advice, *Let him that standeth take heed lest he fall!* A wise man! and yet *in a rage!* An Israelite! and yet in a rage with a prophet! A good man! and yet impatient of reproof, and cannot bear to be told of his faults! Lord, what is man when left to himself! They that idolize their own conduct, cannot bear contradiction; and they that indulge a peevish, passionate temper, may be transported by it into impieties as well as indecencies, and will some time or other, probably, fly in the face of God himself. See what gall and wormwood this root of bitterness bore! *Asa put him in the prison-house*—Him whom he knew to be a prophet of the Lord, and God's messenger to him! Or, *in the house of the stocks*, (as some read it,) in which the feet, or, as some of the Hebrews say, the necks of the prisoners were locked up. God's prophets meet with many that cannot bear reproof; still, however, they must proceed on doing their duty. *And Asa oppressed some of the people the same time*—Probably such as owned the prophet in his sufferings, or were known to be his particular friends. He that abused his power for the persecuting of God's prophet, was left to himself further to abuse it for the crushing of his own subjects, whereby he weakened himself, and lost his interest. Most persecutors have been tyrants.

Verse 12. *Asa was diseased in his feet*—Afflicted

13 ¶ ^a And Asa slept with his fa- A. M. 3090.
thers, and died in the one and fortieth B. C. 914.
year of his reign.

14 And they buried him in his own sepulchres which he had ^o made for himself in the city of David, and laid him in the bed which was filled ^o with sweet odours, and divers kinds of *spices* prepared by the apothecaries' art: and they made ^p a very great burning for him.

^o Heb. *digged*.—^o Genesis i. 2; Mark xvi. 1; John xix. 39.
^p Chap. xxi. 19; Jer. xxxiv. 5.

with the gout in a high degree. "He put the prophet in the stocks," says Henry, "and now God put him in the stocks; so his punishment answered his sin." *Until his disease was exceeding great*—^{עַד לִכְעוּלָה חַלְּוֹ}, *ad lemaalah chaljo, until his disease came to the height*, or, *until it ascended*, namely, to his stomach, or head: and then it became mortal. *Yet in his disease he sought not to the Lord, but to the physicians*—He did not humble himself before God, but put his confidence in the skill and faithfulness of his physicians. His making use of physicians was his duty, but his trusting in them, and expecting that from them which was to be had from God only, was his sin and folly. The help of every creature must be used with an eye to the Creator, and in dependence on him, who makes every creature that to us which it is, without whom the most skilful and faithful are physicians of no value.

Verse 14. *They buried him in his sepulchre which he had made for himself*—As one mindful of his grave. *And laid him in the bed with sweet odours, and divers kinds of spices*—After the manner of those nations, Gen. i. 2; 2 Chron. xxi. 19. *And made a very great burning*—Of precious spices; thereby testifying their respect to him, notwithstanding his miscarriages. The eminent piety and usefulness of good men ought to be remembered to their praise, though they have had their blemishes. Let their faults be buried in their graves, while their services are remembered over their graves.

CHAPTER XVII.

Jehoshaphat is established in his kingdom, 1-3. His piety, 4-6. He sends Levites to teach Judah, 7-9. His influence over his neighbours, 10, 11. His greatness, captains, and armies, 12-19.

A. M. 3090. **AND** ^a Jehoshaphat his son reigned
B. C. 914. in his stead, and strengthened
himself against Israel.

^a 1 Kings

2 And he placed forces in all the A. M. 3090.
fenced cities of Judah, and set gari- B. C. 914.
sons in the land of Judah, and in the cities

xv. 24.

NOTES ON CHAPTER XVII.

Verse 1. *Jehoshaphat strengthened himself against Israel*—Against the king and people of Is-

rael, who had molested the kingdom of Judah with wars *all the days of Asa*, after that sin of his, mentioned chap. xvi. 2, &c. Ahab had now been three

A. M. 3090. of Ephraim, ^b which Asa his father
B. C. 914. had taken.

3 And the LORD was with Jehoshaphat, because he walked in the first ways ¹ of his father David, and sought not unto Baalim;

4 But sought to the LORD God of his father, and walked in his commandments, and not after ^c the doings of Israel.

5 Therefore the LORD established the king-

dom in his hand; and all Judah ^{A. M. 3090.}
^{B. C. 914.} ^d brought ² to Jehoshaphat presents;

^e and he had riches and honour in abundance.

6 And his heart ³ was lifted up in ^{B. C. 912.}
the ways of the LORD: moreover ^f he ⁴
took away the high places and groves out of Judah.

7 ¶ Also in the third year of his reign he sent to his princes, *even* to Ben-hail, and to

^b Chap. xv. 8. — ¹ Or, of his father, and of David. — ¹ Kings xii. 28. — ^d 1 Sam. x. 27; 1 Kings x. 25. — ^e Heb. gave.

^e 1 Kings x. 27; Chapter xviii. 1. — ³ That is, was encouraged. ^f 1 Kings xxii. 43; Chap. xv. 17; xix. 3; xx. 33.

years upon the throne of Israel, an active, warlike prince. The vigour of the beginning of his reign falling in with the decay of the conclusion of Asa's, it is probable the kingdom of Israel had of late gained ground of the kingdom of Judah, and become formidable to it; so that Jehoshaphat wisely judged that the first thing he had to do was to strengthen himself on that side, and check the growing greatness of the king of Israel; which he did so effectually, and without bloodshed, that Ahab soon courted his alliance, (so far was he from giving him any disturbance,) and proved more dangerous as a friend, than he could have been as an enemy.

Verse 2. *And set garrisons in the cities which Asa had taken*—We do not read of any cities which Asa took; but Abijah his father possessed himself of several, which Asa kept and took for his own, chap. xiii. 19. And, it appears, Jehoshaphat put such forces in them as might secure them to himself.

Verses 3, 4. *He walked in the first ways of his father David*—His ways before he fell so foully, in the matter of Uriah, which were good ways. David, indeed, recovered from that fall, but, perhaps, never, while he lived, fully retrieved the spiritual strength and comfort which he had lost. Jehoshaphat followed David as far as he followed God, and no farther. St. Paul himself thus limits our imitation of him, 1 Cor. xi. 1, *Follow me, as I follow Christ, and not otherwise.* The first ways of many pious people have been their best ways, and their first love their strongest love: which, however, ought not to be the case: for the last ought to be *more than the first*, Rev. ii. 19. But in every copy we propose to write after, as we ought to single out that only which is good, so that chiefly which is best. The original words here are literally rendered, *He walked in the ways of David his father, הַדְּבָרִים הַאֲשֵׁרֶינִי, hareshonim, those first, or ancient ways.* He proposed to himself, for his example, the primitive times of the royal family, those purest times, before the corruptions of the late reigns came in. See Jer. vi. 16. The LXX. leave out David, and so refer this to Asa: *He walked in the first ways of his father Asa*, and did not imitate him in what was amiss in him toward the latter end of his time. It is well to be cautious in following the best men, lest we step aside after them. *And sought not unto Baalim*—The neigh-

bouring nations had their Baalim: one had one Baal, and another had another; but he abhorred them all, and had nothing to do with any of them. *He sought the Lord God of his father*, and him only; prayed to him only; and inquired of him only.

Verses 5, 6. *Therefore the Lord established the kingdom in his hand*—Those stand firm that have the presence of God with them. *If the beauty of the Lord our God be upon us, that will stablish the work of our hands*, and establish us in our integrity. *And all Judah brought to Jehoshaphat presents*—As subjects, in those times and places, used to do to their kings, in token of their respect and subjection to them. The more there is of true religion among a people, the more conscientious loyalty there will be. A governor, that answers the end of government, will be supported. *And he had riches and honour in abundance*—The effect of the favour both of God and his people. It is undoubtedly true, though few will believe it, that religion and piety are the best friends to outward prosperity. *And his heart was lifted up in the ways of the Lord*—Riches and honour in abundance prove to many a clog and a hinderance in the ways of the Lord, an occasion of pride, security, and sensuality: but they had a quite contrary effect upon Jehoshaphat: his abundance was oil to the wheels of his obedience; and the more he had of the wealth of this world, the more cheerfully and resolutely he went on *in the ways of the Lord*. His heart also was lifted up above all discouragements, difficulties, and fears, by which men's hearts are wont to be cast down. He was valiant and resolute for God and his ways. *He took away the high places and groves*—That is, those in which idols were worshipped; for those that were dedicated to the true God only were not taken away, chap. xx. 33. And though Asa had done the same before, yet either he did not do it thoroughly, or the people, who were mad upon their idols, had secretly made new ones, in the latter part of his reign, when he grew more infirm in body, and more remiss in God's cause.

Verse 7. *He sent to his princes—to teach in the cities of Judah*—To inform the people of their duty, and of the king's pleasure. As judges teach or instruct the people in the laws of the land, when

A. M. 3092. Obadiah, and to Zechariah, and to
B. C. 912. Nethaneel, and to Michaiah, ⁵ to teach
in the cities of Judah.

B. C. 912. 8 And with them *he sent* Levites,
even Shemaiah, and Nethaniah, and
Zebadiah, and Asahel, and Shemiramoth, and
Jehonathan, and Adonijah, and Tobijah, and
Tob-adonijah, Levites; and with them Elisha-
ma and Jehoram, priests.

9 ^h And they taught in Judah, and *had* the
book of the law of the LORD with them, and
went about throughout all the cities of Judah,
and taught the people.

10 ¶ And ⁱ the fear of the LORD ⁴ fell upon
all the kingdoms of the lands that *were* round
about Judah, so that they made no war against
Jehoshaphat.

11 *Also some* of the Philistines ^k brought Je-
hoshaphat presents, and tribute-silver; and the
Arabians brought him flocks, seven thousand
and seven hundred rams, and seven thousand
and seven hundred he-goats.

¶ Chapter xv. 3.—^h Chap. xxxv. 3; Neh. viii. 7.—ⁱ Genesis
xxxv. 5.—^k Heb. *was*.

they deliver their charges upon the bench; so did
these princes, in the king's name, admonish and re-
quire the people to observe and obey the laws of
God, which were the municipal laws of that land:
the particular explication and enforcement whereof
they left to the Levites and priests here following,
who were sent for this end, and accordingly *taught
the people*, verse 9.

Verse 9. *And they taught in Judah, &c.*—The
Levites and priests were teachers by office, Deut.
xxxiii. 10. It was a part of the work for which
they had their maintenance, and indeed had little
else to do. But, it seems, they had neglected it,
pretending, probably, that they could not get the
people to hear them. Jehoshaphat, therefore, sends
them with the princes, who, by their authority,
might require the people to assemble together to re-
ceive instruction in the laws of God and their duty.
“What a great deal of good,” says Henry, “may
be done, when Moses and Aaron thus go hand in
hand in the doing of it; when princes with their
power, and priests and Levites with their Scripture-
learning, agree to teach the people the good know-
ledge of God, and their duty. These itinerant
judges, and itinerant preachers together, were in-
strumental to diffuse a blessed light throughout the
cities of Judah.” *And had the book of the law of
the Lord with them*—1st, For their own guidance,
that from thence they might draw all the instruc-
tions they gave to the people, and not *teach for doc-
trines the commandments of men*. 2d, For the con-
viction of the people, that they might see these

12 ¶ And Jehoshaphat waxed great ^{A. M. 3092.}
exceedingly; and he built in Judah ^{B. C. 912.}
⁵ castles, and cities of store.

13 And he had much business in the cities of
Judah: and the men of war, mighty men of
valour, *were* in Jerusalem.

14 And these *are* the numbers of them ac-
cording to the house of their fathers: Of Judah,
the captains of thousands; Adnah the chief,
and with him mighty men of valour three hun-
dred thousand.

15 And ⁶ next to him *was* Jehohanan the
captain, and with him two hundred and four-
score thousand.

16 And next him *was* Amasiah the son of
Zichri, ¹ who willingly offered himself unto the
LORD; and with him two hundred thousand
mighty men of valour.

17 And of Benjamin; Eliada a mighty
man of valour, and with him armed men
with bow and shield two hundred thou-
sand.

^k 2 Samuel viii. 2.—⁵ Or, *palaces*.—⁶ Hebrew, *at his hand*.
¹ Judges v. 2, 9.

priests and Levites had a divine warrant for what
they said, and delivered to them only that which
they had received from the Lord.

Verse 10. *The fear of the Lord fell upon all
the kingdoms, &c.*—Justly concluding, from his
singular piety, that God would eminently appear
for him; for even the heathen could not but ob-
serve, that the kings of Judah were either pros-
perous or unhappy, according as they served God
or forsook him. *So that they made no war against
Jehoshaphat*—God's good providence so ordered it,
that while the princes and priests were instructing
and endeavouring to reform the country, none of
his neighbours gave him any molestation, to take
him off from that good work.

Verse 11. *Some of the Philistines brought pre-
sents*—They had been subject to Judah ever since
David's time; but, it seems, had neglected this duty
in the times of his predecessors, but were now
moved by their own fears to perform it. *And the
Arabians brought him flocks*—Either because he
had upon some just occasion waged war against
them, and subdued them; or because they volun-
tarily put themselves under his protection, in re-
compense whereof they sent him these presents;
or only as a free acknowledgment of their respect
for him.

Verse 13. *He had much business in the cities of
Judah*—To repair and fortify them, and furnish
them with provisions; and to purge out all the
relics of idolatry and injustice, which were more
secretly and craftily managed in the cities than in

A. M. 3092. 18 And next him *was* Jehozabad,
B. C. 912. and with him a hundred and four-
score thousand ready prepared for the war.

A. M. 3092. 19 These waited on the king, be-
B. C. 912. sides ^m those whom the king put in
the fenced cities throughout all Judah.

^m Verse 2.

the country, and which were first and most prevalent in the cities, and thence spread their infection into the country around them.

Verse 19. *These waited on the king*—These above-mentioned were the trained bands, or auxiliaries; whose chief officers waited on the king to receive his commands, and to raise and bring in all, or part of their forces, to the service of the king, as need required. A vast number for so small a com-

pass of ground to furnish out and maintain. But we may consider, that God had promised to make the seed of Abraham like the sand of the sea for number; that there had now been a long peace; that many were come to them from the kingdom of Israel; and that Jehoshaphat was under a special blessing of God. They were doubtless dispersed all the country over, every one residing on his own land; only they were ready at call, whenever there was occasion.

CHAPTER XVIII.

Jehoshaphat joins affinity with Ahab, and consents to go with him to Ramoth-gilead, 1-8. The false prophets promise them success, 4-11. Micaiah foretells the death of Ahab, 6-27. Jehoshaphat hardly escapes, 28-32. Ahab slain, 33, 34.

A. M. 3107. NOW Jehoshaphat ^a had riches and
B. C. 897. honour in abundance, and ^b joined
affinity with Ahab.

2 ^c And ¹ after *certain* years he went down to Ahab to Samaria. And Ahab killed sheep and oxen for him in abundance, and for the people that *he had* with him, and persuaded him to go up *with him* to Ramoth-gilead.

3 And Ahab king of Israel said unto Jehoshaphat king of Judah, Wilt thou go with me to Ramoth-gilead? And he answered him, *I am as thou art*, and my people as thy people; and *we will be* with thee in the war.

4 ¶ And Jehoshaphat said unto the king of Israel, ^d Inquire, I pray thee, at the word of the LORD to-day.

5 Therefore the king of Israel gathered together of prophets four hundred men, and said unto them, Shall we go to Ramoth-gilead to battle, or shall I forbear? And they said, Go up; for God will deliver *it* into the king's hand.

6 ¶ But Jehoshaphat said, *Is there* not here a prophet of the LORD ^e besides, that we might inquire of him?

A. M. 3107. 7 And the king of Israel said unto
B. C. 897. Jehoshaphat, *There is* yet one man,
by whom we may inquire of the LORD: but I hate him; for he never prophesieth good unto me, but always evil: the same *is* Micaiah the son of Imla. And Jehoshaphat said, Let not the king say so.

8 And the king of Israel called for one of *his* ³ officers, and said, ⁴ Fetch quickly Micaiah the son of Imla.

9 And the king of Israel and Jehoshaphat king of Judah sat either of them on his throne, clothed in *their* robes, and they sat in a ⁵ void place at the entering in of the gate of Samaria: and all the prophets prophesied before them.

10 And Zedekiah the son of Chenaanah had made him horns of iron, and said, Thus saith the LORD, With these thou shalt push Syria until ⁶ they be consumed.

11 And all the prophets prophesied so, saying, Go up to Ramoth-gilead, and prosper: for the LORD shall deliver *it* into the hand of the king.

12 And the messenger that went to call Micaiah spake to him, saying, Behold, the words

^a Chap. xvii. 5.—^b 2 Kings viii. 18.—^c 1 Kings xxii. 2, &c.
¹ Heb. *at the end of years.*—^d 1 Sam. xxiii. 2, 4, 9; 2 Sam. ii. 1.

³ Heb. *yet, or, more.*—⁴ Or, *eunuchs.*—⁵ Heb. *Hasten.*—⁶ Or, *floor.*—⁶ Heb. *thou consume them.*

NOTES ON CHAPTER XVIII.

Verse 1. *And joined affinity with Ahab*—For Joram, his eldest son, married Athaliah, Ahab's daughter. This chapter is, for substance, the same with 1 Kings xxii., where it is explained.

Verse 4. *Inquire, I pray thee, at the word of the Lord*—This we should do, whatever we undertake, by particular, believing prayer, by an unbiassed consulting of the Scriptures, and our own consciences and by a close regard to the hints of Providence.

A. M. 3107. of the prophets declare good to the
B. C. 897. king⁷ with one assent; let thy word
therefore, I pray thee, be like one of theirs, and
speak thou good.

13 And Micaiah said, As the LORD liveth,
even what my God saith, that will I speak.

14 And when he was come to the king, the
king said unto him, Micaiah, shall we go to
Ramoth-gilead to battle, or shall I forbear? And
he said, Go ye up, and prosper, and they shall
be delivered into your hand.

15 ¶ And the king said to him, How many
times shall I adjure thee that thou say nothing
but the truth to me in the name of the
LORD?

16 Then he said, I did see all Israel scattered
upon the mountains, as sheep that have no
shepherd: and the LORD said, These have no
master; let them return *therefore* every man
to his house in peace.

17 And the king of Israel said to Jehoshaphat,
Did I not tell thee *that* he would not prophesy
good unto me,⁸ but evil?

18 Again he said, Therefore hear the word of
the LORD; I saw the LORD sitting upon his
throne, and all the host of heaven standing on
his right hand and *on* his left.

19 And the LORD said, Who shall entice
Ahab king of Israel, that he may go up and
fall at Ramoth-gilead? And one spake saying
after this manner, and another saying after
that manner.

20 Then there came out a⁹ spirit and stood
before the LORD, and said, I will entice him.
And the LORD said unto him, Wherewith?

21 And he said, I will go out, and be a lying
spirit in the mouth of all his prophets. And *the*
LORD said, Thou shalt entice *him*, and thou
shalt also prevail: go out and do *even* so.

22 Now therefore, behold, ¹⁰ the LORD hath

⁷ Heb. *with one mouth*.—⁸ Num. xxii. 18, 20, 35; xxiii. 12, 26; xxiv. 13; 1 Kings xxii. 14.—⁹ Or, *but for evil*.—¹⁰ Job i. 6.—¹¹ Job xii. 16; Isa. xix. 14; Ezek. xiv. 9.

Verse 21. *I will go out and be a lying spirit, &c.*—See the power of Satan! One lying spirit can make four hundred lying prophets. And thus he frequently becomes a murderer by being a liar, and destroys men by deceiving them.

Verse 26. *Put this fellow in the prison, &c.*—How frequently has this been the lot of faithful ministers, to be hated and ill treated merely for being true to God, and just and kind to the souls of men! But that day will declare who is in the right and who

put a lying spirit in the mouth of A. M. 3107.
these thy prophets, and the LORD B. C. 897.
hath spoken evil against thee.

23 ¶ Then Zedekiah the son of Chenaanah
came near, and¹¹ smote Micaiah upon the cheek,
and said, Which way went the Spirit of the
LORD from me to speak unto thee?

24 And Micaiah said, Behold, thou shalt see
on that day when thou shalt go⁹ into¹⁰ an
inner chamber to hide thyself.

25 Then the king of Israel said, Take ye
Micaiah, and carry him back to Amon the
governor of the city, and to Joash the king's
son;

26 And say, Thus saith the king, ¹¹ Put this
fellow in the prison, and feed him with bread
of affliction and with water of affliction, until I
return in peace.

27 And Micaiah said, If thou certainly return
in peace, *then* hath not the LORD spoken by me.
And he said, Harken, all ye people.

28 ¶ So the king of Israel and Jehosha-
phat the king of Judah went up to Ramoth-
gilead.

29 And the king of Israel said unto Jehosha-
phat, I will disguise myself, and will go to the
battle; but put thou on thy robes. So the king
of Israel disguised himself; and they went to
the battle.

30 Now the king of Syria had commanded
the captains of the chariots that *were* with him,
saying, Fight ye not with small or great, save
only with the king of Israel.

31 And it came to pass, when the captains of
the chariots saw Jehoshaphat, that they said, It
is the king of Israel. Therefore they com-
passed about him to fight: but Jehoshaphat
cried out, and the LORD helped him; and God
moved them *to depart* from him.

32 For it came to pass, that when the cap-

¹¹ Jeremiah xx. 2; Mark xiv. 65; Acts xxiii. 2.—⁹ Or, *from chamber to chamber*.—¹⁰ Heb. *a chamber in a chamber*.—¹¹ Chap. xvi. 10.

is in the wrong, when Christ appears, to the unspeakable consolation of the persecuted, and the everlasting confusion of their persecutors.

Verse 31. *Jehoshaphat cried out*—He cried out, either to his friends to help, or to his enemies, to let them know he was not the king of Israel, or to God, and not in vain; for he *moved the captains to depart from him*—Many are moved in a manner unaccountable both to themselves and others; but an invisible power moves them.

A. M. 3107. tains of the chariots perceived that it
B. C. 897. was not the king of Israel, they turned
back again ¹¹ from pursuing him.

33 ¶ And a certain man drew a bow ¹² at a
venture, and smote the king of Israel ¹³ be-
tween the joints of the harness: therefore he
said to his chariot-man, Turn thy hand, that

¹¹ Heb. from after him.—¹² Heb. in his simplicity.—¹³ Heb.

Verse 34. He died—Who can hurt those whom
God will protect? And what can shelter those

thou mayest carry me out of the host; A. M. 3107
for I am ¹⁴ wounded. B. C. 897.

34 And the battle increased that day: how-
beit the king of Israel stayed *himself* up in
his chariot against the Syrians until the even:
and about the time of the sun going down he
died.

between the joints and between the breast-plate.—¹⁴ Heb. made sick.

whom God will destroy? Jehoshaphat is saved in
his robes; Ahab is killed in his armour!

CHAPTER XIX.

Jehoshaphat is reproved by a prophet, 1-3. He reforms the kingdom, 4. Gives instructions to the itinerant judges, 5-7.
And to the supreme court at Jerusalem, 8-11.

A. M. 3108. AND Jehoshaphat the king of Judah
B. C. 896. returned to his house in peace to
Jerusalem.

2 And Jehu the son of Hanani ^a the seer
went out to meet him, and said to King Jeho-
shaphat, Shouldest thou help the ungodly,
and ^b love them that hate the LORD? therefore
^c is ^c wrath upon thee from before the LORD.

3 Nevertheless, there are ^d good things found
in thee, in that thou hast taken away the groves

^a 1 Samuel ix. 9.—^b Psalm cxxxix. 21.—^c Chap. xxxii. 25.
^d Chap. xvii. 4, 6; Chap. xii. 12.

NOTES ON CHAPTER XIX.

Verses 1-3. *Jehoshaphat returned to his house in peace*—Safe, being miraculously delivered from imminent danger, as has just been related. *And Jehu, the seer*—Of whom see 1 Kings xvi. 1, 2; *went out to meet him*—Sent by God for that purpose. *And said to Jehoshaphat, Shouldest thou help the ungodly?*—Give them a hand of fellowship, and lend them a hand of assistance? *And love them that hate the Lord?*—Be in a state of intimacy with those that are at enmity with God, and under his wrath and curse? Was it agreeable to the love and duty which thou professest to God and godliness, to enter into so strict an alliance and friendship with wicked Ahab, God's sworn enemy, and to give him such assistance? *Therefore is wrath come upon thee, &c.*—God is angry with thee, and will chastise thee for this miscarriage. Which he did, partly by stirring up the Moabites and others to invade him, chap. xx.; partly by permitting his eldest son Jehoram to kill all his brethren, chap. xxi. 4; and principally by bringing that almost general destruction upon his grand-children by Jehu, (2 Kings ix. 27; and x. 13, 14) which was the fruit of his alliance with Ahab. *And hast prepared thy heart to seek God*—הכנינה, *hachnina*, hast disposed, directed, or set thy heart;

out of the land, and hast ^a prepared
thy heart to seek God. A. M. 3108.
B. C. 896.

4 ¶ And Jehoshaphat dwelt at Jerusalem:
and ¹ he went out again through the people
from Beer-sheba to mount Ephraim, and
brought them back unto the LORD God of
their fathers.

5 ¶ And he set judges in the land through-
out all the fenced cities of Judah, city by city;
6 And said to the judges, Take heed what

^a Chapter xxx. 19; Ezra vii. 10.—¹ Hebrew, he returned and went out.

that is, thou hast sought and served God with all thy heart, and not feignedly, as many others do. And this work of preparing or directing the heart, which is elsewhere attributed to God, (Prov. xvi. 1; Phil. ii. 13,) is here ascribed to Jehoshaphat, because it is man's action, though performed by God's grace, preventing, enabling, and inclining him to it.

Verse 4. *He went out again through the people*—He went out before by his officers, (chap. xvii. 7,) now he went in his own person. *From Beer-sheba to mount Ephraim*—That is, through his whole kingdom, whereof these were the two bounds. *And brought them back unto the God of their fathers*—Such of them as had revolted from God to idols, he reclaimed by his counsel and example, and by the instructions of the Levites and priests whom he carried with him. Many, probably, had revolted to idolatry, when they saw their king so intimate with idolaters. Therefore he thought himself doubly obliged to do all he could to reduce them. If we truly repent of sin, we shall do our utmost to repair the damage we have done to religion, or the souls of others.

Verses 5, 6. *He set judges in the land, city by city*—In every city, for itself and the country adjacent, that justice might be administered with the most ease

A. M. 3108. ye do : for ^fye judge not for man,
B. C. 896. but for the LORD, ^gwho is with you
²in the judgment.

7 Wherefore now let the fear of the LORD be upon you : take heed and do it : for ^hthere is no iniquity with the LORD our God, nor ⁱrespect of persons, nor taking of gifts.

8 ¶ Moreover, in Jerusalem did Jehoshaphat ^kset of the Levites, and of the priests, and of the chief of the fathers of Israel, for the judgment of the LORD, and for controversies, when they returned to Jerusalem.

9 And he charged them, saying, Thus shall ye do ^lin the fear of the LORD, faithfully, and with a perfect heart.

^f Deut. i. 17.—^g Psalm lxxii. 1 ; Eccles. viii. 5.—^h Heb. in the matter of judgment.—ⁱ Deut. xxxii. 4 ; Romans ix. 14. ^k Deut. x. 17 ; Job xxxiv. 19 ; Acts x. 34 ; Rom. ii. 11 ; Gal. ii. 6 ; Eph. vi. 9 ; Col. iii. 25 ; 1 Pet. i. 17.

and convenience to the people, and they might not all be forced to go up to Jerusalem. *And said to the judges, Take heed, &c.*—Mind your business ; take heed of making any mistakes ; be afraid of misunderstanding any point of law, or the matter of fact. Judges, of all men, have need to be cautious, because so much depends on their understanding a matter right. *For ye judge not for man, but for the Lord*—You represent God's person, to whom judgment belongeth ; you have your commission from God, and not from man only ; and your administration of justice is not only for man's good, but also for God's honour and service. *Who is with you in judgment*—Both to observe your carriage, and to defend you against all those enemies whom the impartial exercise of justice may provoke.

Verse 7. *Wherefore, let the fear of the Lord be upon you*—Which will be a restraint upon you to keep you from doing wrong, and an encouragement to you to be active in fulfilling the duties of your office. *For there is no iniquity in our God, nor respect of persons*—And therefore you, who are in God's stead, and do his work, and must give an account to him, must imitate him herein. *Nor taking of gifts*—So as to pervert judgment. See Exod. xxiii. 8 ; Deut. xvi. 19 ; Prov. xvii. 23.

Verse 8. *The chief of the fathers of Israel*—Who were not priests, or Levites, but such persons of other tribes as were most eminent for their dignity, ability, and integrity. But whether these persons made up one court, called the sanhedrim, by which all causes, ecclesiastical and civil, were decided ; or there were two distinct courts, the one ecclesiastical, consisting of the *priests and Levites*, the other civil, consisting of *the chief of the fathers of Israel*, it is not easy to determine. *For the judgment of the Lord*—For matters concerning the law and worship of God. *For controversies*—For matters of difference between man and man. *When they returned*

10 ^mAnd what cause soever shall A. M. 3108
come to you of your brethren that B. C. 896.

dwell in their cities, between blood and blood, between law and commandment, statutes and judgments, ye shall even warn them that they trespass not against the LORD, and so ⁿwrath come upon ^oyou, and upon your brethren : this do, and ye shall not trespass.

11 And behold, Amariah the chief priest is over you ^pin all matters of the LORD ; and Zebadiah the son of Ishmael, the ruler of the house of Judah, for all the king's matters : also the Levites shall be officers before you. ³Deal courageously, and the LORD shall be ^qwith the good.

^m Deuteron. xvii. 18 ; Chapter xvii. 8.—ⁿ 2 Samuel xxiii. 3. ^o Deuteron. xvii. 8, &c.—^p Num. xvi. 46.—^q Ezek. iii. 18. ^r 1 Chronicles xxvi. 30.—^s Hebrew, *Take courage and do.* ^t Chapter xv. 2.

—When Jehoshaphat and his company were returned to Jerusalem, he made this order concerning establishing judges there.

Verse 9. *Faithfully, and with a perfect heart*—Passing such sentences with your lips, as your consciences, upon the hearing of the parties, shall judge to be just, and not acting against your consciences through carnal motives, as corrupt judges do.

Verse 10. *Between blood and blood*—Between the blood of the person slain, and the blood of the manslayer. See the note on Deut. xvii. 8. All the cities of refuge, except Hebron, now belonged to the kingdom of Israel, so that the manslayer now usually fled to the courts of the temple, or the horns of the altar ; and therefore the trial of these was reserved for the court at Jerusalem. *Between law and commandment, &c.*—When any debates shall arise about the meaning of any of God's laws. *Ye shall even warn them*—Ye shall not only give a righteous sentence for what is past, but ye shall admonish the offender, and others, to take better heed for the future. *This do, and ye shall not trespass*—Thus you shall not bring guilt and wrath upon yourselves and others, which otherwise you certainly would do.

Verse 11. *The chief priest is over you*—Shall be your president to direct and assist you ; *in all matters of the Lord*—In spiritual or ecclesiastical matters. *And Zebadiah, the ruler of the house of Judah*—The prince, or chief ruler, under the king, of the tribe of Judah ; *for all the king's matters*—For civil causes, or controversies, either between the king and his people, or between subject and subject, which may be called *the king's matters*, because it was a principal part of his office to see them justly decided. *The Levites shall be officers before you*—Shall be at your command, to see your just sentences executed ; which work was fitly committed to the Levites, as persons who might add their instructions to the cor-

rections, and might bring the guilty to an acknowledgment of their fault, and a submission to their punishment. *Deal courageously*—Act with resolution, and fear not the face of man; but be bold and

daring in the discharge of your duty. *And the Lord shall be with the good*—Shall protect and bless good judges in their pronouncing just sentences, and doing good things.

CHAPTER XX.

The land being invaded, Jehoshaphat and all the people seek God by fasting and prayer, 1-18. They thankfully receive the promise of victory given by a prophet, 14-19. Their enemies are overthrown, 20-25. Their thanksgiving, 26-30. The conclusion of his reign, 31-37.

A. M. 3108. B. C. 896. **I**T came to pass after this also, that the children of Moab, and the children of Ammon, and with them *other* besides the Ammonites, came against Jehoshaphat to battle.

2 Then there came some that told Jehoshaphat, saying, There cometh a great multitude against thee from beyond the sea on this side Syria; and behold, they be ^a in Hazazon-tamar, which is ^b En-gedi.

3 And Jehoshaphat feared, and set ¹ himself to ^c seek the LORD, and ^d proclaimed a fast throughout all Judah.

4 And Judah gathered themselves together, to ask *help* of the LORD; ^{A. M. 3108. B. C. 896.} even out of all the cities of Judah they came to seek the LORD.

5 ¶ And Jehoshaphat stood in the congregation of Judah and Jerusalem, in the house of the LORD, before the new court,

6 And said, O LORD God of our fathers, art not thou ^a God in heaven? and ^f rulest not thou over all the kingdoms of the heathen? and ^e in thy hand is *there not* power and might, so that none is able to withstand thee?

7 Art not thou ^b our God, ² who ⁱ didst drive

^a Genesis xiv. 7.—^b Joshua xv. 62.—^c Hebrew, his face. ^d Chap. xix. 3.—^e Ezra viii. 21; Jer. xxxvi. 9; Jonah iii. 5. ^f Deut. iv. 39; Josh. ii. 11; 1 Kings viii. 23; Matt. vi. 9.

^f Psalm xlvi. 2, 8; Dan. iv. 17, 25, 32.—^g 1 Chron. xxix. 12; Psa. lxxii. 11; Matt. vi. 13.—^h Gen. xvii. 7; Exod. vi. 7. ⁱ Heb. thou.—^j Psa. xlv. 2.

NOTES ON CHAPTER XX.

Verse 1. *It came to pass after this also, &c.*—After Jehoshaphat had been so very well and zealously employed in reforming his kingdom, and providing for the due administration of justice, and the support of religion in it, and when one would have expected to hear of nothing but the peace and prosperity of his reign, he is interrupted in his good work, and brought into great perplexity, through a formidable invasion of his kingdom by several neighbouring nations: this, however, was permitted in order to such a glorious deliverance as was an abundant recompense for the distress he suffered. If we meet with trouble in the way of duty, we may believe it is in order that God may have an occasion of showing us so much the more of his marvellous loving-kindness.

Verse 2. *Then there came some that told Jehoshaphat*—That brought him the surprising intelligence of this invasion, when his enemies had already entered his kingdom. *Saying, There cometh a great multitude against thee from beyond the sea*—The Dead sea, beyond which mount Seir lay; and from *this side Syria*—Largely so called, and so it includes the Moabites and Ammonites. And it may be thus expressed, to intimate that they came by the instigation of the Syrians, to revenge themselves of Jehoshaphat for joining with Ahab against them.

Verse 3. *Jehoshaphat feared*—Partly from human

frailty, and partly from the remembrance of his own guilt, and the wrath of God denounced against him for it, chap. xix. 2. *And set himself to seek the Lord*—The phrase denotes his settled resolution, seriousness, and earnestness in it, and the preparing and fixing of his heart for it. *And proclaimed a fast*—Partly in token of his humiliation and penitence for his sins, and partly to render himself and his people more fervent in their prayers.

Verses 4, 5. *Judah gathered themselves together*—The people readily assembled, out of all the cities of Judah, in the court of the temple, to join in fasting and prayer to the Lord for help in this time of great danger and distress. *And Jehoshaphat stood in the house of the Lord*—Largely so called, that is, in the court of the people, upon that brazen scaffold which Solomon had erected. *Before the new court*—Before the priest's court; which is called the new court, because it had lately been renewed when the altar was renewed.

Verses 6, 7. *And said, O Lord God, &c.*—Jehoshaphat himself was the mouth of the congregation to God, and did not devolve the work upon his chaplains. For though the kings were forbidden to burn incense, they were allowed to pray and preach. *Art thou not God in heaven, &c.*—Which none of the gods of the heathen are. Is not thy dominion supreme, over *kingdoms* themselves, and universal, over *all kingdoms*, even those of the heathen, that

A. M. 3108. out the inhabitants of this land before
B. C. 896. thy people Israel, and gavest it to the
seed of Abraham ^k thy friend for ever?

8 And they dwelt therein, and have built
thee a sanctuary therein for thy name, saying,

9 ^l If, *when* evil cometh upon us, *as* the sword,
judgment, or pestilence, or famine, we stand
before this house, and in thy presence, (for
thy ^m name is in this house,) and cry unto thee
in our affliction, then thou wilt hear and help.

10 And now, behold, the children of Ammon
and Moab, and mount Seir, whom thou
ⁿ wouldst not let Israel invade, when they
came out of the land of Egypt, but ^o they
turned from them, and destroyed them not;

11 Behold, *I say, how* they reward us, ^p to
come to cast us out of thy possession, which
thou hast given us to inherit.

^k Isaiah xli. 8; James ii. 23.—^l 1 Kings viii. 33; Chap. vi.
28, 30.—^m Chap. vi. 20.—ⁿ Deut. ii. 4, 9, 19.—^o Numbers
xx. 21.—^p Psa. lxxxiii. 12.—^q 1 Sam. iii. 13.

know thee not? *Art thou not our God?*—In cove-
nant with us? To whom should we seek, to whom
should we trust for relief, but to him whom we have
chosen for our God, and who has chosen us for his
people? *Who gavest it to the seed of Abraham thy
friend*—To whom thou didst engage thyself to be
his friend, and the friend of his seed for ever, and
therefore we trust thou wilt not forsake us, his pos-
terity.

Verses 8, 9. *Have built thee a sanctuary*—He
does not mention this under an idea that they had
merited any thing at God's hand by building it, for
only of his own they had given him; but considers
it as such a token of God's favourable presence with
them, as had encouraged them to hope he would
hear and help them, when in their distress they cried
to him before that house. *If when evil cometh upon
us, the sword, judgment*—Or rather, the sword of
judgment, or of vengeance, that is, war, whereby
thou judgest and punishest thy people for their sins.

Verses 10, 11. *Whom thou wouldst not let Israel
invade, &c.*—Or give them any disturbance. He
pleads the ingratitude and injustice of his enemies,
and intimates that it would be for God's glory to ap-
pear against them, and for the people whom they
had so ill requited for the kindness shown them.
We may comfortably appeal to God against those
who render us evil for good. *Behold how they re-
ward us, to come and cast us out of thy possession*
—And seize our land for themselves, which indeed
is *thy land*. Their crime was aggravated in this,
that they made an attempt, not only upon the rights
of the Israelites, but of God himself; whose land
this was, which his people held of him as their
Lord.

Verse 12. *O our God, wilt thou not judge them?*—
He appeals to the justice of God, the righteous Judge,

12 O our God, wilt thou not ^a judge ^{A. M. 3108.}
them? for we have no might against ^{B. C. 896.}
this great company that cometh against us;
neither know we what to do: but ^r our eyes
are upon thee.

13 And all Judah stood before the LORD, with
their little ones, their wives, and their children.

14 ¶ Then upon Jahaziel the son of Zecha-
riah, the son of Benaiah, the son of Jeiel, the
son of Mattaniah, a Levite of the sons of Asaph,
^s came the Spirit of the LORD in the midst of
the congregation;

15 And he said, Harken ye, all Judah, and
ye inhabitants of Jerusalem, and thou King
Jehoshaphat, Thus saith the LORD unto you,
^t Be not afraid nor dismayed by reason of this
great multitude; for the battle is not yours,
but God's.

^a Psa. xxv. 15; cxxi. 1, 2; cxxiii. 1, 2; cxli. 8.—^r Num. xi.
25, 26; xxiv. 2; Chap. xv. 1; xxiv. 20.—^s Exod. xiv. 13, 14;
Deut. i. 29; xxxi. 6, 8; Chap. xxxiii. 7.

who rights those that suffer wrong, especially when
they have no helper. Wilt thou not give sentence
against them, and execute it upon them? For to
judge, in this place, signifies to *punish*, as it also
does in many other passages. The justice of God is
the refuge of those that are wronged. *We have no
might against this great company*—It may seem
strange that he should say they had no might, when
he had so many hundred thousand men at command
as are mentioned chap. xvii. 14–16, &c. But it may
be observed, that this was probably such a sudden
invasion, that he had not time to gather any consi-
derable body to oppose them; or rather, he distrusted
the greatest army, and acknowledged it to be of no
force if God were not with him, on whom he en-
tirely relied, and not on the number and valour of
his soldiers, though both were very great.

Verse 13. *All Judah stood before the Lord with
their little ones*—Whom they used to present before
the Lord in times of great distress, to stir up them-
selves to more fervent prayers, their eyes being upon
their harmless and tender children; and to move
God to compassion, because God hath declared that
he will be prevailed with by such methods as these.

Verse 14. *Upon Jahaziel came the Spirit of the
Lord*—It seems he was not a prophet before this
time, but was now suddenly inspired by God with
the following message, to comfort this great assem-
bly with an assured hope of deliverance, before they
stirred from the place where they had prayed. For
it is never in vain to seek God; *while they were yet
speaking, God heard*.

Verses 15–17. *Thus saith the Lord, Be not afraid*
—You have admitted fear enough to induce you to
have recourse to God: now do not give way to that
fear which would drive you from him. *The battle
is not yours*—It is not in your own cause, nor in

A. M. 3108. B. C. 896. 16 To-morrow go ye down against them: behold, they come up by the cliff of Ziz; and ye shall find them at the end of the brook, before the wilderness of Jeruel.

17 Ye shall not need to fight in this battle: set yourselves, stand ye still, and see the salvation of the LORD with you, O Judah and Jerusalem: fear not, nor be dismayed; to-morrow go out against them: for the LORD will be with you.

18 And Jehoshaphat bowed his head with his face to the ground: and all Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem fell before the LORD, worshipping the LORD.

19 And the Levites, of the children of the Kohathites, and of the children of the Korhites, stood up to praise the LORD God of Israel with a loud voice on high.

20 ¶ And they rose early in the morning, and went forth into the wilderness of Tekoa: and as they went forth, Jehoshaphat stood and

¹ Heb. *ascend*.—⁴ Or, *valley*.—⁵ Exod. xiv. 13.—⁶ Num. xiv. 9; Chap. xv. 2; xxxii. 8.—⁷ Exod. iv. 31.—⁸ Isa. vii. 9.
⁹ 1 Chron. xvi. 29.—¹⁰ Heb. *praisers*.—¹¹ 1 Chron. xvi. 34; Psalm cxxxvi. 1.

your own strength, that you engage; *the battle is God's*—And he doth and will interest himself in your favour, as you have desired, and will fight for you. *To-morrow go ye down*—From Jerusalem, where he and his army now were, which stood upon high ground. *Ye shall not need to fight in this battle*—The work shall be done to your hands, and you will not need to strike a stroke, nor shall you be the instruments, but only the spectators of the defeat of the enemy. *O Judah and Jerusalem, fear not*—Thus does he encourage them to trust in God, though the danger was very threatening, and to expect certain victory and deliverance.

Verses 18, 19. *Jehoshaphat bowed his head with his face to the ground*—In token of his reverence for God and his message, his belief of the promise, and his thankfulness for so great a favour. *The Levites stood up to praise the Lord*—By Jehoshaphat's appointment. *With a loud voice on high*—With heart and voice lifted up, whereby they showed their confidence in God, and assurance of the accomplishment of the prophet's prediction.

Verse 20. *Believe in the Lord your God*—Believe God's promise delivered to us by this prophet, and consequently all other predictions of the prophets. *So shall ye prosper*—Take heed lest by your unbelief you frustrate God's promise.

Verse 21. *When he had consulted with the people*—That is, with the elders and heads of the tribes, who represented the rest. He called a council of war, and it was resolved to appoint *singers to go out before the army*, who had nothing to do but to praise God, to praise his holiness, which is his beau-

said, Hear me, O Judah, and ye inhabitants of Jerusalem; ² Believe in the LORD your God, so shall ye be established; believe his prophets, so shall ye prosper.

21 And when he had consulted with the people, he appointed singers unto the LORD, and that should praise the beauty of holiness, as they went out before the army, and to say, Praise the LORD; for his mercy endureth for ever.

22 ¶ And when they began to sing and to praise, the LORD set ambushments against the children of Ammon, Moab, and mount Seir, which were come against Judah; and they were smitten.

23 For the children of Ammon and Moab stood up against the inhabitants of mount Seir, utterly to slay and destroy them: and when they had made an end of the inhabitants of Seir, every one helped to destroy another.

24 And when Judah came toward the watch-

¹ 1 Chron. xvi. 41; Chap. v. 13; vii. 3, 6.—² Heb. *And in the time that they, &c.*—³ Heb. *in singing and praise*.—⁴ Judg. vii. 22; 1 Samuel xiv. 20.—⁵ Or, *they smote one another*.
⁶ Heb. *for the destruction*.

ty, to praise him as they did in the temple, that *beauty of holiness*, "with that good old doxology, which eternity itself," as Henry says, "will not wear threadbare, *Praise the Lord, for his mercy endureth for ever.*" By this strange advance to the field of battle, Jehoshaphat showed his firm reliance on the word of God, which enabled him to triumph before the battle, to animate his own men, and confound the enemy.

Verse 22. *When they began to sing and to praise*—So acceptable are the fervent prayers and praises of God's people to him, and so terrible to their enemies! *The Lord set ambushments*—Hebrew, *מארבים*, *mearebim*, *insidiantes*, *persons lying in wait*, or *plotting*, and *laying snares*. The meaning seems to be, as appears from the next verse, that God raised jealousies and animosities among their enemies themselves, which by degrees broke forth, first into secret plots, snares, and ambushments, which one party contrived and laid for another, against which they had conceived some grudge; and then into a general confusion, and open hostilities and outrages, to the destruction of one another throughout the whole army. So vain are all men's attempts against God, who needs none to destroy his enemies but themselves, and their own mistakes and passions, which he can, when he pleases, arm against them.

Verses 23, 24. *The children of Ammon and of Moab, &c.*—These fell foul upon the Edomites, and cut them off; and then fell out with one another, and cut one another off. Thus God often makes wicked people instruments of destruction to one another.

A. M. 3108. tower in the wilderness, they looked
B. C. 896. unto the multitude, and behold, they
were dead bodies fallen to the earth, and ¹⁰ none
escaped.

25 And when Jehoshaphat and his people came to take away the spoil of them, they found among them in abundance both riches with the dead bodies, and precious jewels, which they stripped off for themselves, more than they could carry away: and they were three days in gathering of the spoil, it was so much.

26 ¶ And on the fourth day they assembled themselves in the valley of ¹¹ Berachah; for there they blessed the LORD: therefore the name of the same place was called, The valley of Berachah, unto this day.

¹⁰ Hebrew, there was not an escaping.—¹¹ That is, blessing.
¹² Heb. head.—¹³ Neh. xii. 43.

When Judah came toward the watch-tower—Which stood upon the cliff of Ziz, mentioned verse 16, and looked toward the wilderness, where their enemies lay encamped, whose numbers, and order, and condition, they could descry from thence. *They looked unto the multitude, and behold they were dead bodies*—When they came to the view of this vast army, instead of finding living men to fight with, they found them all dead men, and their carcasses spread as dung upon the face of the earth. *And none escaped*—Or rather, *none remained*, because those who were not killed, made the best of their way home; for it cannot be supposed that they were absolutely all killed.

Verse 25. *They found among them in abundance both riches and jewels, &c.*—Which they had brought with them to corrupt any of Jehoshaphat's officers as they saw occasion: to procure necessaries for their vast army from time to time: and because they came as to triumph rather than to fight, being confident of the victory on account of their numbers, and especially because they thought to surprise Jehoshaphat ere he could make any considerable preparations against them; God also permitting them to be puffed up to their own destruction. See how rich in mercy God is to them that call upon him in truth, and how often he out-does the prayers and expectations of his people. Jehoshaphat prayed to be delivered from being spoiled by the enemy, and God not only did that, but enriched them with the spoils of the enemy. Now it appeared what was God's end in bringing this great army against Judah; it was to humble them, and prove them, that he might do them good in their latter end. It seemed, at first, to be a disturbance to their reformation, but it proves to be a recompense of it.

Verse 26. *On the fourth day, &c.*—Undoubtedly many thanksgivings were offered to God immediately, and perhaps even a day of praise was kept in the

27 Then they returned, every man A. M. 3108.
of Judah and Jerusalem, and Jehosha- B. C. 896.
phat in the ¹² fore-front of them, to go again to Jerusalem with joy; for the LORD had ¹³ made them to rejoice over their enemies.

28 And they came to Jerusalem with psalteries and harps and trumpets unto the house of the LORD.

29 And ¹⁴ the fear of God was on all the kingdoms of *those* countries, when they had heard that the LORD fought against the enemies of Israel.

30 So the realm of Jehoshaphat was quiet: for his ¹⁵ God gave him rest round about.

31 ¶ ¹⁶ And Jehoshaphat reigned over Judah: *he was* thirty and five years old when he began to reign, and he reigned twenty and five years

¹⁴ Chap. xvii. 10.—¹⁵ Chap. xv. 15; Job xxxiv. 29.—¹⁶ 1 Kings xxii. 41, &c.

camp, before they drew their forces out of the field: but in the fourth day they assembled in a valley, and blessed God with so much zeal and fervency, that a name was thereby given to the place, and the remembrance of that work of wonder perpetuated for the encouragement of succeeding generations to trust in God. *Of Berachah*—Hebrew, *of blessing*, so called, from the solemn blessings and praises given to God on that occasion.

Verses 27, 28. *Jehoshaphat in the fore-front of them*—They marched all in a body, in solemn procession, and Jehoshaphat at their head, that the country, as they passed along, might join with them in their praises. *To go again to Jerusalem with joy*—That they might give thanks for the mercy there, where by prayer they had obtained it. *Unto the house of the Lord*—To renew their praises in the court of the temple, the proper and usual place for it. Praising God must not be the work of a day only; but our praises, when we have received mercy, must be often repeated, as our prayers were, when we were in pursuit of it. Every day we must bless God; as long as we live, and while we have any being, we must praise him, spending our time in that work, in which we hope to spend our eternity.

Verses 29, 30. *The fear of God was on all the kingdoms, &c.*—Which were near, or which heard these things. They were afraid to attack or molest the worshippers of a God who was able to help his people in so wonderful a manner. *So the realm of Jehoshaphat was quiet*—Those that were displeased at the destroying of the images and groves, were now satisfied, and obliged to own, that since the God of Israel could deliver after this sort, he only ought to be worshipped, and in that way which himself had appointed. So that they were quiet among themselves; and they were also quiet from the fear of insults or injuries from their neighbours, God having given them *rest round about*.

A. M. 3108. in Jerusalem. And his mother's
B. C. 896. name was Azubah the daughter of Shilhi.

32 And he walked in the way of Asa his father, and departed not from it, doing *that which was right* in the sight of the LORD.

33 Howbeit, ¹ the high places were not taken away: for as yet the people had not ² prepared their hearts unto the God of their fathers.

34 Now the rest of the acts of Jehoshaphat, first and last, behold, they *are* written in the ³ book of Jehu the son of Hanani, ¹ who ⁴ is mentioned in the book of the kings of Israel.

¹ Chapter xvii. 6.—² Chap. xii. 14; xix. 3.—³ Heb. words.
⁴ 1 Kings xvi. 1, 7.—⁵ Heb. was made to ascend.

Verse 33. *Howbeit, the high places were not taken away*—Not universally; the fault was not in Jehoshaphat, but in the people, who, though they did worship the true God, yet would not be confined to the temple; but, for their own convenience, or from their affection to their ancient customs, chose to worship him in the high places.

Verse 35. *After this did Jehoshaphat join him with Ahaziah*—This is mentioned as an aggravation of his sin, after so great an obligation laid upon him by God, and after he had been so sharply reproved by a prophet, yet he relapsed into the same sin; which proceeded partly from that near relation which was contracted between the two families, and partly

35 ¶ And after this ^m did Jeho- A. M. 3108.
shaphat king of Judah join himself ^{B. C. 896.}
with Ahaziah king of Israel, who did very wickedly:

36 ¹⁵ And he joined himself with him to make ships to go to Tarshish: and they made the ships in Ezion-geber.

37 Then Eliezer the son of Dodavah of Mare-shah prophesied against Jehoshaphat, saying, Because thou hast joined thyself with Ahaziah, the LORD hath broken thy works. ⁿ And the ships were broken, that they were not able to go ^o to Tarshish.

^m 1 Kings xxii. 48.—¹⁵ At first, Jehoshaphat was unwilling.
ⁿ 1 Kings xxii. 49.—^o 1 Kings xxii. 49.—^p Chap. ix. 21.

from the easiness of Jehoshaphat's temper, which could not resist the solicitations of others, in such things as might seem indifferent. For he did not join with him in war, as he did with Ahab, but in a peaceable way only, in a matter of trade and commerce. And yet God reproves and punishes him for it, (verse 37,) to show his great dislike of all familiar conversation of his servants and people with professed enemies of God and of religion, as Ahaziah was. *Who did very wickedly*—Or, *who did industriously, and maliciously, and constantly, work wickedness*, as the Hebrew phrase implies, giving himself up to idolatry, and all wickedness.

CHAPTER XXI.

Jehoram succeeds, 1-3. His wickedness, 4-7. Edom and Libnah revolt, and Jehoram is still more wicked, 8-11. The prophecy of Elijah against him, 12-15. The success of his enemies, 16, 17. His sickness and death, 18-20.

A. M. 3108. NOW ⁿ Jehoshaphat slept with his
B. C. 896. fathers, and was buried with his fathers in the city of David. And Jehoram his son ¹ reigned in his stead.

2 And he had brethren the sons of Jehoshaphat, Azariah, and Jehiel, and Zechariah, and Azariah, and Michael, and Shephatiah:

¹ 1 Kings xxii. 50.—² Alone.—³ Jehoram made partner

NOTES ON CHAPTER XXI.

Verse 2. *And Azariah*—Hebrew, אַזַּרְיָהוּ, Azariahu, distinguished by the last syllable, hu, from the Azariah mentioned in the former clause. *Of Jehoshaphat king of Israel*—So he is called, either, 1st, Because he was so by right: or, 2d, Because he was king not only of Judah and Benjamin, but of a great number of Israelites, who had come and settled in his kingdom.

all these were the sons of Jehoshaphat king of Israel. A. M. 3108.
B. C. 896.

3 And their father gave them great gifts of silver, and of gold, and of precious things, with fenced cities in Judah: but the kingdom gave he to ² Jehoram; because he was the firstborn.

of the kingdom with his father, 2 Kings viii. 16.

Verse 3. *With fenced cities of Judah*—Over which he made them governors. This he seems to have done prudently; thus providing well for them, that they might not be tempted to envy their brother the kingdom, nor to quarrel among themselves: but "things excellently designed," says Strigelius, from Cicero, "have often a very ill event." This wealth and authority of theirs, made their brother first fear them, and then, through his wicked covetousness,

A. M. 3106^e 4 Now when Jehoram was risen
B. C. 896. up to the kingdom of his father, he strengthened himself, and slew all his brethren with the sword, and *divers* also of the princes of Israel.

B. C. 892. 5 ¶ ^b Jehoram was thirty and two years old when he began to reign, and he reigned eight years in Jerusalem.

6 And he walked in the way of the kings of Israel, like as did the house of Ahab: for he had the daughter of ° Ahab to wife: and he wrought *that which was* evil in the eyes of the LORD.

7 Howbeit the LORD would not destroy the house of David, because of the covenant that he had made with David, and as he promised to give a ³light to him and to his ⁴sons for ever.

B. C. 889. 8 ¶ ° In his days the Edomites revolted from under the ⁴dominion of Judah, and made themselves a king.

^b In consort, 2 Kings viii. 17, &c.—^c Chapter xxii. 2. ^a Heb. *lamp*, or, *candle*.—^d 2 Samuel vii. 12; 1 Kings xi. 36; 2 Kings viii. 19; Psa. cxxiii. 11, &c.

contrive to cut them off, that he might get possession of their riches and power. *Because he was the firstborn*—Whom Jehoshaphat supposed he ought to prefer on account of the law, recorded Deut. xxi. 15, though otherwise, it is probable, he would not have done it, having doubtless, before this time, observed his perverse and wicked inclinations, and how much he was swayed by his idolatrous wife.

Verse 4. *He strengthened himself*—Hardened his heart, as the word *prn*, *chazak*, often signifies; and *slew all his brethren with the sword*—Either by false accusation, under colour of law, or rather by assassination, pretending, it is likely, that he could not think himself safe in the government till they were taken out of the way. Those that mean ill themselves, are commonly, without cause, jealous of those about them. *And divers also of the princes of Israel*—Either, 1st, Of Judah, here called *Israel*, as in verse 2. Or rather, 2d, Of Israel properly so called; not the princes of all Israel, or of the several tribes thereof, but the chief of those Israelites who, out of love to God and the true religion, had forsaken their estates in the kingdom of Israel, and were now incorporated with the kingdom of Judah: these he slew, because he thought they would be most zealous for that religion which he was resolved to oppose.

Verse 5. *Jehoram was, &c.*—Of this and several of the following verses, see notes on 2 Kings viii. 17, &c.

Verse 10. *The same time did Libnah revolt*—Libnah seems to have set up for a free state. And the reason is here given, both why God permitted it, and why they did it, because Jehoram was become

9 Then Jehoram went forth with A. M. 3115.
his princes, and all his chariots with B. C. 889.
him: and he rose up by night, and smote the Edomites which compassed him in, and the captains of the chariots.

10 So the Edomites revolted from under the hand of Judah unto this day. The same time *also* did Libnah revolt from under his hand; because he had forsaken the LORD God of his fathers.

11 Moreover, he made high places in the mountains of Judah, and caused the inhabitants of Jerusalem to ¹commit fornication, and compelled Judah *thereto*.

12 ¶ And there came a ⁵writing to him from Elijah the prophet, saying, Thus saith the LORD God of David thy father, Because thou hast not walked in the ways of Jehoshaphat thy father, nor in the ways of Asa king of Judah,

^e 2 Kings viii. 20, &c.—^d Heb. *hand*.—^f Leviticus xvii. 7; xx. 5; Verse 13.—^g Which was written before his death, 2 Kings ii. 1.

an idolater. While he adhered to God, they adhered to him; but when he cast God off, they cast him off. Whether this would justify them in their revolt or not, it justified God's providence which suffered it.

Verse 11. *He made high places*—Not to the Lord, whose sworn enemy he was, but to *Baals*, or false gods. *Caused the inhabitants of Jerusalem to commit fornication*—Spiritual whoredom, or idolatry, seducing them to eat things sacrificed to idols, (Rev. ii. 20,) not only by his counsel and example, but, as it follows, by force, by threats, and penalties.

Verse 12. *And there came a writing to him from Elijah*—It is certain, Elijah was taken up into heaven in the time of Jehoshaphat. Therefore Josephus and the LXX. imagine (as Grotius observes) that from thence he sent a letter. Dr. Lightfoot is of opinion, that it is not meant of that Elijah who was carried up to heaven, but of another of his name, who sent this letter. Kimchi is of opinion that Elijah, foreseeing, by the spirit of prophecy, before he went to heaven, the wickedness of Jehoram, spake these words to one of the prophets, and charged him to put them down in writing, and send them in a letter to Jehoram, when he grew so impious, as is here related; and let him know that Elijah commanded this writing to be delivered to him: that so Jehoram, being affected with it, as if it had been sent from heaven, might be moved to repent of the evil he had done. And indeed the passage will bear this sense. *He* did not send a writing, but it was sent as *his* writing. For there is nothing in the words to intimate that this was written after his death, but only delivered after his death. So that it might have been written (for any thing that appears to the con-

A. M. 3115. B. C. 889. 13 But hast walked in the way of the kings of Israel, and hast ^a made Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem to ^h go a whoring, like to the ⁱ whoredoms of the house of Ahab, and also hast ^k slain thy brethren of thy father's house, *which were better than thyself* :

14 Behold, with ^a a great plague will the LORD smite thy people, and thy children, and thy wives, and all thy goods :

15 And thou *shalt have* great sickness by ^l disease of thy bowels, until thy bowels fall out by reason of the sickness day by day.

^a Verse 11.—^b Exod. xxxiv. 15; Deut. xxxi. 16.—^c 1 Kings xvi. 31–33; 2 Kings ix. 22.—^d Verse 4.—^e Heb. a great stroke.—^f Verses 18, 19.—^g 1 Kings xi. 14, 23.

trary) by Elijah himself before he was taken up into heaven. But, upon the whole, as we find the prophets were sent to those of their own time, and not to those who should come after, (there being a succession of prophets raised up for every age,) and as we have no mention of any other Elijah, in any other place of Scripture; and as (agreeable to what our Saviour makes Abraham say to the rich man, when he desired Lazarus to be sent from the dead to his brethren, *They have Moses and the prophets*,) we have no rational ground for thinking that God should employ a prophet, whom he had taken into heaven on this occasion, when there was, at that time, a prophet on the earth no ways inferior to him, namely, Elisha his successor: therefore there is ground to conclude, that the difficulty has arisen by the inaccuracy of transcribers of the Scriptures, and that it should be, and was at first written *Elisha*, and not *Elijah*.

Verse 13. *Which were better than thyself*—More innocent, righteous, and godly. This seems to intimate that they were pious persons, who abhorred idolatry. And, if so, his sin was the more heinous in cutting them off, as proceeding from enmity to God, as well as to them.

Verse 14. *Behold, with a great plague, &c.*—There was no calamity that could be thought of which did not befall this wicked prince: whose kingdom was destroyed and depopulated by the fiercest nations; his treasures ransacked; his wives carried into captivity; his children slain; and he himself laboured under a sore disease for two years; and when he was dead, had not the honour of royal sepulchre, such as his ancestors had. All which calamities were threatened in the writing sent him, that he might not think they came by chance, but by the special direction of Almighty God, as a punishment for his wickedness. But why should his people suffer, who are here threatened to be plagued? 1st. Because their base fear made them comply with him in his idolatry: and, 2d, Because he suffered in his people's destruction: for as the honour, and safety, and strength of a king lie in the multitude and

16 ¶ Moreover, the LORD ^m stirred ⁿ up against Jehoram the spirit of the ^o Philistines, and of the Arabians, that *were* near the Ethiopians :

17 And they came up into Judah, and brake into it, and ^r carried away all the substance that was found in the king's house, and ^s his sons also, and his wives; so that there was never a son left him, save ^t Jehoahaz the youngest of his sons.

18 ¶ ^u And after all this the LORD ^v smote him ^w in his bowels with an incurable disease.

⁷ Heb. carried captive, Chapter xxii. 1.—⁸ Chapter xxiv. 7. ⁹ Or, Ahaziah, Chap. xxii. 1, or, Azariah, Chap. xxii. 6.—¹⁰ His son, Ahaziah Prorez, 2 Kings ix. 29, soon after.—¹¹ Ver. 15.

prosperity of his people; so when they are diminished, and destroyed, the king is very much weakened and endangered by it. *And thy children, and thy wives*—Whose lives shall go for the lives of thy brethren.

Verse 15. *By reason of the sickness day by day*—That is, from day to day continually, Hebrew, *days upon days*: or, (as days are often put for a year,) *year upon year*: that is, one year after another for two years, as the event shows, verse 19.

Verse 16. *The Lord stirred up against Jehoram the spirit of the Philistines*—A people who had been fully subdued and dispirited; but whose spirits and courage God now raised, that they might do his work. *And of the Arabians, that were near the Ethiopians*—Hebrew, *near the Cushites*, that is, the Ethiopians properly so called, for they were parted only by the Red sea; or rather a people in Arabia, frequently mentioned in Scripture, and so called either for their likeness in colour and complexion to the Ethiopians, or because one of these tribes was a colony from the other.

Verse 17. *And his sons also, and his wives*—Whom they slew, all except Ahaziah and Athaliah, who possibly were hid in some secret place. *So that there was never a son left him, save Jehoahaz*—Who is also called Ahaziah, a name of the same signification with Jehoahaz, and, by a small alteration of the letters, *Azariah*, (chap. xxii. 6,) the meaning of which word is akin to the other, all signifying the *possession, strength, or help of the Lord*. Thus blood was required for blood. Jehoram had slain all his brethren; they slay all his sons but one. And he had not escaped, had he not been of the house of David, which must not be extirpated, like that of Ahab, because a blessing was in it, no less a blessing than that of the Messiah.

Verse 18. *The Lord smote him in his bowels with an incurable disease*—Dr. Mede observes, two impious kings are recorded to have had the same end that this Jehoram had: Antiochus Epiphanes and Agrippa, of whom it was said, *εις τι τα σπλαγχνα τοις ου σπλαγχνιζομενοις*, "Of what avail are bowels to those

A. M. 3119. 19 And it came to pass, that in
B. C. 885. process of time, after the end of two
years, his bowels fell out by reason of his sick-
ness: so he died of sore diseases. And his
people made no burning for him, like ^p the
burning of his fathers.

^p Chap. xvi. 14.

who have no bowels, who show no pity or compas-
sion?" It is true, even good men, and those who are
dear to God, may be afflicted with diseases of this
kind: but to such they are fatherly chastisements,
and, by the support of divine consolation, the soul
may have ease and peace, even then when the body
is afflicted with pain; which certainly was not the
case with Jehoram.

Verse 19. *So he died of sore diseases*—These
words seem to import that he was afflicted with a
complication of diseases, together with his dysen-
tery; all which were very grievous, and a suitable
punishment of his horrid wickedness. *And his peo-
ple made no burning for him*—Paid him no extra-
ordinary funeral honours.

Verse 20. *And departed*—Hebrew, *went*, namely,
the way of all the earth, as it is more fully expressed
Josh. xxiii. 14. Or, *to the land of darkness*, Job x.
21, 22. Or, *to his long home*, Eccles. xii. 5. Or,
went away, namely, out of this world, as the word
הלך, *halack*, used here and Job xiv. 20; Eccles. v.

20 Thirty and two years old was A. M. 3119.
he when he began to reign, and he B. C. 885.
reigned in Jerusalem eight years, and departed
¹⁰ without being desired: howbeit they buried
him in the city of David, but not in the sepul-
chres of the kings.

¹⁰ Heb. *without desire*, Jer. xxii. 18.

15; vi. 4, signifies. And there are many such phrases
used concerning death, in the Old and New Testa-
ments, which all signify that death is not an annihila-
tion, but only a translation into another place and
state. See Gen. xv. 15; Phil. i. 23. *Without being
desired*—Hebrew, *without desire*, which may be re-
ferred, 1st, To himself. He had no desire of living
longer, nor any pleasure in life, but was heartily
weary of it, through his excessive pains. Or rather,
it belongs, 2d, To his people, who did not desire that
he should live longer, but oft and heartily wished
that he had died sooner: which contempt of him
they showed both by *making no burning for him*, as
they used to do for good kings, and by denying him
burial among the kings. The expression is empha-
tical: for it is usual with men to desire the death of
some persons, whom afterward they lament, and
heartily wish they were alive again. But for this
ungodly and unhappy prince, his people did not only
in his life-time wish his death, but afterward did not
repent of those desires.

CHAPTER XXII.

Ahaziah's wicked reign, 1-4. Being confederate with Joram, he is slain by Jehu, 5-9. Athaliah destroys the seed royal, and usurps the kingdom, 10-12.

A. M. 3119. **A**ND the inhabitants of Jerusalem
B. C. 885. made ^a Ahaziah his youngest son
king in his stead: for the band of men that
came with the Arabians to the camp had slain

^a 2 Kings viii. 24, &c.; Chap. xxi. 17; Verse 6.

NOTES ON CHAPTER XXII.

Verse 1. *The band of men had slain all the eldest*
—A cruel sort of men, who came along with the
Arabians, and therefore slew those whom the Ara-
bians had spared, and only carried into captivity.
Or the Philistines may be intended, who accom-
panied the Arabians in this expedition, (chap. xxi. 16,)
and who lived near the kingdom of Judah, and there-
fore wished to destroy all the branches of the royal
family, lest, if any of them survived, they should af-
terward gain strength, and revenge themselves upon
them for plundering their country, and carrying so
many of the seed royal away captive.

Verse 2. *Forty and two years old was Ahaziah*

all the ^b eldest. So Ahaziah the son A. M. 3119.
of Jehoram king of Judah reigned. B. C. 885.

2 ^c Forty and two years old was Ahaziah
when he began to reign, and he reigned one

^b Chap. xxi. 17.—^c 2 Kings viii. 26.

—It is said (2 Kings viii. 26) that he was but two and
twenty years old when he began to reign; so that, it
is probable, an error has been committed here by the
copyist or transcriber. For some Greek copies have
here twenty-two years old, and it is so in the Syriac
and Arabic translations, and particularly in that most
ancient copy of the Syriac, which was used by the
church at Antioch in the primitive times, and to this
day is kept in the church of Antioch, from which
Archbishop Usher did, at his own great charge, get
an exact copy transcribed. *Athaliah the daughter
of Omri*—That is, of Omri's family; or, of Ahab,
Omri's son. Grand-children are often called sons or
daughters in the Scriptures.

A. M. 3119. year in Jerusalem. His mother's
B. C. 885. name also was ^d Athaliah the daughter of Omri.

3 He also walked in the ways of the house of Ahab: for his mother was his counsellor to do wickedly.

4 Wherefore he did evil in the sight of the LORD like the house of Ahab: for they were his counsellors after the death of his father, to his destruction.

B. C. 884. 5 ¶ He walked also after their counsel, and ^e went with Jehoram the son of Ahab king of Israel to war against Hazael king of Syria at Ramoth-gilead: and the Syrians smote Joram.

6 ^f And he returned to be healed in Jezreel because of the wounds ¹ which were given him at Ramah, when he fought with Hazael king of Syria. And ² Azariah the son of Jehoram king of Judah went down to see Jehoram the son of Ahab at Jezreel, because he was sick.

7 And the ³ destruction of Ahaziah ⁴ was of God, by coming to Joram: for when he was come, he ^b went out with Jehoram against Jehu the son of Nimshi, ⁱ whom the LORD had anointed to cut off the house of Ahab.

⁴ Chap. xxi. 6.—² 2 Kings viii. 28, &c.—¹ 2 Kings ix. 15.
¹ Heb. *wherewith they wounded him.*—³ Otherwise called *Ahaziah*, Verse 1, and *Jehoahaz*, Chap. xxi. 17.—³ Heb. *treading down.*—^e Judg. xiv. 4; 1 Kings xii. 15; Chap. x. 15.

Verses 3, 4. *He walked in the ways of the house of Ahab*—Called their ways, not because they were the first inventors of them in these parts, but the chief establishers. These ways did not consist merely in the worshipping of God by an image, which was the way of Jeroboam; but in the worship of other gods besides the God of Israel, namely, *Baal-gods*, or *Baalim*. *For his mother was his counsellor to do wickedly*—Being a crafty and an imperious woman. Those that counsel persons to do wickedly, counsel them to their destruction. It is bad enough when strangers do this, but when parents give such counsel to their own children, it is deplorable indeed! The counsel of the ungodly is the ruin of many young people of both sexes, especially if given to them when they are setting out in life. *They were his counsellors after the death of his father*—Who, while he lived, seduced his son by his counsel and authority, and kept him to idolatry, and so rendered other evil counsellors unnecessary.

8 And it came to pass, that when A. M. 3120.
Jehu was ^k executing judgment upon B. C. 884.
the house of Ahab, and ¹ found the princes of Judah, and the sons of the brethren of Ahaziah, that ministered to Ahaziah, he slew them.

9 ^m And 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: Because, said they, he ^{is} the son of Jehoshaphat, who ⁿ sought the LORD with all his heart. So the house of Ahaziah had no power to keep still the kingdom.

10 ¶ ^o But when Athaliah the mother of Ahaziah saw that her son was B. C. 884.
dead, she arose, and destroyed all the seed royal of the house of Judah.

11 But ^p Jehoshabeath, the daughter of the king, took Joash the son of Ahaziah, and stole him from among the king's sons that were slain, and put him and his nurse in a bed-chamber. So Jehoshabeath, the daughter of King Jehoram, the wife of Jehoiada the priest, (for she was the sister of Ahaziah,) hid him from Athaliah, so that she slew him not.

12 And he was with them hid in the house of God six years: and Athaliah reigned over the land.

^b 2 Kings ix. 21.—¹ 2 Kings ix. 6.—^k 2 Kings x. 10.
¹ 2 Kings x. 13.—^m 2 Kings ix. 27, at *Megiddo* in the kingdom of Samaria.—^o Chapter xvii. 4.—^o 2 Kings xi. 1, &c.
^p 2 Kings xi. 2, *Jehosheba*.

Verse 5. *He went with Jehoram to war against Hazael*—Following the evil example of Jehoshaphat herein; though he would not follow him in what was good. But of this and the following verses, see notes on 2 Kings viii. 28, 29, and ix. 21, 27.

Verses 7, 8. *The destruction of Ahaziah was of God*—By his providence so disposing occasions, and Ahaziah's inclinations, that he should come, at that particular time, to receive his deserved judgment. See on 2 Kings x. 12-14.

Verse 9. *They sought Ahaziah*—Who, though wounded, had made his escape. *They caught him, for he was hid in Samaria*—He fled first to Megiddo, but not thinking himself safe there, he fled to Samaria, where he was taken, and sent thence, by Jehu's order, to Megiddo, where he received the sentence of death. See note on 2 Kings ix. 27.

Verse 10. *But when Athaliah, &c.*—This and verses 11, 12, are explained 2 Kings xi. 1-3.

CHAPTER XXIII.

Jehoiada prepares the people, and crowns the king, 1-11. Athaliah is slain, 12-15. The kingdom is reformed, 16-21.

A. M. 3126.
B. C. 878.

AND ^a in the seventh year Jehoiada strengthened himself, and took the captains of hundreds, Azariah the son of Jeroham, and Ishmael the son of Jehohanan, and Azariah the son of Obed, and Maaseiah the son of Adaiah, and Elishaphat the son of Zichri, into covenant with him.

2 And they went about in Judah, and gathered the Levites out of all the cities of Judah, and the chief of the fathers of Israel, and they came to Jerusalem.

3 And all the congregation made a covenant with the king in the house of God. And he said unto them, Behold, the king's son shall reign, as the LORD hath ^bsaid of the sons of David.

4 This *is* the thing that ye shall do; A third part of you ^centering on the sabbath, of the priests and of the Levites, *shall be* porters of the ^ddoors;

5 And a third part *shall be* at the king's house; and a third part at the gate of the foundation: and all the people *shall be* in the courts of the house of the LORD.

6 But let none come into the house of the LORD, save the priests, and ^ethey that minister

^a 2 Kings xi. 4, &c.—^b 2 Sam. vii. 12; 1 Kings ii. 4; ix. 5; Chap. vi. 16; vii. 18; xxi. 7.—^c 1 Chron. ix. 25.

NOTES ON CHAPTER XXIII.

Verse 1. *And took the captains of hundreds*—Not all, but those here following, in whom he put most trust. But the contents of this chapter, in general, having occurred 2 Kings xi., where they are explained, little need be said on them here.

Verse 2. *And gathered the Levites out of all the cities of Judah*—Because he knew them to be well affected to the cause of God and the king, to which they were bound by the two strongest ties, conscience and interest: and because he could collect them without any suspicion, it being their duty to attend at Jerusalem at the solemn feasts, the time of one which was probably chosen for this purpose. *And the chief of the fathers of Israel*—Judah is here called *Israel*, as in several other places. *They came to Jerusalem*—To settle their resolutions with Jehoiada.

Verses 4, 5. *A third part of you shall be porters of the doors*—Or rather, guards at the gates, to prevent any of Athaliah's party from entering into the temple. *At the gate of the foundation*—So called, because it stood lower than the rest of the doors, at the foot of the steps by which they went up from the king's house to the temple. *And all the people*

of the Levites; they shall go in, for ^{A. M. 3126.} *they are holy*: but all the people shall ^{B. C. 878.} keep the watch of the LORD.

7 And the Levites shall compass the king round about, every man with his weapons in his hand; and whosoever *else* cometh into the house, he shall be put to death: but be ye with the king when he cometh in, and when he goeth out.

8 So the Levites and all Judah did according to all things that Jehoiada the priest had commanded, and took every man his men that were to come in on the sabbath, with them that were to go *out* on the sabbath: for Jehoiada the priest dismissed not ^athe courses.

9 Moreover, Jehoiada the priest delivered to the captains of hundreds spears, and bucklers, and shields, that *had been* King David's, which *were* in the house of God.

10 And he set all the people, every man having his weapon in his hand, from the right ²side of the ³temple to the left side of the temple, along by the altar and the temple, by the king round about.

11 Then they brought out the king's son, and put upon him the crown, and ^f*gave him* the

¹ Heb. *thresholds*.—^d 1 Chron. xxiii. 28.—^e 1 Chron. xxiv., xxv.—² Heb. *shoulder*.—³ Heb. *house*.—^f Deut. xvii. 18.

shall be in the courts—In the two courts; for by the *people* here he seems to intend both the generality of the Levites, who had no particular station assigned them, such as their brethren had, and who were to be in the court of the priests, and the people who were in the court of the people.

Verse 6. *Let none come into the house of the Lord*—Strictly so called, and distinguished from the courts just mentioned, namely, into the sanctuary, or holy place. *Save the priests, and they that minister of the Levites*—Who are to minister in course, or according to my present appointment. *They shall go in, for they are holy*—They have been consecrated to the service of God, and are bound to attend there. *But all the people shall keep the watch of the Lord*—That is, of the house of the Lord, as is expressed 2 Kings xi. 6. The meaning is, Let them stand in their court to prevent and oppose any person that shall endeavour violently to break into the house, to seize upon the king, or to oppose the present work, which he expected Athaliah and her accomplices would do.

Verse 11. *Jehoiada and his sons anointed him*—Among which sons was Zechariah, whom he afterward most ungratefully slew.

A. M. 3126. testimony, and made him king. And
B. C. 878. Jehoiada and his sons anointed him,
and said, 'God save the king.

12 ¶ Now when Athaliah heard the noise of the people running and praising the king, she came to the people into the house of the LORD :

13 And she looked, and behold, the king stood at his pillar at the entering in, and the princes and the trumpets by the king : and all the people of the land rejoiced, and sounded with trumpets ; also the singers with instruments of music, and ⁵ such as taught to sing praise. Then Athaliah rent her clothes, and said, ⁵ Treason, treason !

14 Then Jehoiada the priest brought out the captains of hundreds that were set over the host, and said unto them, Have her forth of the ranges : and whoso followeth her, let him be slain with the sword. For the priest said, Slay her not in the house of the LORD.

15 So they laid hands on her ; and when she was come to the entering ^h of the horse-gate by the king's house, they slew her there.

16 ¶ And Jehoiada made a covenant between him, and between all the people, and between

⁴ Heb. *let the king live.*—⁵ 1 Chron. xxv. 8.—⁶ Heb. *Conspiracy.*—⁷ Neh. iii. 28.—⁸ Deut. xiii. 9.—⁹ 1 Chronicles xliii. 6, 30; xxiv. 1.

Verse 13. *All the people rejoiced*—To see a rod sprung out of the stem of Jesse ! To see what they despaired of ever seeing, a king of the house of David.

Verse 16. *Jehoiada made a covenant between him, &c.*—In 2 Kings xi. 17, it is said, *Jehoiada made a covenant between the Lord, and the king, and the people.* Here it is said to be made between him, the people, and the king. But the two passages do not contradict each other. For Jehoiada, as God's priest, was his representative in this transaction, or a sort of mediator, as Moses was. God covenanted by him to take them for his people ; and the king and people covenanted with him to be his ; and then the king covenanted with the people to govern them *as the people of God ;* and the people with the king to be subject to him *as the Lord's people,* in his fear, and for his sake. For it must be observed, that this covenant, and others made in like manner, were solemn promises on the part of the Jewish king and people, that, for the future, they would ob-

the king, that they should be the A. M. 3126.
LORD's people. B. C. 878.

17 Then all the people went to the house of Baal, and brake it down, and brake his altars and his images in pieces, and ¹ slew Mattan the priest of Baal before the altars.

18 Also Jehoiada appointed the offices of the house of the LORD by the hand of the priests the Levites, whom David had ^h distributed in the house of the LORD, to offer the burnt-offerings of the LORD, as *it is written* in the ¹ law of Moses, with rejoicing and with singing, *as it was ordained* ⁶ by David.

19 And he set the ^m porters at the gates of the house of the LORD, that none *which was* unclean in any thing should enter in.

20 ⁿ And he took the captains of hundreds, and the nobles, and the governors of the people, and all the people of the land, and brought down the king from the house of the LORD : and they came through the high gate into the king's house, and set the king upon the throne of the kingdom.

21 And all the people of the land rejoiced : and the city was quiet, after that they had slain Athaliah with the sword.

¹ Numbers xxviii. 2.—² Hebrew, *by the hands of David,* 1 Chron. xxv. 2, 6.—³ 1 Chron. xxvi. 1, &c.—⁴ 2 Kings xi. 19.

serve God's laws : in return to which the high-priest promised, on the part of God, that, if they did so, they should enjoy all the blessings promised in those divine laws to obedience.

Verse 18. *Jehoiada appointed the offices, &c.*—Or rather, *restored,* for there was no new appointment of offices or officers, but the old officers were restored to their respective offices. The Hebrew literally translated is, *He put the offices of the house of the Lord into the hand of the priests, &c.* For in the time of the idolatrous kings, and of Athaliah, those offices had probably been disposed of to persons of other tribes, partly to gratify their wicked friends, and partly to bring God's house and worship into disgrace.

Verse 21. *All the people rejoiced : and the city was quiet*—The generality of the people rejoiced, the rest were quiet, and made no opposition. When the son of David is enthroned in the soul, all therein is quiet, and springs of joy are opened.

CHAPTER XXIV.

Joash takes care to repair the temple, 1-14. After Jehoiada's death, he sets up the worship of Baal again, though warned, 15-19. He puts Zechariah to death, 20-22. Is invaded by the Syrians, 23, 24. Struck with sore diseases and slain, 25-27.

A. M. 3126.
B. C. 873.

JOASH ^a was seven years old when he began to reign, and he reigned forty years in Jerusalem. His mother's name also was Zibiah of Beer-sheba.

2 And Joash ^b did that which was right in the sight of the LORD all the days of Jehoiada the priest.

3 And Jehoiada took for him two wives; and he begat sons and daughters.

4 ¶ And it came to pass after this, that Joash was minded ¹ to repair the house of the LORD.

B. C. 856. 5 And he gathered together the priests and the Levites, and said to them, Go out unto the cities of Judah, and gather of all Israel money to repair the house of your God from year to year, and see that ye hasten the matter. Howbeit the Levites hastened it not.

6 ^d And the king called for Jehoiada the chief, and said unto him, Why hast thou not required of the Levites to bring in out of Judah and out of Jerusalem the collection, according to the commandment of ^e Moses the servant of the LORD, and of the congregation of Israel, for the ^f tabernacle of witness?

7 For ^g the sons of Athaliah, that wicked woman, had broken up the house of God; and also all the ^h dedicated things of the house

^a 2 Kings xi. 21; xii. 1, &c.—^b Chap. xxvi. 5.—¹ Heb. to renew.—^c 2 Kings xii. 4.—^d 2 Kings xii. 7.—^e Exod. xxx. 12, 13, 14, 16.—^f Num. i. 50; Acts vii. 44.

NOTES ON CHAPTER XXIV.

Verse 1. *Joash was seven years old, &c.*—A great part of this chapter is explained in the notes on 2 Kings xii.

Verse 5. *Gather of all Israel*—Not only of the tribes of Judah and Benjamin, but of all the Israelites, belonging to any of the ten tribes, who are now resident in my kingdom: *money to repair, &c., from year to year*—That is, either, 1st, To repair part of it every year till the reparations were perfected: or, 2d, The money was to be gathered from year to year, till they got such a sum as might suffice for the work.

Verse 6. *The king called for Jehoiada the chief*—It is observable, that he is not called the *chief priest, or high-priest*, but only the *chief, or the head*; which he might be in many other respects, either by reason of his near relation to the royal family, or be-

of the LORD did they bestow upon ^{A. M. 3148.} Baalim. ^{B. C. 856.}

8 And at the king's commandment ¹ they made a chest, and set it without at the gate of the house of the LORD.

9 And they made ² a proclamation through Judah and Jerusalem, to bring in to the LORD ³ the collection that Moses the servant of God laid upon Israel in the wilderness.

10 And all the princes and all the people rejoiced, and brought in, and cast into the chest, until they had made an end.

11 Now it came to pass, that at what time the chest was brought unto the king's office by the hand of the Levites, and ¹ when they saw that *there was much money*, the king's scribe and the high-priest's officer came and emptied the chest, and took it, and carried it to his place again. Thus they did day by day, and gathered money in abundance.

12 And the king and Jehoiada gave it to such as did the work of the service of the house of the LORD, and hired masons and carpenters to repair the house of the LORD, and also such as wrought iron and brass to mend the house of the LORD.

13 So the workmen wrought, and ³ the work was perfected by them, and they set the house of God in his state, and strengthened it.

^a Chapter xxi. 17.—^b 2 Kings xii. 4.—¹ 2 Kings xii. 9. ² Heb. a voice.—³ Verse 16.—⁴ 2 Kings xii. 10.—⁵ Heb. the healing went up upon the work.

cause he was the chief of one of the twenty-four families. And the high-priest seems to be mentioned as a distinct person from Jehoiada, 2 Kings xii. 9, 10; which things make it questionable whether Jehoiada was the high-priest or not.

Verse 7. *The sons of Athaliah, &c.*—To wit, Ahaziah and his brethren, before they were carried away captive, (chap. xxi. 17,) who did this by her instigation, as this phrase implies; *had broken up the house of God*—Had both broken up the treasures, and defaced the house itself. *And the dedicated things did they bestow upon Baalim*—Gave them, either to adorn the temples of those false gods, or to promote their worship.

Verses 8, 9. *And set it at the gate of the house, &c.*—That is, of the court of the people, whither all manner of persons might come to offer. *To bring in to the Lord the collection that Moses*

A. M. 3148. 14 And when they had finished it, B. C. 856. they brought the rest of the money before the king and Jehoiada, ^m whereof were made vessels for the house of the LORD, *even* vessels to minister, and ^t to offer *withal*, and spoons, and vessels of gold and silver. And they offered burnt-offerings in the house of the LORD continually all the days of Jehoiada.

B. C. 850. 15 ¶ But Jehoiada waxed old, and was full of days when he died; a hundred and thirty years old *was he* when he died.

16 And they buried him in the city of David among the kings, because he had done good in Israel, both toward God, and toward his house.

^m 2 Kings xii. 13.—^t Or, *pestils*.—¹ 1 Kings xiv. 23. ^o Judg. v. 8; Chap. xix. 2; xxviii. 13; xxix. 8; xxxii. 25.

laid upon Israel—That is, a collection answerable to it.

Verse 14. *Whereof were made vessels for the house of the Lord*—Because Athaliah and her sons had taken away the old ones.

Verses 15, 16. *A hundred and thirty years old was he, &c.*—By which it appears, that he was born in Solomon's time, and had lived six entire reigns before this. *They buried him among the kings*—With this honourable encomium, (perhaps inscribed upon his grave-stone,) that *he had done good in Israel*—But the little religion that Joash had, was all buried in his grave. See how great a judgment, to any prince or people, the death of holy, useful men is! *Both toward God, and toward his house*—He had been an instrument in restoring the divine worship, which now, they were sensible, was a great blessing, and in repairing the decays which were in the temple, and furnishing it with vessels for the service of God.

Verses 17. *Came the princes of Judah*—Some of the great men, who continued Baalites in their hearts; *and made obeisance to the king*—And in that posture presented their requests to him, that they might not be confined to troublesome journeys to Jerusalem, but might have the liberty, which their forefathers enjoyed, of worshipping God in the high places. This liberty once obtained, they knew they could worship idols without disturbance, which was the thing at which they aimed: and for the prevention of such abuses, God obliged all to worship him in one place. *Then the king hearkened unto them*—He consented to their request, that they might worship in the high places. For fair words and flatteries easily deceive princes, as Grotius here observes; and they wanted not specious reasons to persuade the king, not to be so strict as to insist on their worshipping only at the temple.

Verse 18. *And they left the house of the Lord God*—The king and princes, who a while ago so

17 ¶ Now after the death of Jehoi- A. M. 3164. ada came the princes of Judah, and B. C. 840. made obeisance to the king. Then the king hearkened unto them.

18 And they left the house of the LORD God of their fathers, and served ⁿ groves and idols: and ^o wrath came upon Judah and Jerusalem for this their trespass.

19 Yet he ^p sent prophets to them, to bring them again unto the LORD; and they testified against them: but they would not give ear.

20 And ^q the Spirit of God ^r came upon Zechariah the son of Jehoiada the priest, which stood above the people, and said unto them, Thus saith God, ^s Why transgress ye the com-

^p Chap. xxxvi. 15; Jer. vii. 25; xxv. 4.—^q Chap. xv. 1; xx. 14. ^r Heb. *clothed*, as Judg. vi. 34.—^s Num. xiv. 41.

zealously repaired the temple, now forsook the temple! So inconstant a thing is man! So little confidence is to be put in him! It is probable that these great men at first only worshipped in the groves and on the high places themselves; yet they had their emissaries, who persuaded the people to join with them. So that the house of God was soon deserted by them, and they proceeded to worship idols. *And wrath came upon Judah and Jerusalem*—They were soon punished by the hand of Hazael, king of Syria.

Verse 19. *Yet he sent prophets to them, to bring them again*—God's goodness was astonishing, in sending messengers to reclaim such a base people; whose wickedness was no less wonderful, in that they hearkened to the great men among them, rather than to those whom they knew to be true prophets of Jehovah.

Verse 20. *The Spirit of God came upon Zechariah, who stood above the people*—He was moved by the Holy Spirit to address the people publicly, and to reprove them for their idolatries, and their departure from the worship of God, which that he might do, so as to be heard by all, he stood upon a high place, where they might both see and hear him, and from thence both testified against their sin, and warned them of the consequences of it. *And said, Why transgress ye, &c.*—It is remarkable, that, though he spake by the spirit of prophecy, yet he only applied the general prediction of Moses, Deut. xxxi. 16, 17, unto the present time; that they might all learn to pay a greater regard to Moses, and to make themselves better acquainted with his law; unto which, if they had attended, they would have easily discerned who were true prophets and who were false. *Because ye have forsaken the Lord, he also hath forsaken you*—This, it is likely, he spake with great vehemence, and even enlarged upon the subject so long, that it raised their indignation.

A. M. 3164. mandments of the LORD, that ye
B. C. 840.

cannot prosper? *because ye have forsaken the LORD, he hath also forsaken you.

21 And they conspired against him, and stoned him with stones at the commandment of the king, in the court of the house of the LORD.

22 Thus Joash the king remembered not the kindness which Jehoiada his father had done to him, but slew his son. And when he died, he said, The LORD look upon it, and require it.

B. C. 840. 23 ¶ And it came to pass ⁶at the end of the year, that ^athe host of

* Chapter xv. 2.—¹ Matt. xxiii. 35; Acts vii. 58.—⁶ Heb. in the revolution of the year.—² 2 Kings xii. 17.—⁷ Heb. Darmesek.

Verse 21. *And they conspired against him*—Namely, the people whom he addressed, having been easily corrupted by the examples of their apostate king and princes. *And stoned him with stones*—And that immediately, without even colour of law; not so much as accusing him of being a blasphemer, a traitor, a false prophet, or guilty of any crime whatever; *at the commandment of the king*—Who owed his crown and life to Jehoiada his father; and *in the court of the house of the Lord*—Whose minister and messenger he was! As horrid a piece of wickedness this as any we read of in all the history of the kings! The person was sacred, a prophet; the place sacred, the court of the temple, either the court of the priests, or the inner court, *between the porch and the altar*; the message was yet more sacred, a message which, we have reason to believe, they knew proceeded from the spirit of prophecy; the reproof was just, the warning fair, and both grounded on Scripture acknowledged by themselves to be divinely inspired; and yet so impudently and daringly do they defy God himself, that nothing less than the blood of the prophet can satisfy their indignation at his prophecy. *Be astonished, O heavens, at this, and tremble, O earth*, that ever such villany should be committed by men, by Israelites, in contempt and violation of every thing that was just, honourable, and sacred! That a king, a king in covenant with God, should command the murder of one whom it was his office to protect and countenance! The Jews say, there were seven transgressions in one: they killed a priest, a prophet, a judge; they shed innocent blood; polluted the court of the temple, the sabbath, and the day of expiation: for on that day, their tradition says, this happened.

Verse 22. *When he died, he said, The Lord look upon it, and require it*—That is, make inquisition for my innocent blood. But the words may as well be rendered, *The Lord will look upon it, and require it*—He will examine this action, and require satisfaction from you for it: a prophetic sentence, which, as appears from what follows, was speedily executed.

Syria came up against him: and they ^{A. M. 3165.}
came to Judah and Jerusalem, and ^{B. C. 839.}

destroyed all the princes of the people from among the people, and sent all the spoil of them unto the king of ⁷Damascus.

24 For the army of the Syrians ²came with a small company of men, and the LORD ⁷delivered a very great host into their hand, because they had forsaken the LORD God of their fathers. So they ²executed judgment against Joash.

25 And when they were departed from him, (for they left him in great diseases,) ²his own

² Lev. xxvi. 8; Deut. xxxii. 30; Isaiah xxx. 17. —⁷ Lev. xxvi. 25; Deuteron. xxviii. 25.—² Chap. xxii. 8; Isaiah x. 5. —² 2 Kings xii. 20.

Verse 23. *At the end of the year the host of Syria came up*—So soon did God hear the cry of his holy prophet's blood and revenge it. *They came and destroyed all the princes*—That it might appear they were sent and directed by God, to single out to destruction the first beginners, and chief promoters, of this general apostacy. *And sent all the spoil unto the king of Damascus*—To Hazael the king of that part of Syria called *Syria Damascena*, from its capital city Damascus.

Verse 24. *For, or rather, although, the army of the Syrians came with a small company*—Or was a small company of men. This more manifestly showed that the punishment proceeded from the hand of God, who took away their courage, so that, even with a great host, they could not withstand a mere handful of their enemies. This, as all the circumstances of it make manifest, was a distinct war from that mentioned 2 Kings xii. 17; as the reader will easily see if he compare that passage with this. The case seems to have been as follows: When the Jews began to apostatize, Hazael was sent to chastise them, as is recorded 2 Kings xii. 17; but God, in his great long-suffering, either that he might give them further space for repentance, or because he saw some partial repentance had already taken place among them, permitted Hazael to be diverted, by Joash's presents, from his purpose of leading his army against Jerusalem. But in the end of the year, the king and people being still more sunk in idolatry, and this horrid wickedness of murdering his prophet being committed, he sent a party of these same Syrians to execute this awful judgment against Joash, who had commanded it to be committed; against the princes, who had been the instigators of it; and against the people, who had so readily obeyed such an unrighteous mandate of their apostate king and princes.

Verse 25. *They left him in great diseases, &c.*—The chastisement by the invasion of the Syrians, and their destroying the princes, and plundering the city, not answering the end intended, of humbling Joash, and bringing him to repentance, God pro-

A. M. 3165. servants conspired against him for
B. C. 839. the blood of the ^b sons of Jehoiada
the priest, and slew him on his bed, and he
died: and they buried him in the city of David,
but they buried him not in the sepulchres of
the kings.

26 And these *are* they that conspired against
him; ^a Zabad the son of Shimeath an Ammon-

^b Verse 21.—^a Or, *Jozachar*, 2 Kings xii. 21.—^c Or,
Shomer.

ceeded to smite him with sore diseases; and as even
this did not reclaim him, his own servants were per-
mitted to conspire against him and slay him. For,
when vengeance pursues guilty men, the end of
one trouble is often but the beginning of another.
For the blood of the sons of Jehoiada—By which
it seems Joash slew, not only Zechariah, but his
brothers also. And perhaps they that slew him in-
tended to take vengeance for that innocent blood.

ites, and Jehozabad the son of A. M. 3165.
^b Shimrith a Moabitess. B. C. 839.

27 ¶ Now *concerning* his sons, and the
greatness of ^c the burdens *laid* upon him, and
the ¹⁰ repairing of the house of God, behold,
they *are* written in the ¹¹ story of the book of
the kings. ^d And Amaziah his son reigned in
his stead.

^c 2 Kings xii. 18.—¹⁰ Heb. *founding*.—¹¹ Or, *commentary*.
^d 2 Kings xii. 21.

However, that was it which God intended in per-
mitting them to do it.

Verse 27. *The greatness of the burdens laid
upon him*—Either the severe prophecies uttered
against him, of which one instance is recorded,
and there might be others that are not recorded;
or the great judgments of God upon him, both
by the Syrians, verse 23, and by great diseases,
verse 25.

CHAPTER XXV.

Amaziah revenges his father's death, 1-4. Obeys the command of God, and dismisses the Israelites, 5-10. Conquers the Edomites, 11-13. Turns idolater, and despises reproof, 14-16. Challenges the king of Israel, and suffers for it, 17-24. Ends his days ingloriously, 25-28.

A. M. 3165. AMAZIAH ^a was twenty and five
B. C. 839. years old *when* he began to reign,
and he reigned twenty and nine years in Jeru-
salem. And his mother's name *was* Jehoaddan
of Jerusalem.

2 And he did *that which was* right in the
sight of the LORD, ^b but not with a perfect
heart.

3 ¶ ^c Now it came to pass, when the king-
dom was ¹ established to him, that he slew
his servants that had killed the king his
father.

4 But he slew not their children, but *did* as *it*
is written in the law in the book of Moses, where
the LORD commanded, saying, ^d The fathers
shall not die for the children, neither shall the

^a 2 Kings xiv. 1, &c.—^b 2 Kings xiv. 4; Ver. 14.—^c 2 Kings
xiv. 5, &c.—^d Heb. *confirmed upon him*.

NOTES ON CHAPTER XXV.

Verse 2. *But not with a perfect heart*—He was
not an enemy to religion, but a cool and indifferent
friend. He was not a man of serious piety, for his
heart was not whole with God. But of this, and the
two following verses, see notes on 2 Kings xiv. 1-7.

Verse 6. *He hired a hundred thousand men out
of Israel*—Out of the kingdom of the ten tribes. If

children die for the fathers, but every A. M. 3165.
man shall die for his own sin. B. C. 839.

5 ¶ Moreover, Amaziah gathered Judah to-
gether, and made them captains over thou-
sands, and captains over hundreds, according
to the houses of *their* fathers, throughout all
Judah and Benjamin: and he numbered them
^a from twenty years old and above, and found
them three hundred thousand choice *men*, *able*
to go forth to war, that could handle spear and
shield.

6 He hired also a hundred thousand mighty
men of valour out of Israel for a hundred tal-
ents of silver.

7 But there came a man of God to him, say-
ing, O king, let not the army of Israel go with

^d Deut. xxiv. 16; 2 Kings xiv. 6; Jer. xxxi. 30; Ezek. xviii. 20.
^a Num. i. 3.

he had advised with any of his prophets before he
did this, or had but considered how little any of his
ancestors had got by their alliances with Israel, he
would not have thus done what he had soon to undo
again. But rashness makes work for repentance.

Verses 7, 8. *Let not the army of Israel go with
thee*—It is comfortable to employ those who, we
have reason to hope, have an interest in heaven; but

A. M. 3165. thee; for the LORD is not with Israel. B. C. 839. rael, to wit, with all the children of Ephraim.

8 But if thou wilt go, do it, be strong for the battle: God shall make thee fall before the enemy: for God hath power to help, and to cast down.

9 And Amaziah said to the man of God, But what shall we do for the hundred talents which I have given to the army of Israel? And the man of God answered, The LORD is able to give thee much more than this.

10 Then Amaziah separated them, to wit, the army that was come to him out of Ephraim, to go home again: wherefore their anger was greatly kindled against Judah, and they returned home in great anger.

B. C. 827. 11 ¶ And Amaziah strengthened himself, and led forth his people, and

¹ Chapter xx. 6.—² Heb. band.—³ Prov. x. 22.—⁴ Heb. to their place.—⁵ Heb. in heat of anger.

dangerous associating with those from whom the Lord is departed. *For the Lord is not with Israel*—He hath forsaken them; and prosperity shall not attend thy counsels and undertakings, if thou joinest thyself with them. *But if thou wilt go, do it*—It is an ironical concession, like that of Micaiah to Ahab, *Go and prosper*.

Verse 9. *And Amaziah said, But what shall we do for the hundred talents*—The money remitted for the hire of the one hundred thousand Israelitish soldiers. He considered, if he sent the men back he should lose that. Such is the objection which men often make against complying with their duty: they are afraid of losing by it. *And the man of God answered, The Lord is able to give thee much more*—He hath many ways to make up that loss to thee, and certainly will not suffer thee to be a loser by obeying his command. Observe, reader, a firm belief of God's all-sufficiency to bear us out in our duty, and to make up abundantly all the loss and damage we sustain in his service, will render his yoke very easy, and his burden very light. What is it to trust in God, but to be willing to venture the loss of any thing for him, in confidence that it shall be amply made up to us in the way that he sees will be best for us. This king lost one hundred talents of silver by his obedience; and we find just that sum given to his grandson Jotham, as a present, chap. xxvii. 5. Then the principal was repaid, and for interest, ten thousand measures of wheat, and as many of barley, were given him.

Verse 10. *Their anger was greatly kindled against Judah*—Because they were both disgraced by this rejection, and disappointed of that spoil which they hoped to gain, whereas now they are sent away empty; for the hundred talents, probably, were given to their officers only to raise men for this service.

went to the valley of Salt, and smote of the children of Seir ten thousand. A. M. 3177. B. C. 827.

12 And other ten thousand left alive did the children of Judah carry away captive, and brought them unto the top of the rock, and cast them down from the top of the rock, that they all were broken in pieces.

13 ¶ But the soldiers of the army which Amaziah sent back, that they should not go with him to battle, fell upon the cities of Judah, from Samaria even unto Beth-horon, and smote three thousand of them, and took much spoil.

14 ¶ Now it came to pass, after that Amaziah was come from the slaughter of the Edomites, that he brought the gods of the children of Seir, and set them up to be his gods, and bowed down himself before them, and burned incense unto them.

^h 2 Kings xiv. 7.—ⁱ Hebrew, the sons of the band.—^j Chap. xxviii. 23.—^k Exod. xx. 3, 5.

Verses 11, 12. *Amaziah strengthened himself*—With his own men only. *And smote of the children of Seir ten thousand*—Who, it appears, were left dead upon the field. How many were only wounded, and not killed, we are not told; but undoubtedly not a few. *Other ten thousand did the children of Judah cast down from the rock*—A most cruel execution, which can no way be justified, unless the children of Seir had been used to serve in that manner all they took captive of Judah.

Verse 13. *The army which Amaziah sent back, fell upon the cities of Judah*—Thus God chastised those cities of Judah for their idolatries, which were found most in the parts next to Israel. The men of Israel had corrupted them, and now are a plague to them. And thus Amaziah also was punished for having entered into an alliance with idolaters, though at the prophet's reproof he broke it off: and perhaps, likewise, this calamity befell his subjects, because he had used his victory over the Edomites with so much cruelty.

Verse 14. *He brought the gods of Seir, and set them up for his gods*—Egregious folly! When Ahaz worshipped the gods of those that had conquered him, (chap. xxviii. 23.) he had some little colour for it, as he hoped, probably, thus to prevail upon them to assist him too. But for Amaziah to worship the gods of those he had conquered, was surely most unreasonable. What did he see in the gods of the children of Seir, that could tempt him to set them up for his gods, and bow down himself before them? If he had cast the idols down from the rock, and broken them to pieces, instead of the prisoners, he would have discovered more of the piety, as well as more of the pity, of an Israelite. But, perhaps, as a punishment for that barbarous inhumanity, he was given up to this ridiculous idolatry.

A. M. 3177. 15 Wherefore the anger of the LORD
B. C. 827. was kindled against Amaziah, and he sent unto him a prophet, which said unto him, Why hast thou sought after ¹ the gods of the people, which ² could not deliver their own people out of thy hand?

16 And it came to pass, as he talked with him, that *the king* said unto him, Art thou made of the king's counsel? forbear; why shouldst thou be smitten? Then the prophet forbore, and said, I know that God hath ³ determined ⁴ to destroy thee, because thou hast done this, and hast not hearkened unto my counsel.

B. C. 826. 17 ¶ Then ⁵ Amaziah king of Judah took advice, and sent to Joash, the son of Jehohaz, the son of Jehu, king of Israel, saying, Come, let us see one another in the face.

18 And Joash king of Israel sent to Amaziah king of Judah, saying, The ⁶ thistle that was in Lebanon sent to the cedar that was in Lebanon, saying, Give thy daughter to my son to wife: and there passed by ⁷ a wild beast that was in Lebanon, and trode down the thistle.

19 Thou sayest, Lo, thou hast smitten the Edomites; and thy heart lifteth thee up to boast: abide now at home; why shouldst

A. M. 3178. B. C. 826. thou meddle to *thy* hurt, that thou shouldst fall, *even* thou, and Judah with thee?

20 But Amaziah would not hear; for ⁸ it came of God, that he might deliver them into the hand of *their enemies*, because they ⁹ sought after the gods of Edom.

21 So Joash the king of Israel went up; and they saw one another in the face, *both* he and Amaziah king of Judah, at Beth-shemesh, which *belongeth* to Judah.

22 And Judah was ¹⁰ put to the worse before Israel, and they fled every man to his tent.

23 And Joash the king of Israel took Amaziah king of Judah, the son of Joash, the son of ¹¹ Jehohaz, at Beth-shemesh, and brought him to Jerusalem, and brake down the wall of Jerusalem from the gate of Ephraim to ¹² the corner-gate, four hundred cubits.

24 And *he took* all the gold and the silver, and all the vessels that were found in the house of God with Obed-edom, and the treasures of the king's house, the hostages also, and returned to Samaria.

25 ¶ ¹³ And Amaziah, the son of Joash king of Judah, lived after the death of Joash, son of Jehohaz king of Israel, fifteen years.

26 Now the rest of the acts of Amaziah, first

¹ Psa. xcvi. 5.—² Ver. 12.—³ Heb. counselled.—⁴ 1 Sam. ii. 25.—⁵ 2 Kings xiv. 8, &c.—⁶ Or, furze-bush, or, thorn.
⁷ Heb. a beast of the field.

⁸ 1 Kings xii. 15; Chapter xxii. 7.—⁹ Verse 14.—¹⁰ Heb. smitten.—¹¹ Chap. xxi. 17; xxii. 1, 6.—¹² Heb. the gate of it that looketh.—¹³ 2 Kings xiv. 17.

Verse 15. *The anger of the Lord was kindled against Amaziah*—And well it might; yet, before he sent to destroy him, he sent to convince and reclaim him, and thus prevent his destruction. He sent to him a prophet, who reasoned with him very fairly and mildly, saying, *Why hast thou sought after the gods which could not deliver their own people?*—Is this reasonable? Is it acting like a wise man? If men would but duly consider the inability of all those things to help them, which they have recourse to when they forsake God, they would not be such enemies to themselves.

Verse 16. *The king said, Art thou made of the king's counsel?*—Who art thou, that presumest to direct my affairs without my commission? *Forbear; why shouldst thou be smitten?*—Provoke me no further, lest I cause thee to be killed for thy impudence. The prophet's reproof was too just to be answered, and the king could say nothing in excuse for his own folly; but he fell into a passion with the reprove. To the prophet who directed him to send back the army of Israel, he hearkened, though that prophet both contradicted his politics, and lost him a hundred talents of silver: but with this prophet, who only dissuaded him from worshipping the gods of

the Edomites, he had no patience, but instantly fell upon him with an unaccountable rage; which must be attributed to the witchcraft of idolatry. *Then the prophet forbore*—He ceased to advise or reprove him any further, but only denounced the divine sentence passed upon him, for this contempt of God's message to him, and his other sins, which came to pass, verses 20–27. The secure sinner, perhaps, values himself on his having silenced his reprovers and monitors. But what comes of it? *I know that God has determined to destroy thee*—It is a plain indication that thou art marked for ruin; *because thou hast done this, and hast not hearkened to the divine counsel*—They that are deaf to reproof, are ripening apace for destruction.

Verse 17. *Then Amaziah took advice*—About the injury which the Israelites had done to his people, and how he should repair it. *He took advice*—But with whom? Not with the prophet, but with his flattering statesmen. It is good to take advice: but it should be of them who are fit to advise us. But of this and the following verses, see notes on 2 Kings xiv. 8–20.

Verse 20. *For it came of God*—Who gave him up to his own error and passion, in order to his ruin.

A. M. 3178. and last, behold, are they not writ-
B. C. 826. ten in the book of the kings of Judah
and Israel?

B. C. 810. 27 ¶ Now after the time that Ama-
ziah did turn away ¹¹ from following
the LORD they ¹² made a conspiracy against him

¹¹ Heb. from after—¹² Heb. conspired a conspiracy.

Verse 24. *That were found in the house of God with Obed-edom*—That is, with Obed-edom's poste-

in Jerusalem; and he fled to Lachish: A. M. 3194.
B. C. 810. but they sent to Lachish after him,
and slew him there.

28 And they brought him upon horses, and
buried him with his fathers in the city of
¹³ Judah.

¹³ That is, the city of David, as it is 2 Kings xiv. 20.

city, to whom the custody of the sacred treasures
was committed.

CHAPTER XXVI.

Uzziah reigns well, 1-5. Prospers in his wars, building, and the affairs of his kingdom, 6-15. Invading the priest's office, is struck with a leprosy, 16-20. Is confined till his death, 21-23.

A. M. 3194. **T**HEN all the people of Judah took
B. C. 810. *Uzziah,¹ who was sixteen years
old, and made him king in the room of his
father Amaziah.

2 He built Eloth, and restored it to Judah,
after that the king slept with his fathers.

3 Sixteen years old was Uzziah when he
began to reign, and he reigned fifty and two
years in Jerusalem. His mother's name also
was Jecoliah of Jerusalem.

4 And he did *that which was* right in the
sight of the LORD, according to all that his
father Amaziah did.

5 And ^b he sought God in the days of Zechariah,
who ^c had understanding ² in the visions of
God: and, as long as he sought the LORD, God
made him to prosper.

^a 2 Kings xiv. 21; xv. 1, &c.—¹ Or, Azariah.—^b Chapter xxiv. 2.—^c Gen. xli. 15; Dan. i. 17; ii. 19; x. 1.—² Heb. in the seeing of God.—^d Isa. xiv. 29.

NOTES ON CHAPTER XXVI.

Verse 1. *The people of Judah took Uzziah*—Called also Azariah, 2 Kings xiv. 21; both names signifying the same thing, the *strength*, or *help of God*. Of this and verses 1, 3, 4, see notes on 2 Kings xiv. 21, 22; and xv. 2, 3.

Verse 5. *He sought God in the days of Zechariah*—Who was probably the son of that Zechariah whom his grand-father Joash slew. *Who had understanding in the visions of God*—Either the visions with which he himself was favoured, or the visions of the preceding prophets. He was well skilled in prophecy, and conversed much with the heavenly world; was an intelligent, devout, and good man; and had such influence on Uzziah, that while he lived he *sought God*, sought his favour,

6 And he went forth and ^d warred A. M. 3194.
B. C. 810. against the Philistines, and brake
down the wall of Gath, and the wall of Jabneh,
and the wall of Ashdod, and built cities ³ about
Ashdod, and among the Philistines

7 And God helped him against ^e the Philis-
tines, and against the Arabians that dwelt in
Gur-baal, and the Mehunims.

8 And the Ammonites ^f gave gifts to Uzziah:
and his name ⁴ spread abroad *even* to the en-
tering in of Egypt: for he strengthened *himself*
exceedingly.

9 ¶ Moreover, Uzziah built towers in Jerusa-
lem at the ^g corner-gate, and at the valley-gate,
and at the turning *of the wall*, and ⁵ fortified
them.

10 Also he built towers in the desert, and

³ Or, in the country of Ashdod.—⁴ Chap. xxi. 16.—⁵ 2 Sam. viii. 2; Chap. xvii. 11.—⁶ Heb. went.—⁷ 2 Kings xiv. 13; Neh. iii. 13, 19, 32; Zech. xiv. 10.—⁸ Or, repaired.

direction, and aid; trusted in him, cleaved to him, and persisted in his worship, and in the true religion. Happy are the great men who have such about them, and are willing to be advised by them: but unhappy those who seek God only while they have such with them, and have not a principle in themselves to bear them out to the end.

Verse 6. *And brake down the wall of Gath*—Which had been taken by Hazael, in the days of Joash his grand-father, chap. xii. 17; but was either relinquished by him, because it lay so far from his other dominions; or retaken by the Philistines, who had now repaired its fortifications and kept it.

Verses 10, 11. *He built towers in the desert*—Partly to guard his cattle from the inroads and depredations which the Arabians were accustomed to

A. M. 3194. ⁶digged many wells: for he had
B. C. 810. much cattle, both in the low country,
and in the plains; husbandmen *also*, and vine-
dressers in the mountains, and in ⁷Carmel: for
he loved ⁸husbandry.

11 ¶ Moreover, Uzziah had a host of fighting
men, that went out to war by bands, according
to the number of their account by the hand
of Jeiel the scribe and Maaseiah the ruler,
under the hand of Hananiah, *one* of the king's
captains.

12 The whole number of the chief of the
fathers of the mighty men of valour *were* two
thousand and six hundred.

13 And under their hand *was* ⁹an army,
three hundred thousand and seven thousand
and five hundred, that made war with mighty
power, to help the king against the enemy.

14 And Uzziah prepared for them throughout
all the host shields, and spears, and helmets,
and habergeons, and bows, and ¹⁰slings to cast
stones.

B. C. 765. 15 And he made in Jerusalem en-
gines, invented by cunning men, to
be on the towers and upon the bulwarks, to
shoot arrows and great stones withal. And his
name ¹¹spread far abroad; for he was marvel-
lously helped, till he was strong.

16 ¶ But ¹²when he was strong, his heart was

⁶ Or, *cut out many cisterns.*—⁷ Or, *fruitful fields.*—⁸ Heb.
ground.—⁹ Heb. *the power of an army.*—¹⁰ Heb. *stones of*
slings.—¹¹ Heb. *went forth.*—¹² Deut. xxxii. 15.—¹ Deut.
viii. 14; Chap. xxv. 19.

make: and partly to give notice of the approach of
any enemy, and to put some stop to their march on
that side. *Uzziah had an army that went out to*
war by bands—Some bands at one time, and some
at another, as occasion required.

Verse 16. *When he was strong*—Strengthened in
his kingdom, and free from the fear of any enemy;
his heart was lifted up to his destruction—Thus
the prosperity of fools, by puffing them up with
pride, destroys them. He had done so much busi-
ness, and attained so much honour, that he began
to think no business, no honour too great, or too
good for him; no, not that of the priesthood. *He*
went into the temple of the Lord—Into the holy
place, where the altar of incense stood, and into
which none but priests might enter, much less offer
incense.

Verse 18. *And they withstood Uzziah*—Hebrew,
stood up against Uzziah, not by force, or laying
hands upon him to restrain him, for in the next
verse we still find the censur in his hand; but only
by admonition and reproof, which follows. *Neither*

¹³lifted up to *his destruction*: for he ¹⁴transgressed
against the LORD his ¹⁵God, and ¹⁶went into the temple of the LORD
to burn incense upon the altar of incense.

17 And ¹⁷Azariah the priest went in after him,
and with him fourscore priests of the LORD,
that were valiant men:

18 And they withstood Uzziah the king, and
said unto him, *It* ¹⁸*appertaineth* not unto thee,
Uzziah, to burn incense unto the LORD, but to the
¹⁹priests, the sons of Aaron, that are con-
secrated to burn incense: go out of the sanc-
tuary; for thou hast trespassed; neither *shall*
it be for thine honour from the LORD God.

19 Then Uzziah was wroth, and *had* a cen-
surer in his hand to burn incense: and while he
was wroth with the priests, ²⁰the leprosy even
rose up in his forehead before the priests in
the house of the LORD, from beside the incense-
altar.

20 And Azariah the chief priest, and all the
priests, looked upon him, and behold, he *was*
leprous in his forehead, and they thrust him out
from thence; yea, himself ²¹hasted also to go
out, because the LORD had smitten him.

21 ²²And Uzziah the king was a leper unto
the day of his death, and dwelt in a ²³several ²⁴house,
being a leper; for he was cut off from
the house of the LORD: and Jotham his son

¹³ 2 Kings xvi. 12.—¹⁴ 1 Chron. vi. 10.—¹⁵ Num. xvi. 40;
xviii. 7.—¹⁶ Exod. xxx. 7, 8.—¹⁷ Num. xii. 10; 2 Kings v. 27.
¹⁸ Esth. vi. 12.—¹⁹ 2 Kings xv. 5.—²⁰ Lev. xiii. 46; Numbers
v. 2.—²¹ Heb. *free*.

shall it be for thine honour, &c.—Expect that God
will punish thee, or put some brand of infamy upon
thee for this presumption. But this they express
modestly, because they considered that he to whom
they spake, though an offender, was their sovereign.

Verse 19. *Then Uzziah was wroth*—With the
priests. *While he was wroth the leprosy rose up*
in his forehead—So that he could not hide his
shame: though it is probable it was also in the rest
of his body. *From beside the incense-altar*—By a
stroke from an invisible hand, coming from the al-
tar; that he might be assured this was the effect of
God's displeasure.

Verse 20. *They thrust him out from thence*—Not
by force, which needed not, for he voluntarily hast-
ened away, as it follows; but by vehement persua-
sions and denunciations of God's further judgments
upon him, if he did not depart.

Verse 21. *Uzziah was a leper unto the day of*
his death—God would have this leprosy to be in-
curable, as a lasting monument of his anger against
such presumptuous invaders of the priest's office.

A. M. 3239. *was* over the king's house, judging
B. C. 765. the people of the land.

22 ¶ Now the rest of the acts of Uzziah,
first and last, did ^aIsaiah the prophet, the son
of Amoz, write.

^a Isaiah i. 1.

Dwelt in a several house, &c.—As he was obliged
to do by law, which he durst not now resist, being
under the hand of God, and under the fear of worse
plagues, if he did not so. *For he was cut off from
the house of the Lord*—He dwelt in a several house,
because he might not come into the temple and
courts, nor consequently into any public assembly.
So the punishment answers the sin, as face does to

23 ^aSo Uzziah slept with his fa- A. M. 3239.
thers, and they buried him with his B. C. 765.
fathers in the field of the burial which *belonged*
to the kings; for they said, *He is a leper*: and
Jotham his son reigned in his stead.

^a 2 Kings xv. 7; Isaiah vi. 1.

face in a glass. He thrust himself into the temple
of God, whither the priests only had admission: and
for that was thrust out of the very courts of the
temple, into which the meanest of his subjects
might enter. He invaded the dignity of the priest-
hood, to which he had no right, and is for that de-
prived of the royal dignity, to which he had an un-
doubted right.

CHAPTER XXVII.

Jotham reigns well and prospers, 1-6. The conclusion of his reign, 7-9.

A. M. 3246. **JOTHAM** ^a*was* twenty and five
B. C. 758. years old when he began to reign,
and he reigned sixteen years in Jerusalem. His
mother's name also *was* Jerushah, the daughter
of Zadok.

2 And he did *that which was* right in the
sight of the LORD, according to all that his
father Uzziah did: howbeit, he entered not into
the temple of the LORD. And ^bthe people did
yet corruptly.

3 ¶ He built the high gate of the house of
the LORD, and on the wall of ¹Ophel he built
much.

4 Moreover, he built cities in the mountains
of Judah, and in the forests he built castles and
towers.

5 ¶ He fought also with the king of the
Ammonites, and prevailed against them. And

^a 2 Kings xv. 32, &c.—^b 2 Kings xv. 35.—¹ Or, *the tower*,
Chap. xxxiii. 14; Neh. iii. 26.

NOTES ON CHAPTER XXVII.

Verse 2. *He did that which was right, &c.*—He
did according to all his father Uzziah did, except in
his miscarriages. We must not imitate those we
have the greatest esteem for, any further than they
do well; and their failings must be warnings to us,
to walk more circumspectly.

Verse 3. *He built the high gate, &c.*—Otherwise
called the *new gate*. He repaired it, for it was built
before, chap. xi. 5. *On the wall of Ophel he built
much*—Ophel was a tower upon or near the wall of
Jerusalem, which probably he fortified, as his father
had other towers.

the children of Ammon gave him the A. M. 3246.
same year a hundred talents of silver, B. C. 758.
and ten thousand measures of wheat, and ten
thousand of barley. ²So much did the children
of Ammon pay unto him, both the second year,
and the third.

6 So Jotham became mighty, because he ³pre-
pared his ways before the LORD his God.

7 ¶ Now the rest of the acts of Jotham, and
all his wars, and his ways, lo, they *are* written
in the book of the kings of Israel and Judah.

8 He was five and twenty years old, when he
began to reign, and reigned sixteen years in
Jerusalem.

9 ^aAnd Jotham slept with his fa- About
thers, and they buried him in the city B. C. 742.
of David: and Ahaz his son reigned in his
stead.

^a Heb. *This*.—³ Or, *established*.—^c 2 Kings xv. 38.

Verses 5, 6. *He fought also with the Ammonites*
—Who, it seems, endeavoured to shake off the yoke,
which from David's time had been put upon them.
So Jotham became mighty—In wealth, and power,
and influence upon the neighbouring nations, who
courted his friendship, and feared his displeasure;
because he prepared his ways, &c.—Or, *directed
his ways*, his counsels, and actions, by the rule of
God's law. The more steadfast we are in religion,
the more mighty we are both for the resistance of
that which is evil, and for the performance of that
which is good.

Verse 9. *And Jotham slept with his fathers*—He

died in the midst of his days, being only forty-one years of age, finishing his course too soon, as we may be ready to say, considering his great usefulness, but finishing it with honour, and having the happiness of not outliving his reputation, as his last three mentioned predecessors outlived theirs.

And Ahaz his son reigned in his stead—Whose character, in all respects, was the reverse of his. "When that wealth and power," says Henry, "which wise men have done good with, devolves upon fools, that will do hurt with it, it is lamentable, and shall be for a lamentation."

CHAPTER XXVIII.

Ahaz reigns ill, 1-4. Is smitten by the Syrians and Israelites, 5-8; who send back the captives they had taken, 9-15. Ahaz sends for help to the king of Assyria, but in vain, 16-21. Yet he continues in idolatry, 22-25; and dies, 26, 27.

A. M. 3263. B. C. 741. **A**HAZ ^awas twenty years old when he began to reign, and he reigned sixteen years in Jerusalem: but he did not *that which was right* in the sight of the LORD, like David his father:

2 For he walked in the ways of the kings of Israel, and made also ^bmolten images for ^cBaalim.

3 Moreover, he ¹burnt incense in ^dthe valley of the son of Hinnom, and burnt ^ehis children in the fire, after the abominations of the heathen whom the LORD had cast out before the children of Israel.

4 He sacrificed also and burnt incense in the

high places, and on the hills, and ^{A. M. 3263. B. C. 741.} under every green tree.

5 Wherefore ^fthe LORD his God delivered him into the hand of the king of Syria; and they ^gsmote him, and carried away a great multitude of them captives, and brought *them* to ²Damascus. And he was also delivered into the hand of the king of Israel, who smote him with a great slaughter.

6 For ^hPekah the son of Remaliah slew in Judah a hundred and twenty thousand in one day, *which were* all ³valiant men; because they had forsaken the LORD God of their fathers.

^a 2 Kings xvi. 2.—^b Exodus xxxiv. 17; Leviticus xix. 4. ^c Judges ii. 11.—^d Or, offered sacrifice.—^e 2 Kings xxiii. 10. ^f Lev. xviii. 21; 2 Kings xvi. 3; Chap. xxxiii. 6.

^f Isaiah vii. 1.—^g 2 Kings xvi. 5.—^h Hebrew, *Darmesek* ¹ 2 Kings xv. 27.—² Heb. *sons of valour*.

NOTES ON CHAPTER XXVIII.

Verses 1-4. *He did not that which was right in the sight of the Lord*—Nay, he did a great deal that was wrong, very wrong, and that toward God, toward his own soul, and toward his people. He walked in the way of the revolted Israelites, and the devoted Canaanites; made molten images and worshipped them, contrary to the second commandment; nay, he made them for *Baalim*, contrary to the first. He forsook the temple of the Lord, and sacrificed, and burned incense on the hills, and under every green tree, in imitation of the neighbouring idolaters. And, to complete his wickedness, as one perfectly divested of all natural affection, as well as of all religion, and perfectly devoted to the service and interest of the great enemy of mankind, *he burned his children in the fire* to Moloch—Not thinking it enough to dedicate them to that infernal fiend, by causing them to pass through the fire. Such is the absolute sway which the prince of the power of the air sometimes exercises over the children of disobedience! But of his true character and complicated wickedness, see notes on 2 Kings xvi. 1-4, and 10-18.

Verse 5. *Wherefore the Lord his God delivered him, &c.*—Jehovah was *his* God, though not by special relation, which Ahaz had renounced, yet by

his sovereign dominion over him: for God did not forfeit his right by Ahaz's denying it. *Into the hand of the king of Syria*—Who insulted him, triumphed over him, beat him in the field, and carried away a great many of his people into captivity. *He was also delivered into the hand of the king of Israel*—Who, though an idolater as well as Ahaz, was made a terrible scourge to him and his people, shedding their blood, wasting their country, and ruining their families. When they had a good king, and acted wickedly, his goodness in some sort sheltered them; but now they had a bad one, all their defence was departed from them, and an inundation of judgments broke in upon them. And they that knew not their happiness in the foregoing reign, were taught to value it by the miseries of this.

Verse 6. *Pekah slew in Judah a hundred and twenty thousand in one day*—Never was such bloody work made among them before, since they were a nation, and that by Israelites too! The kingdom of Israel was not strong at this time, and yet strong enough, it appears, to bring this great destruction upon Judah. But certainly so many men, *valiant men*, could not have been cut off in one day, if they had not been strangely dispirited, both by the consciousness of their own guilt, and the righteous hand of God upon them. *Because*

A. M. 3263. 7 And Zichri, a mighty man of B. C. 741. Ephraim, slew Maaseiah the king's son, and Azrikam the governor of the house, and Elkanah *that was* ⁴ next to the king.

8 ¶ And the children of Israel carried away captive of their ¹ brethren two hundred thousand, women, sons, and daughters, and took also away much spoil from them, and brought the spoil to Samaria.

9 But a prophet of the LORD was there, whose name *was* Oded: and he went out before the host that came to Samaria, and said unto them, Behold, ² because the LORD God of your fathers was wroth with Judah, he hath delivered them into your hand, and ye have slain them in a rage *that* ¹ reacheth up unto heaven.

10 And now ye purpose to keep under the children of Judah and Jerusalem for ³ bond-men and bond-women unto you: *but are there* not with you, even with you, sins against the LORD your God?

⁴ Heb. *the second to the king.*—¹ Chap. xi. 4.—² Psa. lxxix. 26; Isa. x. 5; xlvii. 6; Ezek. xxv. 12, 15; xxvi. 2; Obadiah

they had forsaken the Lord God of their fathers— Ahaz walked in the ways of the kings of Israel, and God chose the kings of Israel for his scourge: it is just with God, to make them a plague to us, whom we have made our patterns, or partners in sin.

Verse 8. *The children of Israel carried away captive two hundred thousand, women, &c.*—When the army in the field was routed, the cities, and towns, and country villages were all easily stripped, the inhabitants taken for slaves, and their wealth for a prey.

Verse 9. *A prophet of the Lord was there*—By this it appears God continued his prophets among the Israelites, idolatrous as they were, that he might bring them to repentance, if they would hearken to their admonitions. This prophet meets the victorious army of Israel, not to applaud their valour or congratulate their victory; though they returned laden with spoils and triumphs; but in God's name to tell them of their faults, and warn them of the judgments of God. *And said unto them, Behold, because the Lord was wroth with Judah*—He exhorts them not to be lifted up with their victory; which he assures them was not to be ascribed so much to their own valour, as to the anger of God against Judah, to chastise whom, he had used them as the rod of his indignation. *And ye have slain them in a rage that reacheth up to heaven*—An unbounded rage, which cries to God for vengeance against such bloody men.

Verse 10. *Ye purpose to keep the children of Judah for bond-men and bond-women*—To use them, or sell them as slaves, though they are your brethren, and free-born Israelites. God takes notice of

11 Now hear me therefore, and deliver the captives again, which ye have taken captive of your brethren: ² for the fierce wrath of the LORD *is* upon you.

12 Then certain of the heads of the children of Ephraim, Azariah the son of Johanan, Berechiah the son of Meshillemoth, and Jehizkiah the son of Shallum, and Amasa the son of Hadlai, stood up against them that came from the war,

13 And said unto them, Ye shall not bring in the captives hither: for whereas we have offended against the LORD *already*, ye intend to add *more* to our sins and to our trespass: for our trespass is great, and *there is* fierce wrath against Israel.

14 So the armed men left the captives and the spoil before the princes and all the congregation.

15 And the men ⁵ which were expressed by name rose up, and took the captives, and with the spoil clothed all that were naked among

10, &c.; Zech. i. 15.—¹ Ezra ix. 6; Rev. xviii. 5.—² Lev. xxv. 39, 42, 46.—³ James ii. 13.—⁴ Verse 12.

what men purpose, as well as of what they say and do. *But are there not with you, even with you, sins against the Lord your God?*—Which, if not repented of, may bring down the divine vengeance upon your own heads. He appeals to their own consciences, and to the notorious evidence of the fact. As if he had said, It ill becomes sinners to be cruel. Show mercy to them, for you are undone if God do not show mercy to you.

Verse 11. *Now therefore deliver the captives*—Release your brethren, whom you have made prisoners, and send them home again with care. *For the fierce wrath of the Lord is upon you*—And there is no other way of escaping it, but by showing mercy.

Verse 14. *So the armed men left the captives and the spoil before the princes, &c.*—To be disposed of as they pleased. And herein they showed a more truly heroic bravery than they did by taking them. For it is true honour to yield to reason and religion, even in spite of interest. It was a wonderful instance of deference and obedience, which these armed men manifested toward their princes on this occasion, in restoring not only the captives, which were very valuable, but all the spoil also, which no doubt was considerable. What might not these great men have done to bring them to repentance for their idolatries, and to effect a reformation among them, if they had been themselves truly religious, and had exerted their authority among them for these purposes.

Verse 15. *The men expressed by name*—Nominated and appointed by the heads of the people, to take care of the captives, and see them well treated, which they did even to a very high degree of humanity.

A. M. 3263. them, and arrayed them, and shod
B. C. 741.

them, and ^p gave them to eat and to drink, and anointed them, and carried all the feeble of them upon asses, and brought them to Jericho, ^q the city of palm-trees, to their brethren: then they returned to Samaria.

16 ¶ At that time did King Ahaz send unto the kings of Assyria to help him.

17 For again the Edomites had come and smitten Judah, and carried away ^s captives.

18 * The Philistines also had invaded the cities of the low country, and of the south of Judah, and had taken Beth-shemesh, and Ajalon, and Gederoth, and Shocho with the villages thereof, and Timnah with the villages thereof, Gimzo also and the villages thereof: and they dwelt there.

^p 2 Kings vi. 22; Proverbs xxv. 21; Luke vi. 27; Romans xii. 20.—^q Deut. xxxiv. 3; Judges i. 10.—^r 2 Kings xvi. 7.
^s Heb. a captivity.

Verses 16-19. *Did Ahaz send unto the kings of Assyria to helphim*—That is, the king, namely, Tiglath-pileser, (2 Kings xvi. 7,) the plural number being put for the singular, either because he was a great king, a king of kings, or because Ahaz sent to divers of his princes also, who may be called kings in a more general signification of the word. Ahaz found his own kingdom weakened and made naked, and he could not put any confidence in God, and therefore was at a vast expense to procure an interest in the king of Assyria, verses 18, 19. *The cities of the low country*—That part of Judah which was toward the sea, and toward the Philistines' land. *For the Lord brought Judah low*—As high as they were before in wealth and power. They that will not humble themselves under the word of God will be humbled by his judgments. *For he made Judah naked*—Taking away their ornament, and their defence and strength, namely, their treasures, which Ahaz sent to the Assyrian to no purpose; their frontier towns, and other strong holds, which by his folly and wickedness were lost; their religion, and the divine protection, which was their great and only security, which by his sins he forfeited. *And transgressed sore against the Lord*—The Targum renders it, *The house of Judah ceased from the worship of God*, which Ahaz in a manner wholly abolished, and thereby transgressed more grievously than any or all of his predecessors.

Verses 20, 21. *Tiglath-pilneser came and distressed him*—By quartering the Assyrian soldiers upon his country, by growing insolent and imperious, and creating him a great deal of vexation, and by proving as a broken reed, which not only fails him that leans upon it, but pierces his hand. Or, *straitened him*, (as יצ', *jatsar*, rather signifies,) namely, by robbing him of his treasures. *For Ahaz took away a portion, &c.*—He pillaged the

19 For the LORD brought Judah low because of Ahaz king of Israel: for he ^a made Judah naked, and transgressed sore against the LORD.

20 And ^a Tilgath-pilneser king of Assyria came unto him, and distressed him, but strengthened him not.

21 For Ahaz took away a portion out of the house of the LORD, and out of the house of the king, and of the princes, and gave it unto the king of Assyria: but he helped him not.

22 ¶ And in the time of his distress did he trespass yet more against the LORD: this is that King Ahaz.

23 For ^b he sacrificed unto the gods of ^c Damascus, which smote him: and he said, Because the gods of the kings of Syria help them,

* Ezekiel xvi. 27, 57.—^a Chapter xxi. 2.—^b Exodus xxxii. 25.—^c 2 Kings xv. 29; xvi. 7, 9.—^d Chap. xxv. 14.—^e Heb. Darneseck.

house of God, and the king's house, and pressed the princes for money to hire these foreign forces into his service. For though he had conformed to the idolatry of these his heathen neighbours, they did not value or love him the more for that; nor did his compliance, by which he lost God, gain them; nor could he make any interest with them but by his money. Thus it is generally found that wicked men have no real affection for those that revolt to them, nor care to do them a kindness. *But he strengthened him not*—A most emphatical expression: for though he weakened his present enemy, the Syrian, as is related 2 Kings xvi. 9, taking Damascus, and carrying the people away captive; yet really, all things considered, he did not strengthen Ahaz and his kingdom. He did not help him to recover the cities which the Philistines had taken from him; nor did he lend him any forces, or enable him to recruit his own. On the contrary, he weakened him; for by removing the Syrian, who, though a troublesome neighbour, was a kind of bulwark to him, and by destroying Samaria, he opened a way for the invasion of his country with more facility, as happened in the very next reign.

Verse 22. *This is that King Ahaz*—That monster and reproach of mankind, that unteachable and incorrigible prince, whom even grievous afflictions made worse, which commonly make men better. This is he whose name deserves to be remembered and detested for ever.

Verse 23. *He sacrificed unto the gods of Damascus that smote him*—Or, *which had smitten him* formerly; that is, had enabled their worshippers, the Syrians, as he foolishly imagined, to smite him. He sacrificed to them, therefore, not because he loved them, but because he feared them, thinking they had helped his enemies, and hoping, if he could bring them over to his interest, they would help him. "O

A. M. 3264. *therefore* will I sacrifice to them, that
B. C. 740. ^a they may help me. But they were
the ruin of him, and of all Israel.

24 And Ahaz gathered together the vessels
of the house of God, and cut in pieces the ves-
sels of the house of God, ^a and shut up the doors
of the house of the LORD, and he made him
altars in every corner of Jerusalem.

25 And in every several city of Judah he
made high places ⁷ to burn incense unto other

^a Jer. xlv. 17.—⁷ Chap. xxix. 3, 7.

blind superstition!" exclaims Bishop Hall, "how did the gods of Syria help their kings, when both those kings, and their gods, were vanquished and taken by the king of Assyria? Even this Damascus, and this altar, were the spoil of a foreign enemy: how then did the gods of Syria help their kings, any otherwise than to their ruin? What dotage is this, to make choice of a foiled protection! But, had the Syrians prospered, must their gods have the thanks? Are there no authors of good but blocks or devils? or is an outward prosperity the only argument of truth, the only motive of devotion? O foolish Ahaz! It is the God thou hast forsaken that punishes thee, under whose only arm thou mightest have prevailed. His power beats those pagan stocks one against another, so as one while one seems victorious, another vanquished; and at last he confounds both together, with their proudest clients, of which thyself art certainly

gods, and provoked to anger the LORD A. M. 3264.
God of his fathers. B. C. 740.

26 ¶ ^b Now the rest of his acts, and of all his
ways, first and last, behold, they *are* written in
the book of the kings of Judah and Israel.

27 And Ahaz slept with his fathers, B. C. 726.
and they buried him in the city, *even* _____
in Jerusalem: but they brought him not into
the sepulchres of the kings of Israel: and Heze-
kiah his son reigned in his stead.

⁷ Or, to offer.—^b 2 Kings xvi. 19.

the most striking instance." Alas! Ahaz did not see that it was Jehovah that smote him, and strengthened the Syrians against him, and not the gods of Damascus. Had he sacrificed to him, and him only, and worshipped and served him aright, he would have been helped effectually. No marvel that men's affections and devotions are misplaced, when they mistake the author of their trouble and their help. And what was the consequence? The gods of Syria befriended Ahaz no more than the kings of Assyria did: but were the ruin of him and of all Israel. This sin, among others, provoked God to bring judgments upon them; to cut him off in the midst of his days, when he was but thirty-six years of age; and it corrupted the people so that the reformation of the next reign could not prevail to cure them of their inclination to idolatry, but they retained that root of bitterness till the captivity in Babylon eradicated it.

CHAPTER XXIX.

Hezekiah's exhortation to the priests and Levites, 1-11. The care of the Levites to cleanse the temple, and put things into order, 12-19. A solemn revival of God's ordinances, 20-36.

A. M. 3278. **HEZEKIAH** ^a began to reign *when*
B. C. 726. *he was* five and twenty years
old, and he reigned nine and twenty years in Je-
rusalem. And his mother's name *was* Abijah,
the daughter ^b of Zechariah.

2 And he did *that which was* right in the
sight of the LORD, according to all that David
his father had done.

3 ¶ He, in the first year of his reign, in the

^a 2 Kings xviii. 1.—^b Chap. xxvi. 5.

NOTES ON CHAPTER XXIX.

Verses 3, 4. *He opened the doors of the house of the Lord*—Which Ahaz his father had shut, chapter xxviii. 24. *And he brought in the priests, &c.*—He found Judah low and naked, yet did not make it his first business to revive the civil interests of his king-

first month, ^c opened the doors of the A. M. 3278.
house of the LORD, and repaired them. B. C. 726.

4 And he brought in the priests and the
Levites, and gathered them together into the
east street,

5 And said unto them, Hear me, ye Levites;
^d Sanctify now yourselves, and sanctify the
house of the LORD God of your fathers, and
carry forth the filthiness out of the holy *place*.

^c Chap. xxviii. 24; Verse 7.—^d 1 Chron. xv. 12; Ch. xxxv. 6.

dom, but to restore religion to a good posture. Those that begin with God, begin at the right end of their work, and it will prosper accordingly.

Verse 5. *Hear me, ye Levites; carry forth the filthiness*—That filthy altar which Ahaz had put in the place of God's altar, (2 Kings xvi. 11,) and the idols,

A. M. 3278. B. C. 726. 6 For our fathers have trespassed, and done *that which was* evil in the eyes of the LORD our God, and have forsaken him, and have * turned away their faces from the habitation of the LORD, and ¹ turned their backs.

7 [†] Also they have shut up the doors of the porch, and put out the lamps, and have not burned incense nor offered burnt-offerings in the holy place unto the God of Israel.

8 Wherefore the [†] wrath of the LORD was upon Judah and Jerusalem, and he hath delivered them to ² trouble, to astonishment, and to ^h hissing, as ye see with your eyes.

9 For lo, ¹ our fathers have fallen by the sword, and our sons and our daughters and our wives *are* in captivity for this.

10 Now *it is* in my heart to make ^k a covenant with the LORD God of Israel, that his fierce wrath may turn away from us.

11 My sons, ³ be not now negligent: for the LORD hath ¹ chosen you to stand before him, to serve him, and that ye should minister unto him, and ⁴ burn incense.

12 ¶ Then the Levites arose, Mahath the

son of Amasai, and Joel the son of Azariah, of the sons of the Kohathites: and of the sons of Merari; Kish the son of Abdi, and Azariah the son of Jehalelel: and of the Gershonites; Joah the son of Zimmah, and Eden the son of Joah:

13 And of the sons of Elizaphan; Shimri, and Jeiel: and of the sons of Asaph; Zechariah, and Mattaniah:

14 And of the sons of Heman; Jehiel, and Shimei: and of the sons of Jeduthun; She-maiah, and Uzziel.

15 And they gathered their brethren, and ^m sanctified themselves, and came, according to the commandment of the king, ⁵ by the words of the LORD, ⁿ to cleanse the house of the LORD.

16 And the priests went into the inner part of the house of the LORD, to cleanse *it*, and brought out all the uncleanness that they found in the temple of the LORD into the court of the house of the LORD. And the Levites took *it*, to carry *it* out abroad into the brook Kidron.

17 Now they began on the first *day* of the first month to sanctify, and on the eighth day

* Jeremiah ii. 27; Ezek. viii. 16.—¹ Heb. *given the neck.* Chapter xxviii. 24.—² Chap. xxiv. 18.—³ Heb. *commotion.* Deuteron. xxviii. 25.—^h 1 Kings ix. 8; Jer. xviii. 16; xix. 8; xv. 9, 18; xxix. 18.

¹ Chap. xxviii. 5, 6, 8, 17.—^k Chap. xv. 12.—³ Or, *be not now deceived.*—⁴ Num. iii. 6; viii. 14; xviii. 2, 6.—⁵ Or, *offer sacrifice.*—^m Verse 5.—ⁿ Or, *in the business of the LORD.* Chap. xxx. 12.—¹ 1 Chron. xxiii. 28.

or other abominable things, which were there; *out of the holy place*—The temple, or the priests' court, which also is often called a *holy place*.

Verse 6. *Our fathers have trespassed*—He does not say my father, because it became him, as a son, to be as tender as might be of his father's name; and because his father would not have been permitted to do all these things, if the people had not neglected their duty. Urijah the priest, in particular, had joined with Ahaz in setting up an idolatrous altar. *Have turned away their faces, &c., and turned their backs*—Have wilfully and obstinately forsaken God and his worship; that posture being a signification of contempt.

Verses 8, 9. *He hath delivered them to trouble to astonishment, and to hissing*—To such calamities as all that see and hear of them shall be astonished at, and hiss at those who, by their own sin and folly, have brought such miseries upon themselves. When we are under the rebukes of God's providence, it is good for us to inquire whether we have not neglected God's ordinances, and whether that be not the controversy he has with us. *Our wives are in captivity*—Though they were presently released, chapter xxviii. 5, 14, 15.

Verses 10, 11. *It is in my heart to make a covenant with the Lord, &c.*—To engage by solemn

vows and promises to worship him only, and in that way which he hath appointed: for I am sure that his fierce anger will not otherwise be turned away from us. This covenant he would not only make for himself, but bring his people also into the bond of it. *My sons*—So he calls them, though many of them were elder than himself, because he was by his tender love and affection, as he was by his office, obliged to be a nursing father to them. *Be not now negligent*—In sanctifying yourselves and the temple, (verse 5,) and in quickening and preparing yourselves and the people for God's service.

Verses 15, 16. *To cleanse the house of the Lord*—From the dirt it had contracted while it was so long shut up; from dust, cobwebs, and the rust of the vessels. Much more from the idols, and idolatrous altars, which had been set up therein. *The priests went into the inner part of the house*—Not the holy of holies, into which only the high-priest might go, and he only once in a year, but into the holy place. *And brought out all the uncleanness into the court*—To wit, the priests' court, called here *the court*, by way of eminence.

Verse 17. *Now they began on the first day of the first month*—A happy beginning of the new year! Thus should every year begin with a reformation of what is amiss, and the purging away of all the

A. M. 3278. of the month came they to the porch
B. C. 726. of the LORD: so they sanctified the house of the LORD in eight days; and in the sixteenth day of the first month they made an end.

18 Then they went in to Hezekiah the king, and said, We have cleansed all the house of the LORD, and the altar of burnt-offering, with all the vessels thereof, and the show-bread table, with all the vessels thereof.

19 Moreover all the vessels, which King Ahaz in his reign did ^o cast away in his transgression, have we prepared and sanctified, and behold, they *are* before the altar of the LORD.

20 ¶ Then Hezekiah the king rose early and gathered the rulers of the city, and went up to the house of the LORD.

21 And they brought seven bullocks, and seven rams, and seven lambs, and seven he-goats, for a ^p sin-offering for the kingdom, and for the sanctuary, and for Judah. And he commanded the priests the sons of Aaron to offer *them* on the altar of the LORD.

22 So they killed the bullocks, and the priests received the blood, and ^q sprinkled *it* on the

^o Chapter xxviii. 24.—^p Levit. iv. 3, 14.—^q Levit. viii. 14, 15, 19, 24; Heb. ix. 21.—^r Heb. *near*.—^s Levit. iv. 15, 24. ^t Lev. xiv. 20.—^u 1 Chron. xvi. 4; xxv. 6.—^v 1 Chron. xxiii. 5; xxv. 1; Chap. viii. 14.

defilements contracted the foregoing year. *In the sixteenth day they made an end*—Cleansing the house, and porch, and courts, and all the chambers belonging to the temple, in sixteen days. This is mentioned to signify, partly the universal abuse and defilement of all the parts of it by Ahaz, to remove which so much time was required; and partly the diligence of the priests in this work.

Verse 19. *All the vessels have we sanctified*—Though the vessels of the sanctuary may be profaned for a while, God will find a time and a way to sanctify them. Neither his ordinances nor his obedient people shall be suffered to fail for ever.

Verse 21. *They brought seven bullocks*—The number *seven* is customary in sacred matters, and is here used in regard of the vast numbers and various kinds of sins, the guilt whereof yet lay upon the kingdom, which was now to be expiated. Indeed, in case of one particular sin of ignorance committed by the people, there was but one bullock to be offered, but here the sins were many and presumptuous. *For a sin-offering for the kingdom*—To make atonement for the sins of the king, and the royal family, and the court. *And for the sanctuary*—For all the idolatry and uncleanness wherewith the temple had been polluted, which, as it had been cleansed naturally by the priests' hands, so now it was to be purged morally by sacrifices. *And for*

altar: likewise, when they had killed ^{A. M. 3278.}
the rams, they sprinkled the blood ^{B. C. 726.}
upon the altar: they killed also the lambs, and they sprinkled the blood upon the altar.

23 And they brought ⁶ forth the he-goats for the sin-offering before the king and the congregation; and they laid their ^r hands upon them:

24 And the priests killed them, and they made reconciliation with their blood upon the altar, ^s to make an atonement for all Israel: for the king commanded *that* the burnt-offering and the sin-offering *should be made* for all Israel.

25 ^t And he set the Levites in the house of the LORD with cymbals, with psalteries, and with harps, ^u according to the commandment of David, and of ^v Gad the king's seer, and Nathan the prophet: ^w for *so was* the commandment ^x of the LORD ^y by his prophets.

26 And the Levites stood with the instruments ^z of David, and the priests with ^a the trumpets.

27 And Hezekiah commanded to offer the burnt-offering upon the altar. And ^b when the

² 2 Sam. xxiv. 11.—³ 1 Chron. xxx. 12.—⁴ Heb. *by the hand of the LORD*.—⁵ Heb. *by the hand of*.—⁶ 1 Chron. xxiii. 5; Amos vi. 5.—⁷ Num. x. 8, 10; 1 Chronicles xv. 24; xvi. 6. ⁸ Heb. *in the time*.

Judah—For the sins of all the people of Judah. They thought it not enough to lament and forsake their sins, but they brought a sin-offering. Even our repentance and reformation will not obtain pardon, but through Christ, who *was made sin*, that is, a *sin-offering*, for us.

Verse 23. *They laid their hands upon them*—The king and the elders of the people, in the name of the whole congregation: thereby owning themselves guilty before God, and expressing their desire that the guilt of their sin might be transferred upon the sacrifice. By faith we lay our hands on the Lord Jesus, and so *receive the atonement*, Rom. v. 11. Burnt-offerings were offered with the sin-offerings, the intention of which was to give glory to the God of Israel, whom they owned as the only true God, and their God, which it was proper to do, at the same time that they were, by the sin-offering, making atonement for their offences.

Verse 24. *To make an atonement for all Israel*—That is, for all the rest of the tribes, whereof a considerable number were now in his dominions, and not for Judah only. Thus is Christ a propitiation, not for the sins of Israel only, but for those of the whole world, 1 John i. 2.

Verse 27. *When the burnt-offering began, the song of the Lord began also*—The psalms composed by David and Asaph, (verse 30,) with the musical

A. M. 3278. burnt-offering began, ^b the song of
B. C. 726. the LORD began *also* with the trum-
pets, and with the ¹⁰ instruments *ordained* by
David king of Israel.

28 And all the congregation worshipped, and
the ¹¹ singers sang, and the trumpeters sounded:
and all this continued until the burnt-offering
was finished.

29 And when they had made an end of offer-
ing, ^c the king and all that were ¹² present with
him bowed themselves, and worshipped.

30 Moreover, Hezekiah the king and the
princes commanded the Levites to sing praise
unto the LORD with the words of David, and
of Asaph the seer. And they sang praises with
gladness, and they bowed their heads and
worshipped.

31 Then Hezekiah answered and said, Now
ye have ¹³ consecrated yourselves unto the
LORD, come near and bring sacrifices and

^d thank-offerings into the house of the LORD. And the congregation brought
in sacrifices and thank-offerings; and, as many
as were of a free heart, burnt-offerings.

32 And the number of the burnt-offerings,
which the congregation brought, was three-
score and ten bullocks, a hundred rams, *and*
two hundred lambs: all these *were* for a burnt-
offering to the LORD.

33 And the consecrated things *were* six hun-
dred oxen and three thousand sheep.

34 But the priests were too few, so that they
could not flay all the burnt-offerings: wherefore
^e their brethren the Levites ¹⁴ did help them till
the work was ended, and until the *other* priests
had sanctified themselves: ^f for the Levites *were*
more ^g upright in heart to sanctify themselves
than the priests.

35 And also the burnt-offerings *were* in abund-
ance, with ^h the fat of the peace-offerings, and

^b Chapter xxiii. 18.—¹⁰ Hebrew, *hands of instruments*.
¹¹ Heb. *song*.—^c Chapter xx. 18.—¹² Heb. *found*.—¹³ Or,
filled your hand, Chap. xiii. 9.

^d Leviticus vii. 12.—^e Chap. xxxv. 11.—¹⁴ Heb. *strength-
ened them*.—^f Chap. xxx. 3.—^g Psa. vii. 10.—^h Leviticus
iii. 16.

instruments which God, by his prophets, had com-
manded to be used, (verse 25,) and which had been
long neglected. Even sorrow for sin must not put
us out of tune for praising God. By faith we must
even then rejoice in the Lord our righteousness, and
our prayers and praises must ascend with his offer-
ing. to be accepted only in the virtue of it.

Verse 28. *And all the congregation worshipped*—
The king and all present testified their consent to,
and concurrence in, all that was done by bowing their
heads and worshipping, expressing an awful veneration
for the divine majesty by postures of adora-
tion. It is not enough for us to be where God is
worshipped; if we do not ourselves worship him,
and that not with bodily exercise only, which profits
little, but with the heart.

Verse 31. *Now ye have consecrated yourselves to
the Lord*—Have both made an atonement, and made
a covenant by sacrifice; are solemnly reconciled
and engaged to him; *come near and bring sacri-
fices*—Our covenant with God must be pursued and
improved in communion with him. Having conse-
crated ourselves in the first place to the Lord, we
must bring the sacrifices of prayer, and praise, and
alms, to his house. *As many as were of a free heart
brought burnt-offerings*—Wherein there was more
generosity than in the other sacrifices, because they
were wholly burned and offered to God.

Verse 33. *The consecrated things were six hun-
dred oxen, &c.*—That is, the offerings consecrated
to God, besides the burnt-offerings already men-
tioned, namely, the peace-offerings and thank-offe-
rings, the fat of which was burned upon the altar,
and the flesh divided between the priests and the
offerers. Of these there was a still greater number

than of the burnt-offerings. Perhaps the remem-
brance of their sin in sacrificing on the high places,
made them more willing to bring their sacrifices now
to God's altar.

Verse 34. *The priests were too few*—Namely,
such as were sanctified and fit for the work, as the
following words show. Many of them, it is proba-
ble, had been suspended and laid aside as polluted,
for having sacrificed to idols in the last reign, and
the rest had not the zeal that might have been ex-
pected on such an occasion. Therefore they took
no care to sanctify themselves: and being unsanc-
tified, and so unqualified, they made their excuse for
being absent from the service; as if their offence
would be their defence. It is recorded here, to the
perpetual shame of the priests, that though they
were so well provided for out of the offerings of the
Lord, yet they did not mind their business. Here
was work to do, and there wanted proper hands to
do it. *So that they could not flay all the burnt-
offerings*—And much less all the other sacrifices,
which were more numerous; the flaying whereof
was the priests' proper work, Lev. i. 5, 6. *Where-
fore the priests did help them*—Necessity excusing a
deviation from the rule, as it hath excused in other
cases. *For the Levites were more upright in heart,
&c., than the priests*—They were better affected to
the work, and better prepared and qualified for it.
This was their praise; and, in recompense for it,
they had the honour of being employed in that
which was the priests' work. Thus encouragement
was given to the faithful, zealous Levites, and a just
disgrace cast upon the careless priests. What the
Levites wanted in the ceremonial advantages of
their birth and consecration, was abundantly made

A. M. 3278. ⁱ the drink-offerings, for every burnt-offering. So the service of the house of the LORD was set in order.

36 And Hezekiah rejoiced, and all the people, that God had prepared the people: for the thing was done suddenly.

¹ Numbers

xv. 5, 7, 10.

up in their eminent qualifications of knowledge and zeal for the work.

Verse 36. *Hezekiah rejoiced, and all the people*—In this blessed turn of affairs, and the new face of religion which the kingdom had put on. *That God had prepared the people*—Had changed their hearts by his Almighty Spirit. For it was plain his hand was in it, both because so many of those who, in the last reign, had doted on the idolatrous altars, were

now so much in love with God's altar; and because *the thing was done suddenly*; was brought about in so little time, and with little or no opposition. Those that go about the work of God in faith, and with resolution, will often find there is not that difficulty in it which they had apprehended. Only let magistrates and ministers do their parts toward the reforming of a land, and then let them trust God to do his, and ascribe to him the glory of what is done.

CHAPTER XXX.

King Hezekiah and the people resolve to keep the passover, 1-5. He invites Judah and Israel to it, 6-12. The joyful celebration of it, 13-27.

A. M. 3278. B. C. 726. **A**ND Hezekiah sent to all Israel and Judah, and wrote letters also to Ephraim and Manasseh, that they should come to the house of the LORD at Jerusalem, to keep the passover unto the LORD God of Israel.

2 For the king had taken counsel, and his princes, and all the congregation in Jerusalem, to keep the passover in the second ^amonth.

3 For they could not keep it ^bat that time, ^cbecause the priests had not sanctified themselves sufficiently, neither had the people gathered themselves together to Jerusalem.

4 And the thing ¹pleased the king and all the congregation.

5 So they established a decree to make proclamation throughout all Israel, from Beer-sheba

^a Num. ix. 10, 11.—^b Exod. xii. 6, 18.—^c Chap. xxix. 34.

¹ Heb. was right in the eyes of the king.

NOTES ON CHAPTER XXX.

Verse 1. *Hezekiah sent to all Israel*—To all the persons of the ten tribes who were settled in his kingdom, as well as to those of the tribe of Judah. *And wrote letters also to Ephraim and Manasseh*—To all the remainder of the ten tribes, (verse 5,) here expressed by the names of Ephraim and Manasseh, as elsewhere by the name of Ephraim only. But he names these two tribes, because they were nearest to his kingdom, and a great number of them had long since, and from time to time, joined themselves to the kingdom of Judah, 2 Chron. xv. 8, 9. *That they should come to the house of the Lord*—Admonishing them of their duty to God, and persuading them to comply with it.

Verse 2. *The king had taken counsel, &c.*—The law directed that the passover should be celebrated on the fourteenth day of the first month: but as it was found impossible to get all things in readiness against that time, it was thought more advisable to adjourn it to the fourteenth day of the next month, than to defer it till the next year. And for this they had some encouragement, as it was allowed in the law, that in case any man was unclean by reason of a dead body, or was on a journey afar off, at the

proper time of the celebration of the passover, he might eat it on the fourteenth day of the second month, Num. ix. 10, 11. And what was an indulgence to particular persons, they judged, might be allowed to the whole congregation of Israel.

Verse 3. *For they could not keep it at that time*—Which God had appointed for it, both because the temple was not then purified and prepared, and also for two other reasons, which he here adds. *The priests had not sanctified themselves sufficiently*—To wit, in such a manner as was fit, nor in such numbers as were necessary for the slaying and offering of so many thousands of paschal-offerings, as appears, because they were not sufficient for those offerings, which were comparatively few, chapter xxix. 32-34. *Neither had the people gathered themselves together, &c.*—As they used, and ought to do, at that time, from all places: which now they could not do, because neither was the matter agreed upon, nor were the people summoned thither, till the proper time was past.

Verse 5. *So they established a decree*—They fixed a resolution; *to make proclamation throughout all Israel*—Hezekiah, it is certain, had no right to invite Hoshea's subjects to repair to Jerusalem, to the cele-

A. M. 3278. even to Dan, that they should come
B. C. 726. to keep the passover unto the LORD
God of Israel at Jerusalem: for they had not
done it of a long time in such sort as it was
written.

6 So the posts went with the letters ² from the
king and his princes throughout all Israel and
Judah, and according to the commandment of
the king, saying, Ye children of Israel, ⁴ turn
again unto the LORD God of Abraham, Isaac,
and Israel, and he will return to the remnant
of you that are escaped out of the hand of ⁶ the
kings of Assyria.

7 And be not ye ¹ like your fathers, and like
your brethren, which trespassed against the
LORD God of their fathers, *who* therefore ⁵ gave
them up to desolation, as ye see.

¹ Heb. *from the hand*.—⁴ Jer. iv. 1; Joel ii. 13.—² Kings
xv. 19, 29.—⁵ Ezek. xx. 18.—⁶ Chap. xxix. 8.—³ Heb. *har-
dena not your necks*.

bration of his passover; yet for the doing of this we
may well presume that he had encouragement from
Hoshea himself; who, as to the matter of religion,
has a better character in Scripture than any of his
predecessors, from the time of the division of the
two kingdoms. But the truth was, that both the
golden calves, which had caused this political separa-
tion, were now taken away; that of Dan by Tig-
lath-pileser, and that of Beth-el by his son Shalma-
neser; and therefore some of the apostate Israelites,
being thus deprived of their idols, began to return to
the Lord, and to go up to Jerusalem to worship,
some time before Hezekiah made them this invita-
tion to his passover. See Prideaux and Dodd.
*They had not done it of a long time, &c., as it was
written*—In such a manner as God had commanded
them to keep it. Indeed, the ten tribes had never
kept it since the division of the kingdom by Jero-
boam; at least, not in the way in which Moses had
prescribed, being hindered by his threatening inter-
dicts from going to Jerusalem; where only it could
be kept according to the law. And as for Judah, it
appears, from verse 26, that they had never kept this
feast with such solemnity since the time of Solomon.

Verse 6. *So the posts*—Hebrew, הרצים, *harat-
sim, the runners*; *went with the letters*—Expresses
were sent throughout all the tribes of Israel, with
memorials, earnestly pressing the people to take this
opportunity of returning to God, from whom they
had revolted. *Saying, Ye children of Israel, turn
again unto the Lord, &c.*—In these letters Hezekiah
discovers great concern both for the honour of God
and for the welfare of the neighbouring kingdom,
the prosperity of which he seems earnestly to have
desired, though he not only received no toll, tribute,
or custom from it, but it had often, and not long
since, been vexatious to his kingdom. This was in-
deed rendering good for evil. *And he will return*

8 Now ³ be ye not ^b stiff-necked, as A. M. 3278.
B. C. 726. your fathers *were*, but ⁴ yield your-
selves unto the LORD, and enter into his sanc-
tuary, which he hath sanctified for ever: and
serve the LORD your God, ¹ that the fierceness
of his wrath may turn away from you.

9 For if ye turn again unto the LORD, your
brethren and your children *shall find* ^k com-
passion before them that lead them captive, so
that they shall come again into this land: for
the LORD your God is ¹ gracious and merciful,
and will not turn away *his* face from you, if ye
^m return unto him.

10 So the posts passed from city to city through
the country of Ephraim and Manasseh even
unto Zebulun: but ⁿ they laughed them to
scorn, and mocked them.

^b Deut. x. 16.—⁴ Heb. *give the hand*, 1 Chron. xxix. 24; Ezra
x. 19.—¹ Chap. xxix. 10.—^k Psa. cvi. 46.—^l Exod. xxxiv. 6.
^m Isa. lv. 7.—ⁿ Chap. xxxvi. 16.

to the remnant of you—You are but a remnant, nar-
rowly escaped out of the hand of the kings of Assy-
ria, (namely, Pul and Tiglath-pileser,) who have
carried your brethren away captive. And therefore
it concerns you to put yourselves under the protec-
tion of the God of your fathers, that you may not be
quite swallowed up: and if you turn to him in the
way of duty, he will turn to you in a way of mercy.

Verse 8. *Be not stiff-necked, as your fathers were*
—A metaphorical expression, taken from refractory
oxen, which will not go forward, but endeavour to
withdraw their necks and shoulders from the yoke,
and go backward. *But yield yourselves unto the
Lord*—Hebrew, *Give the hand* to him, that is, sub-
mit yourselves to him, by obeying his command,
and renew your covenant with him: both which
things were wont to be done among men, by the
ceremony of giving the hand; *and enter into his
sanctuary*—Come to worship in his temple at Jeru-
salem; *which he hath sanctified for ever*—Hath hal-
lowed, not for a transient and temporary use, but as
long as the state and church of Israel shall have a
being, whatsoever alterations may happen therein.

Verse 9. *Your brethren and your children shall
find compassion, &c.*—You may hope that he will
turn again the captivity of your brethren that are
carried away, and restore them to their own land;
bringing them first to true repentance, accord-
ing to the prayer of Solomon, 1 Kings viii. 47; and
2 Chron. vii. 14; and then causing them to be pitied
of those that have carried them away captive, accord-
ing to the declaration of David, Psa. cvi. 46.

Verse 10. *They laughed them to scorn, and mocked
them*—Having been long accustomed to serve other
gods, the hearts of the generality of the ten tribes
were so hardened, that they scoffed at this most gra-
cious invitation to repentance. And what wonder
that Hezekiah's messengers were thus spitefully

A. M. 3278. 11 Nevertheless, ° divers of Asher and
B. C. 726. Manasseh and of Zebulun humbled
themselves, and came to Jerusalem.

12 Also in Judah ° the hand of God was to give them one heart to do the commandment of the king and of the princes, ° by the word of the LORD.

13 ¶ And there assembled at Jerusalem much people to keep the feast of unleavened bread in the second month, a very great congregation.

14 And they arose and took away the ° altars that were in Jerusalem, and all the altars for incense took they away, and cast them into the brook Kidron.

15 Then they killed the passover on the fourteenth day of the second month: and the priests and the Levites were ° ashamed, and

° Chap. xi. 16; Verses 18, 21.—° Phil. ii. 13.—° Chap. xxix. 25.—° Chap. xxviii. 24.—° Chap. xxix. 34.

used by this apostate race, when even God's messengers, his servants the prophets, who produced undeniable credentials from him, had been and still were worse treated. These Israelites, however, in a little time, paid dear for thus rejecting the counsel of God against themselves. In about two years and a half after their refusing this grace, Shalmaneser, the king of Assyria, invaded the country, and laid siege to Samaria, their capital city, and, at the end of three years more, took it, and carried the whole nation away captive into Assyria and Media, because they obeyed not the voice of the Lord their God, but transgressed his covenant, and all that Moses, the servant of the Lord, commanded, and would not hear nor do it, 2 Kings xviii. 9-12.

Verses 11, 12. *Nevertheless, divers of Asher, &c.*—Here is not so much as one of Ephraim mentioned; yet some of that tribe are spoken of afterward as partaking of the passover, verse 18. It is likely that these, although at first they mocked at the message, yet afterward, upon consideration, followed the example of their brethren. *In Judah the hand of the Lord was to give them one heart*—God, by the power of his grace, inclined their hearts to a unanimous compliance with his and the king's will. And this is mentioned as the reason of this wonderful change wrought in these men, who had lately been given up to idolatry.

Verse 14. *They arose and took away the altars, &c.*—As soon as they came to Jerusalem, they began to show their zeal against idolatry, by throwing down the altars that Ahaz had erected in high places, either for sacrifice or burning incense, which were very many, (chap. xxviii. 24,) stamping them to powder, and then casting them into the brook Kidron. Thus, before they kept the feast, they purged out the old leaven.

Verse 15. *The priests and Levites were ashamed*

and sanctified themselves, and brought in A. M. 3278.
the burnt-offerings into the house of B. C. 726.
the LORD.

16 And they stood in ° their place after their manner, according to the law of Moses the man of God: the priests sprinkled the blood, which they received of the hand of the Levites.

17 For there were many in the congregation that were not sanctified: ° therefore the Levites had the charge of the killing of the passovers for every one that was not clean, to sanctify them unto the LORD.

18 For a multitude of the people, even ° many of Ephraim and Manasseh, Issachar and Zebulun, had not cleansed themselves, ° yet did they eat the passover otherwise than it was written. But Hezekiah prayed for them, saying, The good LORD pardon every one

° Heb. their standing.—° Chapter xxix. 34.—° Verse 11.
° Exod. xii. 43, &c.

—Their negligence and remissness being upbraided by the general forwardness of the people. The zeal which we observe in others, should make us ashamed of our own coldness, and quicken us not only to do our duty, but to do it with our might.

Verses 16, 17. *The priests sprinkled the blood—Of the sacrifices upon the altar; which they received of the hand of the Levites*—Who killed and flayed the sacrifices, which the priests, if they had been sanctified, should have done, as was observed on chap. xxix. 34. *For there were many in the congregation that were not sanctified*—Abundance of people that came to keep this passover were not clean according to the law, and therefore many more sacrifices were to be offered for their cleansing than would otherwise have been necessary: which was one reason why the Levites were employed in the work, for the priests were not of a number sufficient to perform this duty. The reader must observe, that besides the paschal-lamb, the offering of all the sacrifices, which were appointed to accompany it, are included in keeping the passover.

Verse 18. *A multitude of the people had not cleansed themselves*—Either they did not know, after such a long night of ignorance and superstition, what ceremonies were required, in order to their purification, or they had not time to use them. Yet having an eager and pious desire to commemorate their wonderful deliverance out of the Egyptian bondage, they were permitted, in their uncleanness, to eat the passover, lest they should be discouraged if they were denied it, in this their return to the true religion. *But Hezekiah prayed for them*—It was his zeal that had called them together in such haste, and he would not that they should fare the worse for being straitened for time in their preparation. He therefore thought himself concerned to be an intercessor for those that ate the passover otherwise

A. M. 3278. 19 *That* ¹ prepareth his heart to
B. C. 726.

seek God, the LORD God of his fathers, though *he be not cleansed* according to the purification of the sanctuary.

20 And the LORD hearkened to Hezekiah, and healed the people.

21 And the children of Israel *that were* ⁶ present at Jerusalem kept ² the feast of unleavened bread seven days with great gladness: and the Levites and the priests praised the LORD day by day, *singing* with ⁷ loud instruments unto the LORD.

22 And Hezekiah spake ⁸ comfortably unto all the Levites ³ that taught the good knowledge of the LORD: and they did eat throughout the feast seven days, offering peace-offerings, and ⁴ making confession to the LORD God of their fathers.

¹ Chap. xix. 3.—² Heb. *found*.—³ Exod. xii. 15; xiii. 6.
⁴ Heb. *instruments of strength*.—⁵ Heb. *to the heart of all, &c.*,
Isa. xl. 2.

than it was written. And he had confidence that God was so gracious that he would not, on account of the omission of some prescribed ceremony, be wroth with men whose hearts were upright before him.

Verse 19. *That prepareth his heart to seek God*—The great thing required in our attendance on God in his ordinances is, that we *prepare our hearts to seek him*; that the inward man, the spirit, be engaged; that we make heart-work of our religion. All is nothing without this. Hezekiah does not pray that this might be dispensed with, or that the want of other things might be pardoned or overlooked, where this was not. For this is *the one thing needful*, and God is not, cannot be sought acceptably, without it. But he prays that where this was, other deficiencies and omissions, especially such as were of an external and ritual nature, might be pardoned. *Though he be not cleansed according to the purification of the sanctuary*—With that purification which was required of them that came into God's sanctuary. So he calls it, to distinguish it from that internal purity which they are here acknowledged to have.

Verse 20. *The Lord hearkened to Hezekiah*—Was greatly pleased with his pious concern for the congregation; and, in answer to his prayer, *healed the people*—That is, pardoned their sin, and accepted them and their services, as if they had been clean.

Verse 21. *The Levites and the priests praised the Lord day by day*—All the seven days they praised him with songs and musical instruments, thus expressing their own, and exciting one another's joy in God, and thankfulness to him. Much of our time in our religious meetings should be spent in praising God.

Verse 22. *Hezekiah spake comfortably unto all the Levites*—Commended them for their care and

23 And the whole assembly took ⁹ counsel to keep ⁰ other seven days: ¹⁰ and they kept *other* seven days with gladness.

24 For Hezekiah king of Judah ¹¹ did ¹² give to the congregation a thousand bullocks and seven thousand sheep; and the princes gave to the congregation a thousand bullocks and ten thousand sheep: and a great number of priests ¹³ sanctified themselves.

25 And all the congregation of Judah, with the priests and the Levites, and all the congregation ¹⁴ that came out of Israel, and the strangers that came out of the land of Israel, and that dwelt in Judah, rejoiced.

26 So there was great joy in Jerusalem: for since the time of Solomon the son of David king of Israel *there was* not the like in Jerusalem.

27 ¶ Then the priests the Levites arose and

⁹ Chap. xvii. 9; xxxv. 3; Deut. xxxiii. 10.—¹⁰ Ezra x. 11.
¹¹ 1 Kings viii. 65.—¹² Heb. *lifted up, or, offered*.—¹³ Chapter
xxxv. 7, 8.—¹⁴ Chap. xxix. 34.—¹⁵ Verses 11, 18.

diligence, and thereby encouraged them to a cheerful and diligent attendance upon their holy ministrations, and to continue to instruct the people in their duty, promising, it is likely, to reward them for what they had already done. *That taught the good knowledge of the Lord*—Who by their office were to instruct and build up the people in the knowledge and fear of God; which is mentioned as the cause of his respect and kindness to them. Princes and magistrates, by encouraging faithful and laborious preachers of God's word, greatly promote the kingdom of God.

Verse 23. *They kept other seven days with gladness*—Not in the same manner as they had done the former, but in the solemn worship of God, by sacrifices, and prayers, and praises, and public instructions of that great congregation, *in the good knowledge of the Lord*; which was very necessary for the people, after so long and dismal a night of ignorance, superstition, and idolatry.

Verse 24. *Hezekiah did give a thousand bullocks, and seven thousand sheep*—First to God, to whom the parts appointed were offered in a way of thanksgiving; and then to the people, who feasted upon the relics, as the offerer used to do in peace-offerings: and Hezekiah, who was the offerer, gave away his right in the remains of the sacrifices to the people. Which generosity is the more considerable, because it was in the beginning of his reign, when he found the exchequer empty; and when he had been at great expense about cleansing and refitting the temple, and making preparations for this great feast. By this great liberality of the king and princes, God was honoured, the joy of the festival was kept up, and the strangers were encouraged to come again to Jerusalem.

Verse 27. *Then the priests the Levites arose, and*

A. M. 3278. 5 blessed the people: and their voice
B. C. 726. was heard, and their prayer came up

to ¹⁰ his holy dwelling-place, even unto A. M. 3278.
B. C. 726. heaven.

ε Num. vi. 23.

¹⁰ Heb. the habitation of his holiness, Psa. lxxviii. 5.

blessed the people—That is, those of the Levites who were priests also, for to them only this work belonged, 1 Chron. xxiii. 13. In performing this office, they were both the people's mouth to God, by way of prayer, and God's mouth to the people, by way of promise; for the blessing included both. And in it they testified both their desire of the people's welfare, and their dependance upon God and the word of his grace, to which they commended them. *And*

their prayer came up to his holy dwelling-place—The voice of the priests, when they thus blessed the people, as God had commanded, *was heard in heaven*. God said amen to their prayer, and perhaps gave some sensible token of the ratification of the blessing which they had pronounced. The prayer that comes up to heaven in a cloud of incense, will come down again to this earth in showers of blessings.

CHAPTER XXXI.

The remains of idolatry are destroyed, 1. Hezekiah provides work and maintenance for the priests and Levites, 2-4. The people bring in their dues abundantly, 5-10. Officers are appointed to dispose of them, 11-19. Hezekiah's sincerity, 20, 21.

A. M. 3278. NOW when all this was finished,
B. C. 726. all Israel that were ¹present went

offerings, to minister, and to give A. M. 3278.
B. C. 726. thanks, and to praise in the gates of the tents of the LORD.

out to the cities of Judah, and ^abrake the ²images into pieces, and cut down the groves, and threw down the high places and the altars out of all Judah and Benjamin, in Ephraim also and Manasseh, ³until they had utterly destroyed them all. Then all the children of Israel returned, every man to his possession, into their own cities.

³ He appointed also the king's portion of his substance for the burnt-offerings, *to wit*, for the morning and evening burnt-offerings, and the burnt-offerings for the sabbaths, and for the new-moons, and for the set feasts, as *it is written in the ⁴law of the LORD*.

² ¶ And Hezekiah appointed ^bthe courses of the priests and the Levites after their courses, every man according to his service, the priests and Levites ^cfor burnt-offerings and for peace-

⁴ Moreover, he commanded the people that dwelt in Jerusalem to give the ^eportion of the priests and the Levites, that they might be encouraged in ^fthe law of the LORD.

⁵ ¶ And as soon as the commandment ⁴came

¹ Heb. found.—² 2 Kings xviii. 4.—³ Heb. statues, Chap. xxx. 14.—⁴ Heb. until to make an end.—⁵ 1 Chron. xxiii. 6; xxiv. 1.

^e 1 Chron. xxiii. 30, 31.—^f Num. xxviii.; xxix.—^g Num. xviii. 8, &c.; Neh. xiii. 10.—^h Mal. ii. 7.—ⁱ Hebrew, brake forth.

NOTES ON CHAPTER XXXI.

Verse 1. *In Ephraim and Manasseh also*—Though these tribes were a part of Hoshea's kingdom, yet Hezekiah might direct this abolition of idolatry in them, either in virtue of the law of God, to which both Israel and Judah owed subjection, and which commanded the extirpation of these things, out of the whole land of Canaan; or by the special impulse and direction of God's Spirit, which puts men upon heroic and extraordinary actions, though not to be drawn into imitation; or out of a firm persuasion that his neighbour Hoshea, who had permitted his subjects to repair to the passover, would consent to, and approve of, what he did in this respect.

Verse 2. *In the gates of the tents of the Lord*—That is, within the gates of the house of the Lord: which is here called *tents*, either because all houses are often so called, (see Judg. xix. 9, and xx. 8; Psa. lxxix. 25,) or because the host of the Lord, the priests and Levites, encamped there, and kept their stations

and orders there by course: and perhaps also to intimate that it was shortly to be removed.

Verse 3. *The king's portion of his substance, &c.*—Which had hitherto been taken out of the treasures of the temple; but that he might ease the people in their present poverty, which his predecessor had brought upon them, and engage them to a more cheerful attendance upon God's service, he took the burden upon himself.

Verse 4. *That they might be encouraged in the law of the Lord*—Freed from worldly cares and distractions, and enabled to give up themselves entirely to the serious study of God's law, and to the instruction, and direction, and quickening of the people.

Verse 5. *As soon as the commandment came abroad*—Either, 1st, As soon as the report of this command of the king was known abroad in other parts; or, 2d, As soon as the king had enlarged and extended that command to all the parts of his kingdom, which

A. M. 3278. B. C. 726. abroad, the children of Israel brought in abundance ⁵ the first-fruits of corn, wine, and oil, and ⁶ honey, and of all the increase of the field; and the tithes of all *things* brought they in abundantly.

6 And concerning the children of Israel and Judah, that dwelt in the cities of Judah, they also brought in the tithes of oxen and sheep, and the ⁷ tithes of holy things which were consecrated unto the LORD their God, and laid *them* ⁸ by heaps.

7 In the third month they began to lay the foundation of the heaps, and finished *them* in the seventh month.

8 And when Hezekiah and the princes came and saw the heaps, they blessed the LORD, and his people Israel.

9 Then Hezekiah questioned with the priests and the Levites concerning the heaps.

10 And Azariah the chief priest of the house of Zadok answered him, and said, ¹ Since the people began to bring the offerings into the house of the LORD, we have had enough to eat, and have left plenty: for the LORD hath

⁵ Exod. xxii. 29; Neh. xiii. 12.—⁶ Or, *dates*.—⁷ Lev. xxvii. 30; Deut. xiv. 23.—⁸ Hebrew, *heaps, heaps*.—¹ Mal. iii. 10.

(verse 4) was confined to them that dwelt in Jerusalem. *Honey*—Or *dates*, as the Hebrew writers generally understand the word *דבש*, *debash*, in this place, a name which was given to them because of the sweetness of their taste, in some sort resembling honey. For the law requires no tithes but those of the fruits of trees, or of the earth, or of beasts.

Verses 6, 7. *They brought in the tithes of oxen and sheep*—They not only brought in the same tithes which the dwellers in Jerusalem did, namely, of corn, and wine, and oil, &c., which they had in their own storehouses in that city, but also oxen and sheep, which were more proper to the country; for under the term *cities of Judah*, are comprehended the suburbs and territories belonging to them. *And the tithes of holy things*—That is, of all holy things, which were consecrated to the LORD—Whether by vow, or voluntary promise, or otherwise; as the tithes of gain by merchandise, or spoils of war, Gen. xiv. 20, and xxviii. 22; Num. xxxi. 28–30. *And laid them by heaps*—What the priests and Levites had occasion for, they made use of, and the overplus was laid in heaps. *In the third month they began*—Of the sacred year, in which month their harvest began. *And finished them in the seventh month*—In which their harvest ended, and the feast of tabernacles was kept.

Verse 8. *They blessed the Lord*—Both for giving such plentiful provisions to his land, and for giving his people such liberal hearts. And they praised the people for their forwardness and faithfulness in it.

A. M. 3278. B. C. 726. blessed his people; and that which is left is this great store.

11 ¶ Then Hezekiah commanded to prepare ¹ chambers in the house of the LORD; and they prepared *them*,

12 And brought in the offerings, and the tithes, and the dedicated *things* faithfully: ² over which Cononiah the Levite was ruler, and Shimei his brother was the next.

13 And Jehiel, and Azariah, and Nahath, and Asahel, and Jerimoth, and Jozabad, and Eliel, and Ismachiah, and Mahath, and Benajah, were overseers ³ under the hand of Cononiah and Shimei his brother, at the commandment of Hezekiah the king, and Azariah the ruler of the house of God.

14 And Kore the son of Imnah the Levite, the porter toward the east, was over the free-will-offerings of God, to distribute the oblations of the LORD, and the most holy things.

15 And ⁴ next him were Eden, and Miniamin, and Jeshua, and Shemaiah, Amariah, and Shecaniah, in the ⁵ cities of the priests, in *their* ⁶ set office, to give to their brethren by courses,

² Or, *storehouses*.—³ Neh. xiii. 13.—⁴ Hebrew, *at the hand*.—⁵ Heb. *at his hand*.—⁶ Josh. xxi. 9.—⁷ Or, *trust*, 1 Chron. ix. 22

Verses 9, 10. *Hezekiah questioned with the priests, &c.*—How it came to pass that no more of their provision was spent, and that there remained yet such great heaps of it? *The chief priest answered, Since the people began to bring the offerings*—Which they did from the beginning of the harvest, according to the custom; *we have had enough to eat*—We have made use of all we had occasion for, for the maintenance of ourselves and families. And we have not hoarded these heaps for covetousness, but to show what plentiful provision God has made for us. *For the Lord hath blessed his people*—In an extraordinary degree.

Verse 13. *Were overseers under Cononiah and Shimei, &c.*—To dispose of those provisions by their direction, and to be accountable to them therein. *Azariah the ruler of the house of God*—Either the supreme ruler, the high-priest, or the chief ruler under him, and in his stead, being appointed by him to inspect the work.

Verses 14, 15. *The porter toward the east*—At the east gate of the Lord's house; of which see chap. xxiii. 5. *To distribute the oblations*—To the priests and Levites, to whom they were appropriated by God; and *the most holy things*—The remainders of the free-will-offerings, the sin-offerings, and trespass-offerings, and the show-bread; to see that all had a competent maintenance for themselves and their families. *And next him were Eden, &c.*—These were intrusted with receiving and distributing the several

A. M. 3278. as well to the great as to the small :
B. C. 726.

16 Besides their genealogy of males, from three years old and upward, *even* unto every one that entereth into the house of the LORD, his daily portion for their service in their charges according to their courses ;

17 Both to the genealogy of the priests by the house of their fathers, and the Levites ^m from twenty years old and upward, in their charges, by their courses ;

18 And to the genealogy of all their little ones, their wives, and their sons, and their daughters, through all the congregation : for in their ⁿ set office they sanctified themselves in holiness :

^m 1 Chron. xxiii. 24, 27.—ⁿ Or, *trust*.—^a Lev. xxv. 34 ;

portions belonging to the priests, who abode in their several cities, while their brethren came up to Jerusalem.

Verse 16. *From three years old and upward*—To whom a portion of these things was allotted, as is here implied. *Unto every one that entereth into the house of the Lord*—That were capable of entering thither and doing service there, which they were at twenty years old, as is expressed here, verse 17, and 1 Chron. xxiii. 24, through the whole company of the priests and Levites.

Verse 18. *For in their set office they sanctified themselves unto holiness*—This is alleged as a reason why their wives and children were provided for out of the holy things, because they sequestered themselves from worldly affairs, by which they might otherwise have provided for their families, and entirely devoted themselves to holy administrations.

Verse 19. *Also of the priests that were in the fields*—Care was taken of those that lived in the country, though at the greatest distance, as well as of those

19 Also of the sons of Aaron the A. M. 3278. priests, *which were* in ^a the fields of B. C. 726. the suburbs of their cities, in every several city, the men that were ^o expressed by name, to give portions to all the males among the priests, and to all that were reckoned by genealogies among the Levites.

20 ¶ And thus did Hezekiah throughout all Judah, and ^p wrought that *which was* good, and, right and truth, before the LORD his God.

21 And in every work that he began in the service of the house of God, and in the law, and in the commandments, to seek his God, he did *it* with all his heart, and prospered.

Num. xxxv. 2.—^o Verses 12–15.—^p 2 Kings xx. 5.

that lived in or near Jerusalem. And they that were not waiting in their courses, but at home with their families, had provision made for them, as if they had been at the house of God, by the care of the fore-named persons, who had the charge of the whole.

Verses 20, 21. *Thus did Hezekiah throughout all Judah*—His pious zeal was extended through his whole kingdom ; and all parts of the country, as well as those that lay next him, shared in the good fruits of his government. *And wrought that which was good, and right, and truth*—Whatever he thought was pleasing to God, conformable to the law, and profitable for his people, he performed with integrity of heart. *And in every work that he began he did it with all his heart, and prospered*—He prosecuted it with vigour, and brought all his good intentions to a good issue. And in all that he did in the service of the house of God, and in the government of his kingdom, he prospered. What is undertaken with a sincere and disinterested regard to the glory of God, will succeed to our own honour and comfort at last.

CHAPTER XXXII.

Sennacherib invading Judah, Hezekiah fortifies himself, 1–8. The insolent letters and messages sent by Sennacherib, 9–19. The destruction of his army, 20–23. Hezekiah's sickness, riches, and death, 24–33.

A. M. 3291. AFTER ^a these things, and the es-
B. C. 713. tablishment thereof, Sennacherib king of Assyria came and entered into Judah,

^a 2 Kings xviii. 13, &c. ; Isa. xxxvi. 1, &c.

NOTES ON CHAPTER XXXII.

Verse 1. *After these things, and the establishment thereof*—An emphatical preface, signifying, that notwithstanding all his zeal for God, God saw fit to exercise him with a sore trial. And God ordered it at this time, that he might have an opportunity of showing himself strong on the behalf of his returning people. It is possible we may be in the way of

and encamped against the fenced A. M. 3291. cities, and thought ¹ to win them for B. C. 713. himself.

¹ Hebrew, *to break them up*.

our duty, and yet meet with trouble and danger. God permits this, for the trial of our confidence in him, and the manifestation of his care over us. It was well ordered, however, by the Divine Providence, that this trouble did not come upon Hezekiah and his kingdom till the reformation was finished and established ; for, if it had come sooner, it might, and probably would, have put a stop to that good work.

A. M. 3291. 2 And when Hezekiah saw that
B. C. 713.

Sennacherib was come, and that ² he was purposed to fight against Jerusalem,

3 He took counsel with his princes and his mighty men to stop the waters of the fountains which *were* without the city: and they did help him.

4 So there was gathered much people together, who stopped all the fountains, and the brook that ³ ran through the midst of the land, saying, Why should the kings of Assyria come, and find much water?

5 Also ^b he strengthened himself, ^c and built up all the wall that was broken, and raised *it* up to the towers, and another wall without, and repaired ^d Millo in the city of David, and made ^e darts and shields in abundance.

6 And he set captains of war over the people, and gathered them together to him in the street of the gate of the city, and ⁵ spake comfortably to them, saying,

7 ^o Be strong and courageous, ^f be not afraid nor dismayed for the king of Assyria, nor for all the multitude that *is* with him: for ^g *there* be more with us than with him.

8 With him *is* an ^h arm of flesh; but ⁱ with us *is* the LORD our God to help us, and to fight our battles. And the people ⁶ rested them-

^a Hebrew, *his face was to war.*—^b Hebrew, *overflowed.*
^c Isaiah xxii. 9, 10.—^d Chapter xxv. 23.—^e 2 Samuel v. 9; 1 Kings ix. 24.—^f Or, *swords, or, weapons.*—^g Hebrew, *spake to their heart,* Chap. xxx. 22; Isa. xl. 2.—^h Deut. xxxi. 6.
ⁱ Chap. xx. 15.

Sennacherib, king of Assyria, came, and entered into Judah—He was now, as Nebuchadnezzar was afterward, the terror, and scourge, and great oppressor of that part of the world, who aimed to raise a boundless monarchy for himself, upon the ruins of all his neighbours. His predecessor, Shalmaneser, had lately made himself master of the kingdom of Israel, and carried the ten tribes captive; and Sennacherib thought, in like manner, to win Judah to himself. Thus pride and ambition put men upon grasping at universal dominion.

Verses 3, 4. *To stop the waters of the fountains*—To fill them up with earth and other things cast into them, that it might not be known there was any water there, and withal to draw the waters by secret passages and pipes to Jerusalem. *And the brook that ran through the midst of the land*—The brook Kidron, which being but small, except when much rain fell, they easily filled up the spring of it. *Saying, Why should the kings of Assyria find much water*—Which was scarce in that country, and the want of it might greatly distress the Assyrian army.

Verse 5. *He built up all the wall that was broken*

selfes upon the words of Hezekiah A. M. 3291.
king of Judah. B. C. 713.

9 ¶ ^k After this did Sennacherib B. C. 710.
king of Assyria send his servants to

Jerusalem, (but he *himself laid siege* against Lachish, and all his ⁷ power with him,) unto Hezekiah king of Judah, and unto all Judah that *were* at Jerusalem, saying,

10 ¹ Thus saith Sennacherib king of Assyria, Whereon do ye trust, that ye abide ⁸ in the siege in Jerusalem?

11 Doth not Hezekiah persuade you to give over yourselves to die by famine and by thirst, saying, ^m The LORD our God shall deliver us out of the hand of the king of Assyria?

12 ⁿ Hath not the same Hezekiah taken away his high places, and his altars, and commanded Judah and Jerusalem, saying, Ye shall worship before one altar, and burn incense upon it?

13 Know ye not what I and my fathers have done unto all the people of *other* lands? ^o were the gods of the nations of those lands any ways able to deliver their lands out of my hand?

14 Who *was there* among all the gods of those nations that my fathers utterly destroyed, that could deliver his people out of my hand,

^k 2 Kings vi. 16.—^l Jer. xvii. 5; 1 John iv. 4.—^m Chapter xiii. 12; Rom. viii. 31.—ⁿ Heb. *leaned.*—^o 2 Kings xviii. 17.
^p Hebrew, *dominion.*—^q 2 Kings xviii. 19.—^r Or, *in the strong hold.*—^s 2 Kings xviii. 30.—^t 2 Kings xviii. 22.—^u 2 Kings xviii. 33, 34, 35.

—Which Joash, king of Israel, had broken down, and which had not since been repaired. *And raised it up to the towers*—Either as high as the towers, or tops of the wall; or from the gate of Ephraim as far as the two towers, which were at the corner-gate, having been raised there for the defence of it. So that the wall, that had been broken down, was all rebuilt. See chap. xxv. 23. *And repaired Millo*—Of which see note on 1 Kings ix. 15.

Verses 9, 10. *After this did Sennacherib send his servants to Jerusalem*—Of this and the following verses, see notes on 2 Kings xviii. 17, &c., and xix. 10, &c. *Whereon do ye trust, that ye abide in the siege, &c.*—Or rather, why do ye stay till Jerusalem is besieged; or, resolve to stand a siege? For the city was not yet besieged.

Verses 11, 12. *To give over yourselves to die by famine, &c.*—It appears by this he did not intend to storm the city, but to keep them pent up till they were starved. *Hath not Hezekiah taken away his high places, &c.*—He speaks thus through his ignorance of the divine law, which enjoined them to worship only at Jerusalem.

A. M. 3294. that your God should be able to deliver
B. C. 710. you out of my hand?

15 Now therefore ^p let not Hezekiah deceive you, nor persuade you on this manner, neither yet believe him: for no god of any nation or kingdom was able to deliver his people out of my hand, and out of the hand of my fathers: how much less shall your God deliver you out of my hand?

16 And his servants spake yet *more* against the LORD God, and against his servant Hezekiah.

17 ^q He wrote also letters to rail on the LORD God of Israel, and to speak against him, saying, ^r As the gods of the nations of *other* lands have not delivered their people out of my hand, so shall not the God of Hezekiah deliver his people out of my hand.

18 ^s Then they cried with a loud voice, in the Jews' speech, unto the people of Jerusalem ^t that *were* on the wall, to affright them, and to trouble them; that they might take the city.

19 And they spake against the God of Jerusalem, as against the gods of the people of the earth, *which were* ^u the work of the hands of man.

^p 2 Kings xviii. 29.—^q 2 Kings xix. 9.—^r 2 Kings xix. 12.
^s 2 Kings xviii. 28.—^t 2 Kings xviii. 26, 27, 28.—^u 2 Kings
xix. 18.—^v 2 Kings xix. 15.—^w 2 Kings xix. 2, 4.—^x 2 Kings

Verse 15. *How much less shall your God deliver you*—Seeing I have destroyed so many nations, and some of them stronger than you, in spite of all their gods, it is not probable that your God should defend you, inasmuch as none of the others could defend their worshippers.

Verses 18, 19. *That they might take the city*—By a surrender of it into their hands. *They spake against the God of Jerusalem, as against the gods of the people*—They set the God of Israel, the Creator of heaven and earth, upon the same footing with the idols of the heathen.

Verse 21. *The Lord sent an angel*—The Jewish comment, termed the Targum, says, The Word of the Lord (the Eternal Word) sent Gabriel to do this execution, and that it was done with lightning, and in the passover night, the same night wherein the firstborn in Egypt were slain. *Which cut off the mighty men, and the leaders and captains*—With a vast number of common soldiers, 2 Kings xix. 35. *They that came forth of his own bowels slew him*—See 2 Kings xix. 37. And with him the Assyrian empire began to fall, and never recovered its former strength. For the next year after Sennacherib's death, the Medes revolted, being encouraged to it, no doubt, by this great loss at Jerusalem. And by their example, several other nations fell off from the Assyrians, and asserted their independence.

20 ¶ ^x And for this *cause* Hezekiah the king, and ^y the Prophet Isaiah the son of Amoz, prayed and cried to heaven.

21 ^z And the LORD sent an angel, ^{About} which cut off all the mighty men of B. C. 710. valour, and the leaders and captains in the camp of the king of Assyria. So he returned with shame of face to his own land. And when he was come into the house of his god, they that came forth of his own bowels ^a slew him there with the sword.

22 Thus the LORD saved Hezekiah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem from the hand of Sennacherib the king of Assyria, and from the hand of all *other*, and guided them on every side.

23 And many brought gifts unto the LORD to Jerusalem, and ^b presents ^c to B. C. 710. Hezekiah king of Judah: so that he was ^d magnified in the sight of all nations from thenceforth.

24 ¶ ^e In those days Hezekiah was B. C. 713. sick to the death, and prayed unto the LORD: and he spake unto him, and he ^f gave him a sign.

25 But Hezekiah ^g rendered not again according to the benefit *done* unto him; for

xix. 35, &c.—^h Heb. *made him fall*.—ⁱ Heb. *precious things*.
^a Chap. xvii. 5.—^b Chap. i. 1.—^c 2 Kings xx. 1; Isa. xxxviii. 1.—^d Or, *wrought a miracle for him*.—^e Psa. cxvii. 12.

Verses 22, 23. *Thus the Lord saved Hezekiah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem*—By this work of wonder he was glorified as the Protector and Saviour of his people; *from the hand of Sennacherib, and of all others*—For such a deliverance as this was an earnest of great mercy in store for them; *and guided them on every side*—That is, defended them from all their enemies; just as a shepherd doth his sheep, which he leads into places of safety. *And many brought gifts unto the Lord*—When they were convinced he had such wonderful power, having seen it exerted for the defence of his people, strangers were thereby induced to supplicate his favour, and those who had been enemies to him and his people, to deprecate his wrath; and both brought gifts to his temple, in token of their desire of the former, or fear of the latter. *And presents to Hezekiah*—In token of the esteem and honour in which they held him, and to obtain an interest in him. *So that he was magnified in the sight of all nations*—Or, *of all those nations*; namely, the nations which were not very remote from Canaan, and heard of these things.

Verse 25. *Hezekiah rendered not again according to the benefit done him*—Was not humble, grateful, and devoted to God, as in reason and duty he ought to have been, considering God's marvellous interpositions in his favour, and the great and extraordinary deliverances he had wrought out for him and his

A. M. 3291. * his heart was lifted up: (therefore B. C. 713. there was wrath upon him, and upon Judah and Jerusalem.

26 * Notwithstanding, Hezekiah humbled himself for ¹² the pride of his heart, both he and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, so that the wrath of the LORD came not upon them ^h in the days of Hezekiah.

27 ¶ And Hezekiah had exceeding much riches and honour: and he made himself treasuries for silver, and for gold, and for precious stones, and for spices, and for shields, and for all manner of ¹³ pleasant jewels:

28 Storehouses also for the increase of corn, and wine, and oil; and stalls for all manner of beasts, and cotes for flocks.

29 Moreover, he provided him cities, and possessions of flocks and herds in abundance: for ⁱ God had given him substance very much.

30 * This same Hezekiah also stopped the

* Chapter xxvi. 16; Hab. ii. 4.—^f Chap. xxiv. 18.—^g Jer. xxxi. 18, 19.—^h Hebrew, *the lifting up*.—ⁱ 2 Kings xx. 19.
¹² Heb. *instruments of desire*.—¹³ 2 Chron. xxix. 12.—¹⁴ Isa. xxi. 9, 11.—¹⁵ Heb. *interpreters*.

kingdom; but God's favour to him became the food and fuel of his pride. *For his heart was lifted up*—On account of that prodigious victory over the Assyrians, his miraculous restoration from sickness, and the honour since done him by an embassy from the great king of Babylon. All which, probably, raised in him too great an opinion of himself, as if these things were done for his piety and virtues. And instead of walking humbly with God, and giving the glory of all to him, he took, in part at least, the honour to himself, and vainly showed his riches and precious treasures to the Babylonish ambassadors, 2 Kings xx. 12, &c. *Therefore there was wrath upon him*—For pride is a sin which God particularly hates, especially in his own people; and they that exalt themselves must expect to be abused, and put under humbling providences. Thus wrath came on David for his pride in numbering the people. *And upon Judah and Jerusalem*—Who were justly punished for Hezekiah's sin, because they imitated him in it, as they confess in the next verse.

Verse 26. *Hezekiah humbled himself for the pride of his heart*—For the sins of the heart, though they should never show themselves in any external way, either by word or deed, must be acknowledged to God and repented of, if we would find mercy; and self-humiliation is a necessary branch of repentance. *Both he and the inhabitants of Jerusalem*—Who humbled themselves with Hezekiah, either because they were conscious they had been guilty of the same sin, or, at least, feared they might share in the punishment. *So that the wrath of the Lord came not upon them in the days of Hezekiah*—In his days there were peace and truth; so much doth repent-

upper water-course of Gihon, and A. M. 3291. brought it straight down to the west B. C. 713. side of the city of David. And Hezekiah prospered in all his works.

31 ¶ Howbeit, in the business of B. C. 712. the ¹⁴ ambassadors of the princes of Babylon, who ¹ sent unto him to inquire of the wonder that was done in the land, God left him, to ^m try him, that he might know all *that was* in his heart.

32 ¶ Now the rest of the acts of Hezekiah, and his ¹⁵ goodness, behold, they are written in ⁿ the vision of Isaiah the prophet, the son of Amoz, and in the ^o book of the kings of Judah and Israel.

33 ^p And Hezekiah slept with his B. C. 698. fathers, and they buried him in the ¹⁶ chiefest of the sepulchres of the sons of David: and all Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem did him ^q honour at his death: and Manasseh his son reigned in his stead.

¹² 2 Kings xx. 12; Isaiah xxxix. 1.—^m Deuteronomy viii. 2.
¹³ Heb. *kindnesses*.—ⁿ Isa. xxxvi.; xxxvii.; xxxviii.; xxxix.
^o 2 Kings xviii.; xix.; xx.—^p 2 Kings xx. 21.—¹⁴ Or, *highest*.—^q Prov. x. 7.

ance avail to put by, or at least to put off, the tokens of God's anger.

Verse 29. *He provided him cities*—He repaired, fortified, and beautified them, for the honour and safety of his kingdom. *And possessions of flocks and herds in abundance*—The riches of those countries consisted chiefly in abundance of cattle.

Verse 30. *Hezekiah stopped the upper water-course of Gihon*—A rivulet near Jerusalem, consisting of two streams, the upper, which was brought into one pool, called *the upper pool*, (Isa. vii. 3,) and the lower, which was brought into another, called *the lower pool*, Isa. xxii. 9. The former he diverted, and brought by pipes into Jerusalem, which was a work of great art and labour. *And brought it straight down to the city of David*—Whereas before it fetched a compass, and therefore might have been beneficial to the Assyrian host.

Verse 31. *To inquire of the wonder done in the land*—Either the destruction of the Assyrians, or the going back of the sun. These miracles were wrought to alarm and awaken a stupid, careless world, and to turn them from dumb and lame idols to the living God. *God left him*—To himself, and suffered Satan to try him, that he might know he had infirmities and sins as well as virtues. O, what need have great men, and good men, and useful men, to study their own follies and infirmities, and to beg earnestly of God, that he would hide pride from them!

Verse 33. *All Judah did him honour at his death*—They buried him in the chiefest of the sepulchres, made as great burning for him as for Asa; or, which is a much greater honour, made great lamentation

for him, as they afterward did for Josiah. Though it is to be feared that the generality of the people did not comply with those of their kings, who were pious, in their endeavours to reform the nation; yet they could not but praise those endeavours, and the memory of those kings was blessed among them. It is a debt we owe to those who have been eminently useful in their day, to do them honour at their death, when they are out of the reach of flattery, and we have seen the end of their conversation.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

The wicked reign of Manasseh, 1-10. His captivity, prayer, and reformation, 11-17. The conclusion of his reign, 18-20. The wicked reign and death of Amon, 21-25.

A. M. 3306. B. C. 698. **MANASSEH** ^a was twelve years old when he began to reign, and he reigned fifty and five years in Jerusalem:

2 But did that which was evil in the sight of the LORD, like unto the ^b abominations of the heathen, whom the LORD had cast out before the children of Israel.

3 For ¹ he built again the high places which Hezekiah his father had ^o broken down; and he reared up altars for Baalim, and ^d made groves, and worshipped ^o all the host of heaven, and served them.

4 Also he built altars in the house of the LORD, whereof the LORD had said, ^f In Jerusalem shall my name be for ever.

5 And he built altars for all the host of heaven ^g in the two courts of the house of the LORD.

6 ^b And he caused his children to pass through the fire in the valley of the son of Hinnom: ⁱ also he observed times, and used enchantments, and used witchcraft, and ^k dealt with a familiar spirit, and with wizards: he wrought much evil in the sight of the LORD, to provoke him to anger.

^a 2 Kings xxi. 1, &c. — ^b Deut. xviii. 9; 2 Chron. xxviii. 3. ¹ Heb. he returned and built. — ^c 2 Kings xviii. 4; Chap. xxx. 14; xxxi. 1; xxxii. 12. — ^d Deut. xvi. 21. — ^e Deut. xvii. 3. ^f Deut. xii. 11; 1 Kings viii. 29; ix. 3; Chap. vi. 6; vii. 16. ^g Chap. iv. 9.

NOTES ON CHAPTER XXXIII.

Verse 1. *Manasseh was twelve years old, &c.*—This and the following verses, to verse 11, are taken out of 2 Kings xxi. 1, &c., where the reader will find them explained.

Verse 11. *The Lord brought upon them the captains of the host of the king of Assyria*—Some suppose that Esar-haddon, the successor of Sennacherib, king of Assyria, is here meant, and that, in consequence of the royal family failing in Babylon, he found means to bring that kingdom under his yoke again; or that, by force of arms, or some other means, he recovered it from Merodach-Baladan. They say that he held it thirteen years, and that it was during this time that Manasseh was taken and

7 And ¹ he set a carved image, the ^{A. M. 3306. B. C. 698.} idol which he had made, in the house of God, of which God had said to David and to Solomon his son, In ^m this house and in Jerusalem, which I have chosen before all the tribes of Israel, will I put my name for ever:

8 ^a Neither will I any more remove the foot of Israel from out of the land which I have appointed for your fathers; so that they will take heed to do all that I have commanded them, according to the whole law, and the statutes and the ordinances by the hand of Moses.

9 So Manasseh made Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem to err, and to do worse than the heathen, whom the LORD had destroyed before the children of Israel.

10 ¶ And the LORD spake to Manasseh, and to his people: but they would not hearken.

11 ^o Wherefore the LORD brought ^{B. C. 677.} upon them the captains of the host ² of the king of Assyria, which took Manasseh among the thorns, and ^p bound him with ³ fetters, and carried him to Babylon.

^a Lev. xviii. 21; Deut. xviii. 10; 2 Kings xxiii. 10; Chap. xxviii. 3; Ezk. xxiii. 37, 39. — ¹ Deut. xviii. 10, 11. — ² 2 Kings xxiv. 6. — ³ 2 Kings xxi. 7. — ^m Psa. cxxxii. 14. — ⁿ 2 Sam. vii. 10. — ^o Deut. xxviii. 36; Job xxxvi. 8. — ^p Hebrew, which were the king's. — ^q Psa. cvii. 10, 11. — ^r Or, chains.

carried captive to Babylon. Others think it more probable that the king of Babylon is here called the king of Assyria, because he had added Assyria to his empire, and that having been informed by his ambassadors of the great riches which were in Hezekiah's treasures at Jerusalem, and being assured of Manasseh's degeneracy from the piety of his father, and from that God whose power alone made Hezekiah formidable, he thought this a fit season to invade Manasseh's kingdom, which the Jews say he did, in the twenty-second year of his reign. *Which took Manasseh among the thorns*—In some thicket where he thought to have hid himself from the Assyrians till he could make an escape: or, as the Hebrew כְּחוֹחִים, *bachochim*, may be rendered, with

A. M. 3327. B. C. 677. 12 And when he was in affliction, he besought the LORD his God, and humbled himself greatly before the God of his fathers,

13 And prayed unto him: and he was entreated of him, and heard his supplication, and brought him again to Jerusalem into his kingdom. Then Manasseh knew that the LORD he was God.

14 ¶ Now after this, he built a wall without the city of David, on the west side of Gihon, in the valley, even to the entering in at the fish-gate, and compassed about Ophel, and

¶ 1 Pet. v. 6.—1 Chron. v. 20; Ezra viii. 23.—Psa. ix. 16; Dan. iv. 25.—1 Kings i. 33.

hooks, metaphorically speaking; or, in his forts, that is, in one of them.

Verse 12. *When he was in affliction he besought the Lord his God*—Being “deprived of his authority and liberty, and secluded from his evil counsellors and companions, and from all his pleasures, in chains, and in a prison, without any other prospect than of ending his days in that wretched situation, he had leisure to reflect on what had passed. He then, no doubt, recollected the honour, prosperity, and deliverances with which his father had been favoured; his own good education, with the instruction and warnings of the prophets; and his atrocious, multiplied, and daring crimes: and he remembered that his miseries had been foretold by his faithful monitors. Thus, by the special grace of God, his solitude and affliction brought him to view his own conduct and character in another light than before, and he began to cry for mercy and deliverance, *humbling himself greatly before the God of his fathers.*”—Scott. Bishop Hall remarks, from this verse, the truth of that saying of the prophet, *Affliction giveth understanding.* “If the cross bear us not to heaven,” says he, “nothing can. What use were there of the grain, but for the edge of the sickle, wherewith it is cut down; the stroke of the flail, wherewith it is beaten; the weight and attrition of the mill, wherewith it is crushed; the fire of the oven, wherewith it is baked? Say now, Manasseh, with that grand-father of thine, *It is good for me that I have been afflicted; thine iron was more precious to thee than thy gold; thy jail was a more happy lodging to thee than thy palace; Babylon was a better school to thee than Jerusalem.* How foolish are we to frown upon our afflictions! These, how severe soever, are our best friends: they are not indeed for our pleasure, they are for our profit; their issue makes them worthy of a welcome. What do we care how bitter that potion is which brings us health?”

Verse 13. *Then Manasseh knew that the Lord he was God*—He was convinced, by his own experience, of God's power, justice, and goodness; that Jehovah alone was the true God, and not those idols which he had worshipped, by which he had received

raised it up a very great height, and put captains of war in all the fenced cities of Judah.

A. M. 3327. B. C. 677.

15 And he took away the strange gods, and the idol out of the house of the LORD, and all the altars that he had built in the mount of the house of the LORD, and in Jerusalem, and cast them out of the city.

16 And he repaired the altar of the LORD, and sacrificed thereon peace-offerings and thank-offerings, and commanded Judah to serve the LORD God of Israel.

17 Nevertheless, the people did sacrifice still

¶ Chap. xxvii. 3.—Or, the tower.—Verses 3, 5, 7.—Lev. vii. 12.—Chap. xxxii. 12.

great hurt and no good. He might have known this at a less expense, if he would have given due attention and credit to the word written and preached: but it was better to pay thus dear for the knowledge of God, than perish in ignorance and unbelief.

Verse 14. *After this he built a wall without the city of David*—He repaired and strengthened that wall which Hezekiah had built, (chap. xxxii. 5,) and which, possibly, the king of Assyria, or of Babylon rather, when he last took Jerusalem, had caused to be thrown down, either wholly or in part. *On the west side of Gihon*—On the west side of the city of David, to which Hezekiah had brought the water-course down, mentioned chap. xxxii. 30, into the great pool which he had made to receive it: and possibly this wall was built to secure the free use of it to the citizens, when they should be distressed or besieged by an enemy.

Verses 15, 16. *He took away the strange gods*—The images of them, and that idol, whatever it was, which he had set up with so much solemnity in the house of the Lord. *And all the altars*—The idolatrous altars, as detestable things, loathing them as much, it is to be hoped, as ever he had loved them. *And he repaired the altar of the Lord*—Which had either been abused or broken down by some of the idolatrous priests, or at least neglected, and was therefore gone out of repair. *And sacrificed thereon peace-offerings*—To implore God's favour; and *thank-offerings*—To praise him for his deliverance. *And commanded Judah to serve the Lord*—Using his power to reform his people, as he had before abused it to corrupt them. Thus he brought forth fruit meet for repentance, and endeavoured, as far as he could, to repair the injuries which he had done to the cause of God by his impious commands, verse 9. Observe, reader, those that truly repent of their sins, will not only return to God themselves, but will do all they can to bring those back to him that have, by their example, been seduced and drawn away from him.

Verse 17. *Nevertheless, the people did sacrifice still, &c.*—“Rabbi Kimchi observes very well here, that though Manasseh's repentance might be sincere, yet it was attended with a melancholy circumstance,

A. M. 3327. in the high places, yet unto the LORD
B. C. 677. their God only.

18 ¶ Now the rest of the acts of Manasseh, and his prayer unto his God, and the words of ^a the seers that spake to him in the name of the LORD God of Israel, behold, they are written in the book of the kings of Israel.

19 His prayer also, and how God was entreated of him, and all his sin, and his trespass, and the places wherein he built high places, and set up groves and graven images, before he was humbled: behold, they are written among the sayings of ^b the seers.

20 ¶ ^b So Manasseh slept with his fathers, and they buried him in his own house: and Amon his son reigned in his stead.

^a 1 Sam. ix. 9. — ^b Or, Hosai. — ^c 2 Kings xxi. 18. — ^d 2 Kings xxi. 19, &c.

which ought to sound in the ear of every one invested with power. His example and authority easily seduced his people to idolatry; but his royal mandate was unable to reclaim them."—Dodd. He could not carry the reformation so far as he had carried the corruption. It is an easy thing to debauch men's manners; but not so easy to reform them again.

Verse 18. *The words of the seers that spake to him in the name of the Lord*—The reproofs they gave him for his sin, and their exhortations to repentance. Let sinners consider, that how little notice soever they take of them, an account is kept of the words of the seers, that speak to them from God, to admonish them of their sins, and warn them of their danger, and call them to their duty, which words will be produced against them in the great day. *They are written in the books of the kings of Israel*—Of Judah, often called Israel. He speaks not of the books of Kings, for these things are not mentioned there, but of their public records, whence the most important things were taken by the prophets, and put into those canonical books.

Verse 19. *His prayer also*—Which is twice mentioned as remarkable. We have a prayer which, it is pretended, he made in prison. The church does not receive it as canonical; but it has a place among the apocryphal pieces, and, in our collection, stands before the books of Maccabees. The Greek church has received it into its book of prayers, and it is there sometimes used as a devout form, and which contains nothing in it deserving censure. *And how God was entreated of him*—Which was written for the generations to come, that the people that should be created might praise the Lord, for his readiness to receive returning prodigals. *They are written among the sayings of the seers*—To those seers that spake to him, (verse 18,) to reprove him for his sin, he sent his confession, when he repented, to be inserted in their memoirs, as a token of his gratitude to them for their kindness in reproving him. Thus it

21 ¶ ^c Amon was two and twenty years old when he began to reign, and reigned two years in Jerusalem. A. M. 3327. B. C. 677.

22 But he did that which was evil in the sight of the LORD, as did Manasseh his father: for Amon sacrificed unto all the carved images which Manasseh his father had made, and served them; 23 And humbled not himself before the LORD, ^d as Manasseh his father had humbled himself; but Amon ^e trespassed more and more.

24 ^e And his servants conspired against him, and slew him in his own house.

25 ¶ But the people of the land slew all them that had conspired against King Amon; and the people of the land made Josiah his son king in his stead. B. C. 641.

^d Verse 12. — ^e Hebrew, multiplied trespass. — ^f 2 Kings xxi. 23, 24.

becomes penitents to take shame to themselves, and to give thanks to their reprovers, and warning to others.

Verse 20. *And they buried him in his own house*—Not in the sepulchres of the kings. He was buried privately, and nothing of that honour was done him, at his death, that was done to his father. Penitents may recover their comfort sooner than their credit.

Verse 22. *He did that which was evil, as did Manasseh his father*—That is, as Manasseh had done in the days of his apostacy. They who think the wickedness of Amon an evidence that Manasseh did not truly repent, forget how many good kings had wicked sons. Manasseh, however, seems to have been very deficient in this after his repentance, that when he cast out the images, he did not utterly deface and destroy them, according to the law, which required them to burn the images with fire, Deut. vii. 5. How necessary that law was, this instance shows; for the carved images being only thrown by, and not burned, Amon, knowing where to find them, soon set them up, and sacrificed to them.

Verse 23. *And humbled not himself, &c.*—He fell, like his father, but did not rise again like him. It is not so much sin, as impenitence in sin, that ruins men; not so much that they have offended, as that they do not humble themselves for, and forsake their offences; not the disease, but the neglect of the remedy. *But Amon trespassed more and more*—Increased in wickedness of every kind, and especially in his attachment to various and abominable idolatries. They that were joined to idols, generally grew more and more mad upon them.

Verse 24. *His servants conspired against him*—He rebelled against God, and his own servants rebelled against him, and that when he had reigned but two years. Thus, though they were wicked, God was righteous. Perhaps when he sinned, as his father did, in the beginning of his days, he promised himself that he would repent, as his father had done,

in the latter end of his days. But if so, he was wretchedly mistaken, being cut off when he was young. And his case shows what madness it is to presume upon repenting and turning to God when

we are old. Reader, behold, now is the accepted time! let it be to thee the day of salvation! remember, thou knowest not what a day may bring forth. To-day, then, hear his voice, and harden not thy heart.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

The general character of Josiah, 1, 2. He roots out idolatry, 3-7. Repairs the temple, 8-13. Rends his clothes on hearing the book of the law, and sends to inquire of God, 14-22. Huldah foretells the destruction of Jerusalem, 23-28. Josiah and the people renew their covenant with God, 29-33.

A. M. 3363. B. C. 611. **JOSIAH** ^a was eight years old when he began to reign, and he reigned in Jerusalem one and thirty years.

2 And he did *that which was* right in the sight of the LORD, and walked in the ways of David his father, and declined *neither* to the right hand nor to the left.

B. C. 634. 3 ¶ For in the eighth year of his reign, while he was yet young, he began to ^b seek after the God of David his father: and in the twelfth year he began ^c to purge Judah and Jerusalem ^d from the high places, and the groves, and the carved images, and the molten images.

4 ^e And they brake down the altars of Baalim in his presence; and the ^f images, that *were* on high above them, he cut down; and the groves, and the carved images, and the molten images, he brake in pieces, and made dust *of them*, ^g and strewed *it* upon the ^h graves of them that had sacrificed unto them.

5 And he ⁱ burnt the bones of the priests upon their altars, and cleansed Judah and Jerusalem.

6 And *so did he* in the cities of Manasseh, and Ephraim, and Simeon, even unto Naphtali, with their ^j mattocks round about.

A. M. 3370. B. C. 634. 7 And when he had broken down the altars and the groves, and had

^k beaten the graven images ^l into powder, and cut down all the idols throughout all the land of Israel, he returned to Jerusalem.

8 ¶ Now ^m in the eighteenth year of his reign, when he had purged the ⁿ land, and the house, he sent Shaphan the son of Azaliah, and Maaseiah the governor of the city, and Joah the son of Joahaz the recorder, to repair the house of the LORD his God.

9 And when they came to Hilkiah the high-priest, they delivered ^o the money that was brought into the house of God, which the Levites that kept the doors had gathered of the hand of Manasseh and Ephraim, and of all the remnant of Israel, and of all Judah and Benjamin; and they returned to Jerusalem.

10 And they put *it* in the hand of the workmen that had the oversight of the house of the LORD, and they gave it to the workmen that wrought in the house of the LORD, to repair and mend the house:

11 Even to the artificers and builders gave they *it*, to buy hewn stone, and timber for couplings, and ^p to floor the houses which the kings of Judah had destroyed.

^a 2 Kings xxii. 1, &c.—^b Chap. xv. 2.—^c 1 Kings xiii. 2. ^d Chap. xxxiii. 17, 22.—^e Leviticus xxvi. 30; 2 Kings xxiii. 4. ^f Or, *sun-images*.—^g 2 Kings xxiii. 4.

^h Heb. *face of the graves*.—ⁱ 1 Kings xiii. 2.—^j Or, *mauls*, ^k Deut. ix. 21.—^l Heb. *to make powder*.—^m 2 Kings xxii. 3. ⁿ 2 Kings xii. 4, &c.—^o Or, *to rafter*.

NOTES ON CHAPTER XXXIV.

Verse 1. *Josiah was eight years old when he began to reign*—The reader will find the principal parts of this chapter explained at large in the notes on 2 Kings xxii. and xxiii., to which he is referred.

Verse 3. *While he was yet young*—In the sixteenth year of his age; when he was entering into the age of temptation, and had the administration of his kingdom wholly in his own power, and none to restrain him, even then he begins to be religious in good earnest.

Verse 6. *Even unto Naphtali*—Which was in the

utmost borders of the kingdom of Israel. For it must be remembered, that the ten tribes were now gone into captivity; and those who were come in their stead were weak and few, and not able to withstand the power of Josiah.

Verses 8-11. *When he had purged the land and the house*—The house of God, called the house, by way of eminence. *And they returned to Jerusalem*—That is, the Levites, who had gone abroad through all Josiah's kingdom to gather money for this use, and now came with it to Jerusalem to lodge it in the treasuries of the Lord's house. *To floor the houses*

A. M. 3380.
B. C. 624.

12 And the men did the work faithfully: and the overseers of them were Jahath and Obadiah, the Levites, of the sons of Merari; and Zechariah and Meshullam, of the sons of the Kohathites, to set it forward; and other of the Levites, all that could skill of instruments of music.

13 Also they were over the bearers of burdens, and were overseers of all that wrought the work in any manner of service: ¹ and of the Levites there were scribes, and officers, and porters.

14 ¶ And when they brought out the money that was brought into the house of the LORD, Hilkiah the priest ^m found a book of the law of the LORD given by ⁶ Moses.

15 And Hilkiah answered and said to Shaphan the scribe, I have found the book of the law in the house of the LORD. And Hilkiah delivered the book to Shaphan.

16 And Shaphan carried the book to the king, and brought the king word back again, saying, All that was committed ⁷ to thy servants, they do it.

17 And they have ⁸ gathered together the money that was found in the house of the LORD, and have delivered it into the hand of the overseers, and to the hand of the workmen.

18 Then Shaphan the scribe told the king, saying, Hilkiah the priest hath given me a book. And Shaphan read ⁹ it before the king.

19 And it came to pass, when the king had heard the words of the law, that he rent his clothes.

20 And the king commanded Hilkiah, and Ahikam the son of Shaphan, and ¹⁰ Abdon the son of Micah, and Shaphan the scribe, and Asaiah a servant of the king's, saying,

21 Go, inquire of the LORD for me, and for them that are left in Israel, and in Judah, concerning the words of the book that is found: for great is the wrath of the LORD that is poured

¹¹ 1 Chron. xxiii. 4, 5. — ^m 2 Kings xxii. 8, &c. — ⁶ Heb. by the hand of. — ⁷ Heb. to the hand of. — ⁸ Heb. poured out, or, melted. — ⁹ Heb. in it.

which the kings of Judah had destroyed—The chambers adjoining to the temple, or within the courts.

Verse 12. All that could skill of instruments of music—All these, here named, were skilful in instruments of music—Which may be here mentioned, to intimate, that as they were skilful, so they were

A. M. 3380.
B. C. 624

out upon us, because our fathers have not kept the word of the LORD, to do after all that is written in this book.

22 And Hilkiah, and they that the king had appointed, went to Huldah the prophetess, the wife of Shallum the son of ⁿ Tikvath, the son of ¹¹ Hasrah, keeper of the ¹² wardrobe; (now she dwelt in Jerusalem ¹³ in the college;) and they spake to her to that effect.

23 ¶ And she answered them, Thus saith the LORD God of Israel, Tell ye the man that sent you to me,

24 Thus saith the LORD, Behold, I will bring evil upon this place, and upon the inhabitants thereof, even all the curses that are written in the book which they have read before the king of Judah:

25 Because they have forsaken me, and have burned incense unto other gods, that they might provoke me to anger with all the works of their hands; therefore my wrath shall be poured out upon this place, and shall not be quenched.

26 And as for the king of Judah, who sent you to inquire of the LORD, so shall ye say unto him, Thus saith the LORD God of Israel concerning the words which thou hast heard;

27 Because thy heart was tender, and thou didst humble thyself before God when thou heardest his words against this place, and against the inhabitants thereof, and humbledst thyself before me, and didst rend thy clothes, and weep before me; I have even heard thee also, saith the LORD.

28 Behold, I will gather thee to thy fathers, and thou shalt be gathered to thy grave in peace, neither shall thine eyes see all the evil that I will bring upon this place, and upon the inhabitants of the same. So they brought the king word again.

29 ¶ ^o Then the king sent and gathered together all the elders of Judah and Jerusalem.

30 And the king went up into the house of the

¹⁰ Or, Achbor, 2 Kings xxii. 12. — ¹¹ Or, Harhas. — ¹² Heb. garments. — ¹³ Or, in the school, or, in the second part. — ^o 2 Kings xxiii. 1, &c.

exercised in both employments, and did successively oversee the work, and praise God with their voices and instruments.

Verse 19. When the king had heard the words he rent his clothes—Were the things contained in Scripture new to us, as they were here to Josiah, surely they would make deeper impressions upon us than

A. M. 3380. LORD, and all the men of Judah and B. C. 624. the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and the priests, and the Levites, and all the people, ¹⁴great and small: and he read in their ears all the words of the book of the covenant that was found in the house of the LORD.

31 And the king stood in his ^pplace, and made a covenant before the LORD, to walk after the LORD, and to keep his commandments, and his testimonies, and his statutes, with all his heart, and with all his soul, to perform the words of the covenant which are written in this book.

¹⁴ Heb. *from great even to small.*—^p 2 Kings xi. 14; xxiii. 3; Chap. vi. 13.

they commonly do. But they are not the less weighty, and therefore should not be the less regarded, because they are well known.

Verses 32, 33. *He caused all present to stand to it*—He caused them to engage by an oath or covenant, that they would observe the laws of God, as his predecessors had formerly done, and which indeed they were before obliged to do. *The inhabitants of Je-*

32 And he caused all that were ¹⁵pre- A. M. 3380. sent in Jerusalem and Benjamin to B. C. 624. stand *to it*. And the inhabitants of Jerusalem did according to the covenant of God, the God of their fathers.

33 And Josiah took away all the ^aabominations out of all the countries that *pertained* to the children of Israel, and made all that were present in Israel to serve, *even* to serve the LORD their God. ^rAnd all his days they departed not ¹⁶from following the LORD, the God of their fathers.

¹⁵ Heb. *found.*—^a 1 Kings xi. 5.—^r Jer. iii. 10.—¹⁶ Heb. *from after.*

rusalem did according to the covenant, &c.—They complied with God's and the king's command, as to the outward acts of God's worship, though not with an upright and renewed heart, as appears by the history. *To serve, even to serve the Lord their God*—The repetition shows, that this was the only thing his heart was set upon. He aimed at nothing, in all he did, but to engage them to God and their duty.

CHAPTER XXXV.

Josiah keeps a solemn passover, 1-19. He goes against Pharaoh-necho, and is slain, 20-24. He is bitterly lamented, 25-27.

A. M. 3381. MOREOVER, ^aJosiah kept a pass- A. M. 3381. over unto the LORD in Jerusa- B. C. 623. lem: and they killed the passover on the ^bfourteenth *day* of the first month.

2 And he set the priests in their ^ccharges, and ^dencouraged them to the service of the house of the LORD,

3 And said unto the Levites ^ethat taught all Israel, which were holy unto the LORD, ^fPut the holy ark ^gin the house which Solomon the son of David king of Israel did build: ^hit

^a 2 Kings xxiii. 21, 22.—^b Exodus xii. 6; Ezra vi. 19. ^c Chapter xxiii. 18; Ezra vi. 18.—^d Chapter xxix. 5, 11. ^e Deuteronomy xxxiii. 10; Chapter xxx. 22; Malachi ii. 7. ^f Chap. xxxiv. 14.

NOTES ON CHAPTER XXXV.

Verse 3. *That taught all Israel which were holy*—That is, the Levites were holy unto the Lord. And therefore it may be rendered, *and were holy, &c.*, that is, peculiarly dedicated to this service, of ministering to the priests, and instructing the people. *Put the holy ark in the house, &c.*—It appears from this that the ark had been removed from its place; but by whom or when cannot now be said. *It shall not be a burden upon your shoulders*—That is, hereafter. For they were to carry it to a settled place, there to remain: and then they would be obliged to

shall not be a burden upon your A. M. 3381. shoulders: serve now the LORD your B. C. 623. God, and his people Israel,

4 And prepare *yourselves* by the ⁱhouses of your fathers, after your courses, according to the ^kwriting of David king of Israel, and according to the ^lwriting of Solomon his son:

5 And ^mstand in the holy *place* according to the divisions of ⁿthe families of the fathers of your brethren ^othe people, and *after* the division of the families of the Levites.

^g Chap. v. 7.—^h 1 Chron. xxiii. 26.—ⁱ 1 Chronicles ix. 10. ^k 1 Chron. xxiii. xxiv; xxv; xxvi.—^l Ch. viii. 14.—^m Psa. cxxxiv. 1.—ⁿ Hebrew, *the house of the fathers.*—^o Hebrew, *the sons of the people.*

bear it no further on their shoulders, as they had done before it was fixed in the temple. *Serve now the Lord, &c.*—Ministers must look upon themselves as servants both to Christ, and to the people for his sake. They must take care and take pains, and lay themselves out to the utmost, both for the honour and glory of God, and for the benefit of his people, *not as having dominion over their faith, but as helpers* of their holiness and joy.

Verse 5. *And stand in the holy place*—Or minister (as that word is frequently used) in the court of the priests. *According to the division of the fami-*

A. M. 3381. 6 So kill the passover, and ^a sanctify yourselves, and prepare your brethren, that *they* may do according to the word of the LORD by the hand of Moses.

7 And Josiah ³ gave ^o to the people of the flock, lambs and kids, all for the passover-offerings, for all that were present, to the number of thirty thousand, and three thousand bullocks: these *were* of the king's substance.

8 And his princes ⁴ gave willingly unto the people, to the priests, and to the Levites: Hilkiah, and Zechariah, and Jehiel, rulers of the house of God, gave unto the priests for the passover-offerings two thousand and six hundred *small cattle*, and three hundred oxen.

9 Cononiah also, and Shemaiah, and Nathaneel, his brethren, and Hashabiah, and Jeiel, and Jozabad, chief of the Levites, ⁶ gave unto the Levites for passover-offerings five thousand *small cattle*, and five hundred oxen.

10 So the service was prepared, and the priests ² stood in their place, and the Levites in their courses, according to the king's commandment.

11 And they killed the passover, and the priests ⁹ sprinkled *the blood* from their hands, and the Levites ⁷ flayed *them*.

12 And they removed the burnt-offerings, that they might give according to the divisions of

the families of the people, to offer A. M. 3381. B. C. 623. unto the LORD, as *it is written* ^a in the book of Moses. And so *did they* with the oxen.

13 And they ⁴ roasted the passover with fire according to the ordinance: but the *other holy offerings* ^a sod they in pots, and in caldrons, and in pans, and ⁶ divided *them* speedily among all the people.

14 And afterward they made ready for themselves, and for the priests: because the priests the sons of Aaron *were busied* in offering of burnt-offerings and the fat until night; therefore the Levites prepared for themselves, and for the priests the sons of Aaron.

15 And the singers the sons of Asaph *were* in their ⁷ place, according to the ² commandment of David, and Asaph, and Heman, and Jeduthun the king's seer; and the porters ⁷ waited at every gate; they might not depart from their service; for their brethren the Levites prepared for them.

16 So all the service of the LORD was prepared the same day, to keep the passover, and to offer burnt-offerings upon the altar of the LORD, according to the commandment of King Josiah.

17 And the children of Israel *that were* ⁶ present kept the passover at that time, and the feast of ² unleavened bread seven days.

^a Chap. xxix. 5, 15; xxx. 3, 15; Ezra vi. 20.—³ Heb. offered.
^o Chap. xxx. 24.—⁴ Heb. offered.—⁵ Heb. offered.—⁷ Ezra vi. 18.—⁹ Chap. xxix. 22.—⁶ Chap. xxix. 34.—² Lev. iii. 3.
⁷ Exod. xii. 8, 9; Deut. xvi. 7.

^a 1 Sam. ii. 13, 14, 15.—⁶ Heb. made them run.—⁷ Heb. station.—² 1 Chron. xxv. 1, &c.—⁷ 1 Chron. ix. 17, 18; xxvi. 14, &c.—⁶ Heb. found.—² Exod. xii. 15; xiii. 6; Chap. xxx. 21.

lies—According to the several families, both of the people, whom he calls *their brethren*, lest they should despise them, or grudge to serve them, and of the Levites. For the passover was to be eaten by the several families according to their numbers, and therefore he commands these persons, that when the paschal lambs were brought to them to be killed, they should so order the matter, that they might be distributed to the several families, whether of the Levites or other tribes.

Verses 6, 7. *Prepare your brethren*—By purifying them, and exciting them to fit themselves for so great and solemn a work. *Josiah gave to the people lambs and kids*—For either of these might be used for the paschal-offering. *And three thousand bullocks*—Which were to be offered after the lambs upon the several days of the feast of unleavened bread.

Verse 8. *And his princes gave willingly*—Not the political, but ecclesiastical princes, or the chief of the priests and Levites, whose names here follow. *Unto the people, priests, and Levites*—For the use of any of the families of them, as need should be.

For they supposed the thirty thousand, which the king had given, were not sufficient for all the families.

Verse 11. *And the Levites flayed them*—Which they did, (though properly that work belonged to the priests,) because the priests, who were sanctified, were not sufficient for it, there being so many thousands of the cattle; and they were fully employed in the killing of the sacrifices, and the sprinkling of the blood, which was more properly the priests' work than the other.

Verse 12. *And they removed the burnt-offerings*—That part of the paschal lambs which was to be burned, which they despatched as soon as possible, that they might give that part which was to be eaten to each family. *And so they did with the oxen*—All of which were not given for peace-offerings, but some for burnt-offerings: which they also offered as fast as they could, that they might give to each family a portion sufficient for them to feast on.

Verses 13, 14. *But the other holy offerings sod they in pots*—Those from which the burnt-offerings were

A. M. 3391. 18 And * there was no passover like
B. C. 623. to that kept in Israel from the days
of Samuel the prophet ; neither did all the kings
of Israel keep such a passover as Josiah kept,
and the priests, and the Levites, and all Judah
and Israel that were present, and the inhabitants
of Jerusalem.

19 In the eighteenth year of the reign of Josiah
was this passover kept.

B. C. 610. 20 ¶ ^b After all this, when Josiah
had prepared the ⁹ temple, Necho king
of Egypt came up to fight against Charchemish
by Euphrates : * and Josiah went out against
him.

21 But he sent ambassadors to him, saying,
What have I to do with thee, thou king of
Judah ? *I come* not against thee this day, but
against ¹⁰ the house wherewith I have war : for

^a 2 Kings xxiii. 22, 23.—^b 2 Kings xxiii. 29; Jer. xlv. 2.
^c Heb. *house*.—¹⁰ Heb. *the house of my war*.—^e 1 Kings xxii. 34.

removed, (verse 12,) namely, the peace-offerings,
part of which fell to the share of the offerer, who
was Josiah, and, by his gift, to the people. *After-*
ward they made ready—To wit, the paschal lambs,
and their part of the peace-offerings.

Verse 18. *There was no passover like to that*—
The whole solemnity was performed exactly accord-
ing to the law, whereas in Hezekiah's passover there
were several irregularities: likewise Josiah furnis-
hed the whole congregation with beasts for sacrifice at
his own charge, which no king ever did before
him.

Verse 20. *After all this, when Josiah had pre-
pared the temple*—When he and his people hoped
that God was reconciled, and the foundation of a
lasting happiness laid, their hopes were quickly
blasted. So much are men often mistaken in their
judgments about the designs of God's providence.
To fight against Charchemish—Which the Assy-
rian had lately taken from the king of Egypt, of
which he boasts, Isa. x. 9.

Verse 21. *I come not against thee, but against the
house wherewith I have war*—Against the house of
the king of Assyria, between whom and me there is
war. *For God commanded me to make haste*—
Therefore, give me no hinderance. Some think he
only pretended this, because he knew Josiah had a
great reverence for God, and in obedience to him
might desist from his purpose. And the Targum,
with some of the Jews, thinks he called his own idol
by the name of God; though Kimchi thinks, and the
event makes it most probable, that he spoke of the
true God, who perhaps admonished him in a dream,
as he did Abimelech, or sent him a message to go
against the Assyrians by the Prophet Jeremiah,
many of whose prophecies are directed to foreign
nations. *Forbear thee from meddling with God,
who is with me, &c.*—It is at thy peril if thou en-

God commanded me to make haste : A. M. 3394.
forbear thee from *meddling with* B. C. 610.
God, who *is* with me, that he destroy thee
not.

22 Nevertheless Josiah would not turn his face
from him, but ^o disguised himself that he might
fight with him, and hearkened not unto the
words of Necho from the mouth of God, and
came to fight in the valley of Megiddo.

23 And the archers shot at King Josiah ; and
the king said to his servants, Have me away ;
for I am sore ¹¹ wounded.

24 * His servants therefore took him out of
that chariot, and put him in the second chariot
that he had ; and they brought him to Jerusa-
lem, and he died, and was buried ¹² in *one* of
the sepulchres of his fathers. And ^f all Judah
and Jerusalem mourned for Josiah.

¹¹ Hebrew, *made sick*, 1 Kings xxii. 34.—² 2 Kings xxiii. 30.
¹² Or, *among the sepulchres*.—^f Zech. xii. 11.

gaged against one who has both a better army, and a
better cause, and God on his side.

Verse 22. *Josiah would not turn his face from him*
—Being, peradventure, encouraged to go out against
him by a misinterpretation of that promise made to
him, chap. xxxiv. 28, *Thou shalt be gathered to thy
grave in peace*. Thus God overrules the errors and
miscarriages of men to the accomplishment of his
own counsels. *But disguised himself*—Changed
his habit, that he might not give his enemies the ad-
vantage of aiming at his person, which he wisely
thought they would do, that being a likely course to
end their trouble, as indeed it proved. *And heark-
ened not unto the words of Necho from the mouth of
God*—Either, 1st, which Pharaoh sent to him in the
name of God ; or rather, 2d, which Pharaoh received
from the mouth of God ; who was pleased, some
way or other, to impart his mind to him, and which
Pharaoh acquainted him with by the command of
God. And therefore Josiah is here blamed for not
hearkening to this message: although, if he sinned
herein, it was only a sin of ignorance, for he did not
know that God had spoken this to Pharaoh, and
was not bound to believe his testimony, which
he had good reason to suspect in this matter. Yet,
it seems, he ought so far to have regarded it, as
to have inquired into the mind of God about it,
which he neglected to do, and therefore cannot
be wholly excused. How can we think to prosper
in our ways, if we do not acknowledge God in
them ?

Verse 24. *And put him in the second chariot*—It
was the custom of war, in former times, for great
officers to have led horses with them in battle, that
if one failed they might mount another. And, in
like manner, we may presume, that when it became
a fashion to fight in chariots, all great commanders
had an empty one following them, to which they

A. M. 3394. 25 And Jeremiah ^a lamented for Josiah: and ^b all the singing-men and the singing-women spake of Josiah in their lamentations to this day, ⁱ and made them an ordinance in Israel: and behold, they *are* written in the Lamentations.

^a Lam. iv. 20.—^b Matt. ix. 23.

might betake themselves, if any mischief befell the other. *They brought him to Jerusalem, and he died*—Bishop Sherlock observes, that Josiah had so good a character in Scripture, that both Jews and Christians have been at a loss to account for his unfortunate end. The learned Dr. Prideaux endeavours to justify his conduct in opposing the passage of the king of Egypt, because it was a service due to the king of Assyria, to whom Josiah was a vassal. “Be it so,” says Dr. Dodd, “yet his duty to the king of Assyria could not dissolve his dependance on a higher Master. He went to war as vassal of the king of Assyria, but did he ask counsel of God as king of Judah? Or was he attended to the war with such forces only as the kings of Judah might lawfully use? That he had chariots and horsemen, appears plainly from this account of his death. That this was the true or only cause of his misfortune, I dare not affirm; for I have no express authority to support me in affirming it: but this I see, that he was found in the day of battle, not with the equipage of a king of Judah, but surrounded with forces which the law of his God had forbidden him to trust to, and which had often proved a strength fatal to his ancestors.” See Bishop Sherlock’s *Dissertation on the Use and Intent of Prophecy*, at the end.

Verse 25. *Jeremiah lamented for Josiah*—Sorrowed much on account of the immature death of this good king, foreseeing that the utter ruin of his country would follow upon it. And as it was usual with the Jews to make lamentations, elegies, or mournful pieces upon the death of great men, princes, and others that had distinguished themselves among them, and deserved well of their country, it is probable Jeremiah wrote such a piece on the occasion of Josiah’s death. If he did so, the loss of it is very much to be deplored, because, as Dr. Dodd observes, it was, no doubt, “a masterpiece of its kind as there never was an author more

26 ¶ Now the rest of the acts of Josiah, ^{A. M. 3394.} and his ¹³ goodness, according to *that* ^{B. C. 610.} *which was written in the law of the LORD,*

27 And his deeds, first and last, behold, they *are* written in the book of the kings of Israel and Judah.

ⁱ Jer. xxii. 20.—¹³ Heb. *kindnesses*.

deeply affected with his subject, or more capable of carrying it through all the tender sentiments of sorrow and compassion, than Jeremiah.” *All the singing-men and singing-women spake of Josiah in their lamentations*—Among the Jews men and women were usually employed to mourn at funerals, and to sing the praises of the dead. And so real and great was the mourning for Josiah, that for ages afterward they always remembered it in their lamentations for the dead, saying of the person deceased, *Thou art worthy to be lamented for, as good Josiah was*, or words to the same purpose. Or, as Poole thinks, the meaning may be, that in all their succeeding lamentations for their public calamities, they remembered Josiah’s death as their first and fatal blow, which opened the flood-gates to all their following miseries. *And made them an ordinance in Israel*—Ordained that the mournful pieces, penned on this sad occasion, should be learned and sung by all sorts of people. *And, behold, they are written in the Lamentations*—Not in the book termed *The Lamentations of Jeremiah*, which was written on another occasion; but in some collection of mournful poems, now lost.

Verse 26. *The rest of the acts of Josiah, and his goodness*—His piety toward God, and his benignity, clemency, and kindness toward all his subjects, being of a most tender and mild disposition, both toward God and toward men, chap. xxxiv. 27. *According to that which was written in the law*—Which he made his rule in all his actions. The revelation which God has given us of his mind and will is the only true standard by which we can safely walk. All other rules may deceive us, and will often either leave us in doubt or uncertainty how to act, or will lead us wrong. But the word of God is a sure and unerring guide, *a lamp unto our feet, and a light unto our paths*. Let us walk by this, and we shall please God in time and enjoy him in eternity.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

The wicked reigns of Jehoahaz, 1-4; Jehoiakim, 5-8; Jehoiachin and Zedekiah, 9-13. The wickedness of the people, 14-16. Jerusalem destroyed, Judah laid waste, the people slain or led away captive, according to God’s word, 17-21. The proclamation of Cyrus, 22, 23.

A. M. 3398. B. C. 606. **THEN** ^athe people of the land took Jehoahaz the son of Josiah, and made him king in his father's stead in Jerusalem.

2 Jehoahaz *was* twenty and three years old when he began to reign, and he reigned three months in Jerusalem.

3 And the king of Egypt ¹put him down at Jerusalem, and ²condemned the land in a hundred talents of silver and a talent of gold.

4 And the king of Egypt made Eliakim his brother king over Judah and Jerusalem, and turned his name to Jehoiakim. And Necho took Jehoahaz his brother, and carried him to Egypt.

5 ¶ ^aJehoiakim *was* twenty and five years old when he began to reign, and he reigned eleven years in Jerusalem: and he did *that which was evil* in the sight of the LORD his God.

B. C. 610. 6 ^dAgainst him came up Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, and bound him in ³fetters, to ^ecarry him to Babylon.

B. C. 607. 7 ^fNebuchadnezzar also carried of the vessels of the house of the LORD to Babylon, and put them in his temple at Babylon.

8 Now the rest of the acts of Jehoiakim,

and his abominations which he did, ^{A. M. 3397. B. C. 607.} and that which was found in him, behold, they *are* written in the book of the kings of Israel and Judah. And ⁴Jehoiachin his son reigned in his stead.

9 ¶ ⁵Jehoiachin *was* eight years old when he began to reign, and he reigned three months and ten days in Jerusalem: and he did *that which was evil* in the sight of the LORD.

10 And ⁵when the year was expired, ^bKing Nebuchadnezzar sent, and brought him to Babylon, ⁱwith the ⁶goodly vessels of the house of the LORD, and made ⁷Zedekiah ^khis brother king over Judah and Jerusalem.

11 ¶ ¹Zedekiah *was* one and twenty years old when he began to reign, and reigned eleven years in Jerusalem.

12 And he did *that which was evil* in the sight of the LORD his God, and humbled not himself before Jeremiah the prophet *speaking* from the mouth of the LORD.

13 And ^mhe also rebelled against ^{B. C. 593.} King Nebuchadnezzar, who had made him swear by God: but he ⁿstiffened his neck, and hardened his heart from turning unto the LORD God of Israel.

14 ¶ Moreover, all the chief of the priests, and the people, transgressed very much after

^a 2 Kings xxiii. 30.—¹ Heb. removed him.—² Heb. mulcted. ³ 2 Kings xxiii. 36, 37.—⁴ 2 Kings xxiv. 1.—⁵ Or, chains, fore-told Hab. i. 6.—⁶ 2 Kings xxiv. 6; Jer. xxii. 18, 19; xxxvi. 30. ⁷ 2 Kings xxiv. 13; Dan. i. 1, 2; v. 2.—⁸ Or, Jeconiah, 1 Chron. iii. 16, or, Coniah, Jer. xxii. 24.

⁹ 2 Kings xxiv. 8.—⁵ Hebrew, at the return of the year. ¹⁰ 2 Kings xxiv. 10-17.—¹¹ Daniel i. 1, 2; v. 2.—¹² Hebrew, vessels of desire.—¹³ Or, Mattaniah his father's brother, 2 Kings xxiv. 17.—¹⁴ Jer. xxxvii. 1.—¹⁵ 2 Kings xxiv. 18; Jer. liii. 1, &c. ¹⁶ Jer. lii. 3; Ezek. xvii. 15, 18.—¹⁷ 2 Kings xvii. 14.

NOTES ON CHAPTER XXXVI.

Verse 1. *The people of the land took Jehoahaz, &c.*—The principal contents of this chapter are explained in the notes on 2 Kings xxiii. 31, and xxiv., and xxv., to which the reader is referred. What is peculiar to this chapter shall be noticed here.

Verse 6. *And bound him in fetters to carry him to Babylon*—But he did not carry him thither, for Nebuchadnezzar altered his mind, and permitted him to reign at Jerusalem as his tributary, though he carried away, as it follows, some of the vessels of the temple, and also certain principal persons, as we read in the first of Daniel.

Verse 8. *That which was found in him*—That crime of rebellion against the king of Babylon, which for a time he kept in his own breast, but when he saw fit, discovered it and was convicted of it.

Verse 9. *Jehoiachin was eight years old*—See the note on 2 Kings xxiv. 8, in which it is said that he was eighteen years old when he began to reign, which is probably the right reading.

Verse 10. *When the year was expired*—Hebrew,

At the return of the year. At the beginning of the next year, according to the sacred account of the Hebrews, at the spring of the year, the time when kings go forth to battle, as is elsewhere said, when Nebuchadnezzar, among others, went forth to settle and enlarge his conquests. *His brother*—Largely so called, for this was his uncle, or his father's brother, being the son of Josiah.

Verse 12. *And humbled not himself*—By repentance for his past errors and obedience to God's express commands, which he would not yield to, through the pride of his heart, as is intimated by this phrase, and expressed Jer. xxxviii. 19.

Verse 13. *Who had made him swear by God*—Who had required him to swear fealty and constant obedience to him, by the true God, whom he called upon to be a witness against him if he broke his oath. So his rebellion was aggravated with perjury and horrid contempt of God. *But he stiffened his neck, and hardened his heart*—He added obstinacy and incorrigibility to his sins.

Verses 14, 15. *The people transgressed very much*—They were universally corrupt, and therefore God

A. M. 3411. all the abominations of the heathen ;
B. C. 593. and polluted the house of the LORD
which he had hallowed in Jerusalem.

15 ° And the LORD God of their fathers sent
to them ° by his messengers, rising up ° be-
times and sending ; because he had compassion
on his people, and on his dwelling-place :

16 ° But they mocked the messengers of God,
and ° despised his words, and ° misused his pro-
phets, until the ° wrath of the LORD arose against
his people, till *there was* no 10 remedy.

B. C. 590. 17 ° Therefore he brought upon
them the king of the Chaldees, who
° slew their young men with the sword in the
house of their sanctuary, and had no compas-
sion upon young man or maiden, old man, or
him that stooped for age : he gave *them* all into
his hand.

° Jer. xxv. 3, 4 ; xxxv. 15 ; xlv. 4. — ° Heb. *by the hand of his messengers.* — ° That is, *continually and carefully.* — ° Jer. v. 12, 13. — ° Prov. i. 25, 30. — ° Jer. xxxii. 3 ; xxxviii. 6 ; Matt. xxiii. 34. — ° Psa. lxxiv. 1 ; lxxix. 5. — ° Hebrew, *healing.* — ° Deut. xxviii. 49 ; 2 Kings xxv. 1, &c. ; Ezra ix. 7.

justly brought upon them a general destruction. *Rising up betimes, and sending them*—Sending them early and diligently, as a careful householder, who rises betimes about his business. God sent them many prophets and messages, some at the very beginning of their apostacy, and others afterward, till the very day of their captivity.

Verse 16. *But they mocked the messengers of God*—Of which see instances Ezek. xi. 3, and xx. 49. *Misused his prophets*—Imprisoning and persecuting them as they did Jeremiah ; or, *seduced themselves by his prophets* ; that is, by the prophecies of his prophets, which they perverted, or misconstrued. An eminent instance of which we have in this, that because Jeremiah prophesied that Zedekiah should be led to Babylon, (Jer. xxxii. 5,) and Ezekiel, that he should not see Babylon, (Ezek. xii. 13,) and therefore they believed neither, as the Hebrew writers relate. *Till there was no remedy*—Because the people would not repent, and God would not pardon them without repentance.

Verse 17. *Therefore he brought upon them the king of the Chaldees*—The king of the Chaldeans marched against them out of some political view ; but we are taught in the Holy Scriptures to ascribe all these events to the agency of the Divine Providence, and therefore it is said here, not that the king of the Chaldeans went against them, but that the Lord brought upon them the king of the Chaldeans. *Who slew their young men in the house of their sanctuary*—Either in Jerusalem, which was the dwelling-place of God's sanctuary, or in the house which was their sanctuary. It is probable they killed some of them in the very courts and house of God, to which they had fled for refuge, such places being es-

18 ° And all the vessels of the house A. M. 3414
of God, great and small, and the trea- B. C. 590.
sures of the house of the LORD, and the treasures
of the king, and of his princes ; all *these* he
brought to Babylon.

19 ° And they burnt the house of B. C. 588.
God, and brake down the wall of Je-
rusalem, and burnt all the palaces thereof with
fire, and destroyed all the goodly vessels thereof.

20 And 11 them ° that had escaped from the
sword carried he away to Babylon ; ° where
they were servants to him and his sons until the
reign of the kingdom of Persia :

21 To fulfil the word of the LORD B. C. 588.
by the mouth of ° Jeremiah, until the
land ° had enjoyed her sabbaths : *for* as long
as she lay desolate ° she kept sabbath, to fulfil
threescore and ten years.

° Psalm lxxiv. 20 ; lxxix. 2, 3. — ° 2 Kings xxv. 13, &c. — ° 1 Kings xxv. 9 ; Psa. lxxiv. 6, 7 ; lxxix. 1, 7. — ° Heb. *the remainder from the sword.* — ° 2 Kings xxv. 11. — ° Jer. xxvii. 7. — ° Jer. xxv. 9, 11, 12 ; xxvi. 6, 7 ; xxix. 10. — ° Lev. xxvi. 34, 35, 43 ; Dan. ix. 2. — ° Lev. xxv. 4, 5.

teemed sacred and inviolable by the heathen themselves. *He gave them all into his hand*—To be carried captive into Chaldea. Abraham was called out of Ur of the Chaldees, when God took him into covenant with himself. And now his degenerate seed are carried into that country again, to signify that they had forfeited all that kindness wherewith they had been loved for their father's sake, and the benefit of the covenant into which he was called.

Verse 18. *And the treasures of the king, and of his princes*—The treasures of the temple, by a special providence of God, were preserved, and restored, in the reign of Cyrus, to the house of the Lord : but the other, it is likely, were looked upon as spoil, and spent by the king and his great men.

Verse 20. *Where they were servants to him and his sons*—They do not seem to have been made captives to private persons, but to have been taken in one body, and made the servants of the king ; that is, to have been employed by him, in one way or other, to his private advantage, which we are not now acquainted with. *Until the reign of the kingdom of Persia*—Until the reign of the king of Persia, Houb. Respecting the proclamation of Cyrus, see the beginning of the next book. From these words, we may conclude that this book was written after the return from captivity.

Verse 21. *Until the land had enjoyed her sabbaths*—“God had commanded them to let their land rest every seventh year ; and because the Jews had violated this, as well as other precepts, God gave their land a long sabbath, or rest, for no less than ten times seven years, which Jeremiah threatened, as in the margin. If it be true, that they had neglected this law for the space of four hundred and

A. M. 3468. 22 ¶ ° Now in the first year of Cy-
B. C. 536. rus king of Persia, that the word of the
LORD spoken by the mouth of ° Jeremiah might
be accomplished, the LORD stirred up the spirit

of ° Cyrus king of Persia, that he A. M. 3468.
made a proclamation throughout all B. C. 536.
his kingdom, and put it also in writing, say-
ing,

° Ezra i. 1.—Jer. xxv. 12, 13; xxix. 10; xxxiii. 10, 11, 14.

° Isa. xlv. 28.

ninety years, having ploughed their ground in the seventh as well as in other years, then the judgment of God upon them was very remarkable, in causing their ground to rest, and be free from tillage, just as long as it should have been if they had observed his law. For in those four hundred and ninety years, says Procopius Gazæus, when they were under the government of kings, there were seventy years to be kept as sabbaths, which, that the land might enjoy its sabbath, were spent in the captivity of Babylon. Their punishment, too, was made more remarkable in this particular, if it be true, as some have observed, that both the kingdom of Samaria and the kingdom of Judah were destroyed in a sabbatical year; and that immediately after a jubilee, the city and temple were destroyed by Titus, according to Scaliger's computation." See Patrick, Calmet, and Dodd.

Verse 22. *Now in the first year of Cyrus*—Kennicott thinks that the last two verses of this book belong properly to the book of Ezra, and were subjoined to the Chronicles through the inadvertency of some transcriber.

And thus ends the history of the kingdom of Judah, as governed by the successors of the illustrious King David, with the destruction of Jerusalem, the temple, and the whole Jewish monarchy, by the conquest of the Babylonian king: which, in the course of a *righteous providence*, in punishment of the idolatry and other sins of this people, fell out about nine hundred and three years after their deliverance from Egypt; eight hundred and sixty-three from their first entrance into the land of Canaan; four hundred and sixty-eight from David's reign; four hundred and seventeen after the building of the temple; and one hundred and thirty-four after the destruction of the kingdom of the ten tribes.

It is justly observed by a late writer, that the propriety of this dispensation of Divine Providence toward this people will appear, if we reflect, 1st, That this dreadful calamity came upon them gradually, by a succession of judgments, from less to greater, for the space of twenty-two years; in which the lenity of God was very apparent, and which should have been a warning to them, that the threatenings denounced by the prophets would certainly be executed; but which effected no amendment of the religion or morals of the nation; Zedekiah, the last king, being as bad as his predecessors.

2d, That it was a just punishment of their sins, particularly of their idolatry, whereby they forsook God, and therefore God justly forsook them, and delivered them into the hands of their enemies, as Moses had foretold, Lev. xxxvi. 30–36.

3d, That this terrible overthrow was the most ef-

fectual means to work their reformation, which was the end proposed by the divine wisdom. Now, in their captive, disconsolate state, they had time, and their calamities had a natural tendency to give them a disposition, to reflect upon the long series of iniquity and perverseness which had brought them under the heaviest of God's judgments. *Now their own wickedness corrected them, and their backslidings reproved them: now they must know and see that it was an evil thing and bitter, that they had forsaken the Lord their God, and that his fear had not been in them*, Jer. ii. 19. In the land of their captivity, the sermons of the prophets, declaiming with the highest authority against their profane and vicious practices, would be still sounding in their ears, and their abject, wretched condition, the consequence of such practices, would cause these discourses to sink deep into their hearts, and produce an utter detestation of what they very well knew was the cause of all their grievous sufferings.

4th, The law of God, written by Moses, as the rule of their conduct in all affairs, civil and religious, and the ground of their happiness, they had so far neglected, that once it was almost unknown and lost among them, 2 Kings xxii. 8–12. This contempt of the divine law the prophets had frequently and strongly protested against, and publicly declared that it would be their ruin. And in their ruined state this would be remembered as the primary reason of all their sufferings; and they would be made thoroughly sensible that a due regard to the law of God was the only way to recover his favour and their own prosperity; and accordingly would be disposed to attend to it; which, in some measure, was the case. This was another good effect of this dispensation, and may justly be given as one good reason of their being so strongly fixed against idolatry ever after the Babylonish captivity.

5th, This dispensation was also calculated to produce good effects among the nations whither they were carried into captivity. For wherever they were dispersed, in the eastern countries, they would bring with them the knowledge of the true God, now seriously impressed upon their hearts. But Divine Providence, by such signal circumstances of his interposition as were published and known over all the vast extent of the eastern empire, raised some of the captive Jews to the highest posts of dignity and dower in the courts of Assyria and Persia, (Dan. i. 19, 20,) insomuch that the most haughty monarchs openly confessed the living and true God, (Dan. ii. 47–49, and iv. 34, &c.,) and made decrees, which were published throughout their spacious dominions, in favour of the profession and worship of him, Dan. iii. 29; vi. 25, &c. From all this, it is clear,

A. M. 3468. 23 ^h Thus saith Cyrus king of Per-
 B. C. 536. sia, All the kingdoms of the earth hath
 the LORD God of heaven given me; and he
 hath charged me to build him a house in Jeru-

salem, which is in Judah. Who is A. M. 3468
 there among you of all his people? B. C. 536.
 The LORD his God be with him, and let him
 go up.

^h Ezra

i. 2, 3.

that the Jews, notwithstanding their depravity in
 their own country, during the captivity of seventy
 years, must have been the means of diffusing a
 blessed light all over the eastern countries. And
 thus, in this dispensation also, God, the Father and

Governor of mankind, was working for the reforma-
 tion and improvement of the world, in that which is
 the true excellence of their nature, and the only
 foundation of their happiness. See Dodd and Tay-
 lor's *Scheme of Scripture Doctrine*.

THE
BOOK OF EZRA.

ARGUMENT.

EZRA, or ESDRAS, was a person of high esteem among the Jews. He was of the sacerdotal family, and bore a principal part in the restoration from Babylon. Some have asserted that he was chiefly concerned in revising and compiling most of the books of Scripture. Two, however, of those books go under his name; for, among the Hebrews, this and the book of Nehemiah were formerly reckoned but one, and are both inscribed in the Latin and Greek Bibles by the name of Ezra. The first of these was certainly his work; the second is commonly attributed to Nehemiah. It must, however, be acknowledged, that some few particulars have been added to it which could not have been written by Nehemiah. This book of Ezra is a continuation of the history of the Jews, from the time wherein that of the Chronicles ends to near the twentieth year of Artaxerxes Longimanus; and contains a history of eighty-two years, from the first year of the reign of Cyrus in Babylon, A. M. 3468, to the nineteenth year of Artaxerxes Longimanus, who sent Nehemiah to Jerusalem, A. M. 3550. It contains, chiefly, an account of the restoration of the Jewish nation from the Babylonish captivity, their settlement in Judea, and the rebuilding of their temple in Jerusalem. It therefore attests the accomplishment of the famous prophecy of Jeremiah concerning their return, which took place at the end of seventy years, exactly as he had foretold. See Jer. xxv. 8-13, and xxix. 10. For, whether we begin to compute from the beginning of the captivity to the beginning of the restoration, (that is, from the fourth year of Jehoiakim to the first of Cyrus,) or from the completing of the captivity to the completing of the restoration, (that is, from the eleventh of Zedekiah to the fourth of Darius,) both ways the time is exactly seventy years. Thus punctually did God fulfil his own word, in the course of his wise providence, according to the history of this book; and, by this and such like evidences, hath demonstrated and confirmed to us the truth and importance of those Scriptures which bear so decided and incontrovertible a testimony to the religion of our Lord Jesus Christ. For nothing can be more convincing to an unprejudiced mind than such an exact accomplishment of prophecies, uttered so long before the events predicted in them took place. The principal parts of this book were originally written in Hebrew: but the letter of Rehum and Shimshai (chap. iv. 8) to the king, and the king's answer, were written first in the Chaldee language, as were the fifth and sixth chapters, and also the seventh, to verse 27. We have, in this book, an account of the return of the Jews from captivity, chap. i., ii.; of the building of the temple, notwithstanding the opposition it met with, chap. iii.-vi.; of Ezra's coming to Jerusalem, chap. vii., viii.; of his obliging those that had married strange wives to put them away, chap. ix., x.

CHAPTER I.

The proclamation of Cyrus, for the release of the Jews, and building of the temple, 1-4. The return of many of them, 5, 6. Orders given for restoring the vessels of the temple, 7-11.

A. M. 3468. **N**OW in the first year of Cyrus the LORD ^a by the mouth of Jeremiah A. M. 3468.
B. C. 536. king of Persia, that the word of might be fulfilled, the LORD stirred B. C. 536.

^a 2 Chron. xxxvi. 22, 23;

Jer. xxv. 12; xxix. 10.

NOTES ON CHAPTER I.

Verse 1. *Now in the first year of Cyrus, king of Persia*—This is that famous Cyrus who, one hundred and forty years before the temple was destroyed, and two hundred years before he was born, was mentioned by name in the prophecies of Isaiah, as raised

up, and appointed by God, for the restoration of his people, Isa. xlv. 28, and xlv. 1, 4. This remarkable prediction, it is probable, Daniel showed to Cyrus, and that it induced him to give forth the following edict. So Prideaux thinks, with many other learned men. Cyrus, it appears, at his first coming to Babylon, found

A. M. 3468. up the spirit of Cyrus king of Persia,
B. C. 536. ^b that he ¹ made a proclamation
throughout all his kingdom, and *put it* also in
writing, saying,

2 Thus saith Cyrus king of Persia, The

^b Chap. v. 13, 14.—¹ Heb. *caused a voice to pass.*

Daniel there, an old minister of state, famed for his great wisdom over all the East; and hence he not only himself employed him as such, but, upon settling the government, made him first superintendent, or prime minister of state, over all the provinces of the empire. In this station of life Daniel must have been a person of great authority at court, and highly in the esteem of his prince; and, as there could be no doubt but he would use his good offices in behalf of the enlargement of the Jews, so it is not likely he should use them in vain, especially if he showed Cyrus the prophecies just mentioned, which, it is evident from the decree itself, that Cyrus had seen. It must be observed that, strictly speaking, this decree was not given forth in the first year of Cyrus's reign; for then the Jews were not his subjects; but in the first year after his conquest of Babylon, where the Jews then lived in captivity.

That the word of the Lord by the mouth of Jeremiah might be fulfilled—Who foretold that after seventy years the king of Babylon and the Chaldeans should be destroyed, and the people of Judah restored to their own land. This prophecy was first delivered in the fourth year of Jehoiakim, the son of Josiah, which was the first year of Nebuchadnezzar; and the same year Nebuchadnezzar invaded Judea, besieged and took Jerusalem, made Jehoiakim his subject and tributary, transported the finest children of the royal family and of the nobility to Babylon, to be bred up there for eunuchs and slaves in his palace, and also carried away the vessels of the house of the Lord and put them in the temple of his god at Babylon. Seventy years from this time will bring us down to the first year of Cyrus, (2 Chron. xxxvi. 22; Ezra i. 3,) when he made his proclamation for the restoration of the Jews, and for the building of the temple at Jerusalem. This computation of the seventy years captivity appears to many to be the truest and most agreeable to Scripture. But, if we fix the commencement of these seventy years at the time when Jerusalem was burned and destroyed, their conclusion will fall about the time when Darius issued his decree for rebuilding the temple, after the work had been suspended and stopped. Or, if we fix their commencement at the time when Nebuzardan carried away the last remainder of the people, and completed the desolation of the land, their conclusion will fall about the time when the temple was finished and dedicated, and the first passover was solemnized in it. "So that," as Dean Prideaux says, "taking it which way we will, and at what stage we please, the prophecy of Jeremiah will be fully and exactly accomplished concerning this matter." It may be said to have been accomplished, indeed, at three different times, and in three different manners,

LORD God of heaven hath given me A. M. 3468.
all the kingdoms of the earth; and B. C. 536.
he hath ^c charged me to build him a house at
Jerusalem, which is in Judah.

3 Who is there among you of all his people?

^c Isa. xlv. 28; xlv. 1, 13.

and therefore, possibly, all might have been intended, though the first, without doubt, was the principal subject of the prophecy.

The Lord stirred up the spirit of Cyrus, king of Persia—God, who had long before designed him for this work, now suggested these thoughts and intentions to him, and excited him to begin to prosecute them, (for it was not all accomplished in the first year of Cyrus,) which he did, not only by causing his will and pleasure to be proclaimed, but to be put in writing, that none might mistake his meaning.

Verse 2. *The Lord God of heaven*—It is observable, says Mr. Locke, that God, in the former books, is called *the Lord of hosts*, but in the last of Chronicles, in this, in Nehemiah, and Daniel, that is, in the books written after the captivity, he is styled *the God of heaven*, and not *Lord of hosts*, though the sense of both expressions is the same. Probably those who showed or interpreted to Cyrus the prophecy of Isaiah concerning himself, acquainted him that the God, whose prophet Isaiah was, was worshipped by the Jews, not as the God of their particular country merely, but as the *Creator and Lord of heaven and earth*. And Cyrus, though it is likely he did not entirely forsake the religion of his country, yet might acknowledge and revere Jehovah, the God of the Hebrews, as the true and great God. For, though the Jews were strictly commanded to worship one God, and not to admit another into fellowship with him, yet many in the heathen nations, while they worshipped idols, acknowledged a true and supreme God, and often worshipped the gods of other countries in common with their own. *Hath given me all the kingdoms of the earth*—All in those parts of the world; all those large dominions which the Assyrians and Babylonians had possessed: the eastern kings were wont, as they are still, to speak magnificently of their dominions. The gift of these Cyrus ascribes to the great God, through the above-mentioned prophecy of Isaiah concerning him, which must have carried a great evidence with it, especially to him who was so highly encouraged by it; or through some special illumination which God had vouchsafed to him, as he had to Nebuchadnezzar and Darius, and some other heathen princes. *And he hath charged me to build him a house at Jerusalem*—So he might conclude from the prophecy just referred to, (Isa. xlv. 13,) where God says of Cyrus, *He shall build my city*, of which the temple was a principal part, and more plainly from chap. xlv. 28, *He shall say to Jerusalem, Thou shalt be built; and to the temple, Thy foundation shall be laid.*

Verse 3. *Who is there among you of all his peo-*

A. M. 3468. his God be with him, and let him
B. C. 536.

go up to Jerusalem, which *is* in Judah, and build the house of the LORD God of Israel, (^d he *is* the God,) which *is* in Jerusalem.

4 And whosoever remaineth in any place where he sojourneth, let the men of his place ²help him with silver, and with gold, and with goods, and with beasts, besides the free-will-offering for the house of God that *is* in Jerusalem.

5 ¶ Then rose up the chief of the fathers of Judah and Benjamin, and the priests, and the Levites, with all *them* whose spirit ^eGod had raised, to go up to build the house of the LORD which *is* in Jerusalem.

^d Dan. vi. 26.—² Heb. *lift him up*.—^e Phil. ii. 13.—³ That *is*, help them.

ple?—Not of the tribe of Judah only, but of Israel also, who were under his government, the Assyrians and Medes, among whom they were scattered, being his subjects. Accordingly Josephus says, that Zerubbabel sent the edict of Cyrus into Media to the rest of the tribes. *His God be with him*—Let his God help him, as I also shall; and let him go up to Jerusalem—Thus he not only makes a proclamation to them of liberty to go to their own country, but desires them to go, and prays God to be with them, and prosper them in building his house, saying, *He is the God*, and thereby evidently acknowledging him to be the true, if not also the only God.

Verse 4. *Whosoever remaineth in any place where he sojourneth, &c.*—This seems to relate to such as were desirous to go up with their brethren, but were forced to stay behind for want of necessities to support them in so long a journey. To such he would have a supply of all things needful to be given by the inhabitants of the places where they lived, who could afford it, besides sending by them an offering toward the rebuilding of the temple.

Verse 5. *Then rose up the chief of the fathers, &c.*—Eminent and experienced men, from whom it might justly be expected, that, as they were above their brethren in dignity, so they should go before them in duty. *Of Judah and Benjamin*—And with them some of the other tribes, as appears from 1 Chron. ix. 3; but these only are named, because they were most considerable for number and quality. *And the priests and Levites*—Who, as became them, were among the first that set their faces toward Zion. If any good work is to be done, let ministers take the lead in it. *With all whose spirit God had raised, to go up*—Whom he had inspired with reverence and love for himself as the God of Israel, and a deep concern for the restoration of his worship at Jerusalem, and with that resolution and fortitude which were requisite to enable them to break through the difficulties and discouragements which were in their way. These were undoubtedly great and many; such as their present penury; the length, and hazards, and expenses of the journey;

6 And all they that *were* about them ^{A. M. 3468.}
^{B. C. 536.} strengthened their hands with vessels

of silver, with gold, with goods, and with beasts, and with precious things, besides all *that* was willingly offered.

7 ¶ ^fAlso Cyrus the king brought forth the vessels of the house of the LORD, ^gwhich Nebuchadnezzar had brought forth out of Jerusalem, and had put them in the house of his gods;

8 Even those did Cyrus king of Persia bring forth by the hand of Mithredath the treasurer, and numbered them unto ^hSheshbazzar, the prince of Judah.

^f Chap. v. 14; vi. 5.—^g 2 Kings xxiv. 13; 2 Chron. xxxvi. 7.
^h Chap. v. 14.

their being dispersed in several and distant places, which prevented the conjunction of their counsels and actions; the multitude of their enemies; the actual possession of their country by others; the ruinous state of Jerusalem, and the other cities and towns of Judea; and the great backwardness of many of their own brethren to go with them. Add to this, the temptation was strong to some of them to stay in Babylon, being conveniently and comfortably settled there, and having contracted an acquaintance with their neighbours, such as was agreeable and pleasing to them. By these and such like considerations, many were induced to remain where they were, or at least not to go with the first that went. But there were some that broke through these difficulties, and they were those *whose spirits God had raised up*: whom by his Spirit he had inspired with a generous desire of liberty, and a gracious affection to their own land, the land God had given them, and a desire for the free and public exercise of their religion. Had God left them to themselves, and to the counsels of flesh and blood, they would have stayed in Babylon: but, as he had raised up the spirit of Cyrus to proclaim this liberty, so he raised up their spirits to take the benefit of it, and set their faces toward Zion, as strangers asking the way thither, Jer. l. 5. For, being a new generation, they went out, like their father Abraham, from this land of the Chaldees, not knowing whither they went.

Verse 6. *All that were about them strengthened their hands*—Some of them, probably, because they had embraced, or at least favoured, the Jewish religion, concerning which they had been instructed by the Israelites, who had now for a long time dwelt among them; and others, that they might hereby gratify the king, and procure his favour, perceiving him to be friendly to the Jews, and forward and hearty in the work of helping them. Thus God, when he pleases, can incline the hearts of strangers to be kind to his people; yea, make those strengthen their hands, who formerly weakened them.

Verse 8. *And numbered them*—Caused them to be

A. M. 3468. 9 And this is the number of them :
B. C. 536. thirty chargers of gold, a thousand
chargers of silver, nine and twenty knives,

10 Thirty basins of gold, silver basins of a
second sort four hundred and ten, and other
vessels a thousand.

^a Heb. the

delivered to the Jews by number; unto Sheshbazzar, the prince of Judah—The captain and governor of these returning Jews, chap. ii. 2. The sceptre, therefore, was not yet departed from Judah. This person's name was originally Zerubbabel, but it was common for the great men of Judah, at the time of the captivity, to have two names, one of their own country, which was domestic, and another of the Chaldeans, which was used at court. "Zerubbabel was born at Babylon, and his name, which signifies an exile, or stranger in Babylon, implies the misery of the people of Israel at that time; but Sheshbazzar, which is a compound of two words, signifying fine linen and gold, seems to be a name of better omen, and to denote their future and more flourishing condition. So Bishop Patrick. Dr. Trapp, how-

11 All the vessels of gold and of silver were five thousand and four hundred. All these did Sheshbazzar bring up with them of the captivity that were brought up from Babylon unto Jerusalem.

transportation.

ever, says that Sheshbazzar signifies joy in tribulation. Some are of opinion, that among the sacred things which Cyrus ordered to be restored, the ark of the covenant was one; but it nowhere appears that this ark was carried from Jerusalem to Babylon. They tell us, indeed, that in the second temple sacrifices were offered as in the first, and all solemn days observed, especially the great day of expiation, when the law ordained that the blood should be sprinkled before the mercy-seat, and the mercy-seat, say they, was part of the ark; but besides that the ark, without the Shechinah, (which was then certainly withdrawn,) would have been of no great significance, the Jews universally acknowledge that the ark was one of the five things which were wanting in the second temple.—Dodd.

CHAPTER II.

The leaders that returned, 1, 2. The people, 3–35. The priests, Levites, and retainers to the temple, 36–63. The sum total, and their substance, 64–67. Their offerings, 68–70.

A. M. 3468. NOW ^a these are the children of the
B. C. 536. province that went up out of the
captivity, of those which had been carried away,
^b whom Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon

^a Neh. vii. 6, &c.

NOTES ON CHAPTER II.

Verse 1. *The children of the province*—That is, of Babylon, for they are here spoken of whom Nebuchadnezzar had brought captive to Babylon, and not those of the ten tribes, who had been dispersed before, by the kings of Assyria, into various provinces; and who afterward returned to Jerusalem in separate companies. Zerubbabel was in the province of Babylon, and to him those captives joined themselves who lived nearest in the same province. This is the reason why those of the tribes of Judah and Benjamin returned first, though a liberty of returning was granted to all the tribes. Another reason is, because the rebuilding of the temple principally concerned them, as Jerusalem was within their dominion.—Houbigant. *That went out of captivity*—By the words *captivity* and *captives*, when applied to the Jews being carried to Babylon, we are not to understand that they were made slaves to private persons, and bought and sold from one to another, as captives generally were: for they seem to have been transported to Babylon as a colony, to

had carried away unto Babylon, and came again unto Jerusalem and Judah, every one unto his city;

2 Which came with Zerubbabel: Jeshua,

^b 2 Kings xxiv. 14, 15, 16; xxv. 11; 2 Chron. xxxvi. 20.

serve the king only. And we do not find that they ever became the property of private persons in Babylon, but lived there free; only subject, as is probable, to some services for the king. Otherwise Cyrus must have redeemed them from the masters, whose property they were, or at least have made a proclamation that every one should let them go free; of neither of which is any mention made. And besides this, when liberty was given to all, of returning to their own land, we find that but few, comparatively speaking, accepted of it, which would scarce have been the case had they been slaves to private persons. *Every one unto his city*—Either those cities and towns which had belonged to their several ancestors; or rather, those which were now allotted to them, and from this time possessed by them. For their former cities were either demolished, or possessed by other persons, whom they were not now in a capacity to disturb.

Verse 2. *Which came with Zerubbabel: Jeshua, Nehemiah, &c.*—These were their heads, who undertook to conduct them: among whom Zerubbabel

A. M. 3468. Nehemiah, ¹ Serajah, ² Reelaiah, Mor-decai, Bilshan, ³ Mizpar, Bigvai, ⁴ Rehum, Baanah. The number of the men of the people of Israel.

3 The children of Parosh, two thousand a hundred seventy and two.

4 The children of Shephathiah, three hundred seventy and two.

5 The children of Arah, ⁶ seven hundred seventy and five.

6 The children of ⁴ Pahath-moab, of the children of Jeshua and Joab, two thousand eight hundred and twelve.

7 The children of Elam, a thousand two hundred fifty and four.

8 The children of Zattu, nine hundred forty and five.

9 The children of Zaccai, seven hundred and threescore.

10 The children of ⁵ Bani, six hundred forty and two.

11 The children of Bebai, six hundred twenty and three.

12 The children of Azgad, a thousand two hundred twenty and two.

13 The children of Adonikam, six hundred sixty and six.

14 The children of Bigvai, two thousand fifty and six.

15 The children of Adin, four hundred fifty and four.

16 The children of Ater of Hezekiah, ninety and eight.

17 The children of Bezai, three hundred twenty and three.

¹ Or, Azariah, Neh. vii. 7.—² Or, Raamiah.—³ Or, Mispereh.—⁴ Or, Nehum.—⁵ Nehemiah vii. 10.—⁶ Nehemiah vii. 11.

was their prince or leader, as Jeshua was high-priest, who is mentioned next to him. Nehemiah, whose name follows, is not the person whose book comes after this: for he did not go to Judea now, but afterward; or, if he did, he returned to Babylon again. *The number of the men of the people*—This is a kind of title to the following verses. This catalogue differs in some names and numbers from that Neh. vii., which might be, because several names were given to the same persons; and because of the many changes which might happen in the same families between the time of the first making of this catalogue by Ezra, and the making it anew so many years after.

Verse 3. *The children*—The posterity, as that word is generally taken in this catalogue. *Of Pa-*

18 The children of ⁶ Jorah, a hundred and twelve. A. M. 3468. B. C. 536.

19 The children of Hashum, two hundred twenty and three.

20 The children of ⁷ Gibbar, ninety and five.

21 The children of Beth-lehem, a hundred twenty and three.

22 The men of Netophah, fifty and six.

23 The men of Anathoth, a hundred twenty and eight.

24 The children of ⁸ Azmaveth, forty and two.

25 The children of Kirjath-arim, Chephirah, and Beeroth, seven hundred and forty and three.

26 The children of Ramah and Gaba, six hundred twenty and one.

27 The men of Michmas, a hundred twenty and two.

28 The men of Beth-el and Ai, two hundred twenty and three.

29 The children of Nebo, fifty and two.

30 The children of Magbish, a hundred fifty and six.

31 The children of the other ⁹ Elam, a thousand two hundred fifty and four.

32 The children of Harim, three hundred and twenty.

33 The children of Lod, ⁹ Hadid, and Ono, seven hundred twenty and five.

34 The children of Jericho, three hundred forty and five.

35 The children of Senaah, three thousand and six hundred and thirty.

⁶ Or, Binnui, Neh. vii. 15.—⁷ Or, Hariph, Neh. vii. 24. ⁸ Or, Gibeon, Neh. vii. 25.—⁹ Or, Bethazmaveth, Neh. vii. 28. ⁹ Verse 7.—⁹ Or, Harid, as it is in some copies.

rosh—That descended either from Parosh, or from that family whereof Parosh was the chief. And so for the rest.

Verse 5. *Seven hundred, &c.*—In Neh. vii. 10, they were only six hundred and fifty-two; it seems seven hundred and seventy-five marched out of Babylon, but some of them died, others were hindered by sickness or other casualties, and so there came only six hundred and fifty-two to Jerusalem. And the like is to be said in the like differences; which it suffices to hint once for all.

Verses 20, 21. *The children of Gibbar*—Or, as it is in Neh. vii. 25, of *Gibeon*, these being the citizens of that city. For this is not the name of a man, but of a place; and the same may be said of several names that follow. *The children of Beth-lehem*—

A. M. 3468. 36 ¶ The priests: the children of
B. C. 536. ¶ Jedaiah, of the house of Jeshua, nine
hundred seventy and three.

37 The children of ^a Immer, a thousand fifty
and two.

38 The children of ^b Pashur, a thousand two
hundred forty and seven.

39 The children of ⁱ Harim, a thousand and
seventeen.

40 ¶ The Levites: the children of Jeshua
and Kadmiel, of the children of ¹⁰ Hodaviah,
seventy and four.

41 The singers: the children of Asaph, a
hundred twenty and eight.

42 The children of the porters: the children
of Shallum, the children of Ater, the children
of Talmon, the children of Akkub, the children
of Hatita, the children of Shobai, *in* all a
hundred thirty and nine.

43 ¶ ^k The Nethinims: the children of Ziha,
the children of Hasupha, the children of Tab-
baath,

44 The children of Keros, the children of
¹¹ Siaha, the children of Padon,

45 The children of Lebanah, the children of
Hagabah, the children of Akkub,

46 The children of Hagab, the children of
¹² Shalmal, the children of Hanan,

47 The children of Giddel, the children of
Gahar, the children of Reaiah,

48 The children of Rezin, the children of Ne-
koda, the children of Gazzam,

A. M. 3468. 49 The children of Uzzah, the
B. C. 536. children of Paseah, the children
of Besai,

50 The children of Asnah, the children of
Mehunim, the children of ¹³ Nephusim,

51 The children of Bakbuk, the children of
Hakupha, the children of Harhur,

52 The children of ¹⁴ Bazluth, the children of
Mehida, the children of Harsha,

53 The children of Barkos, the children of
Sisera, the children of Thamah,

54 The children of Neziah; the children of
Hatipha.

55 ¶ The children of ¹ Solomon's servants:
the children of Sotai, the children of Sophereth,
the children of ¹⁶ Peruda,

56 The children of Jaalah, the children of
Darkon, the children of Giddel,

57 The children of Shephatiah, the children
of Hattil, the children of Pochereth of Zebaim,
the children of ¹⁶ Ami.

58 All the ^m Nethinims, and the children of
ⁿ Solomon's servants, *were* three hundred ninety
and two.

59 And these *were* they which went up from
Tel-melah, Tel-harsa, Cherub; ¹⁷ Addan, and
Immer: but they could not show their father's
house, and their ¹⁸ seed, whether they *were* of
Israel:

60 The children of Delaiah, the children of
Tobiah, the children of Nekoda, six hundred
fifty and two.

¹ 1 Chron. xxiv. 7.—² 1 Chron. xxiv. 14.—³ 1 Chron. ix. 12.
⁴ 1 Chron. xxiv. 8.—⁵ Or, *Judah*, Chap. iii. 9, called also, *Hodaviah*, Neh. vii. 43.—⁶ 1 Chron. ix. 2.—⁷ Or, *Sia*.—⁸ Or, *Shamlai*.—⁹ Or, *Nephishesim*.

¹⁰ Or, *Bazlith*, Neh. vii. 54.—¹¹ 1 Kings ix. 21.—¹² Or, *Perida*, Neh. vii. 57.—¹³ Or, *Amon*, Neh. vii. 59.—¹⁴ Josh. ix. 21, 27: 1 Chron. ix. 2.—¹⁵ 1 Kings ix. 21.—¹⁶ Or, *Addon*, Neh. vii. 61.—¹⁷ Or, *pedigree*.

The remainders of the inhabitants of that city: so little *was Beth-lehem among the thousands of Judah!* Yet thence must the Messiah arise. Netophah and Anathoth also, in the next two verses, were towns, not men.

Verse 36. *The priests*—Having numbered the people that went of Judah and Benjamin, he proceeds now to the tribe of Levi, and first mentions the priests.

Verse 39. *The children of Harim*—The head of one of the twenty-four courses which David appointed, (1 Chron. xxiv. 8,) of all which courses, some observe here, are not above four or five that returned. There is another Harim mentioned above, verse 32, but that was no priest as this was, verse 36.

Verse 43. *Nethinims*—Persons devoted to the inferior services of the priests and Levites. Commonly supposed to be the Gibeonites, *given* (so their name

signifies) by Joshua first, and again by David, when Saul had expelled them, to the priests and Levites, for those services.

Verse 55. *The children of Solomon's servants*—Who had lived in Solomon's family, and after his death called themselves and their families by that name, esteeming it a great honour that they had been servants to so great a prince.

Verse 59. *Which went up from Tel-melah, &c.*—These were names of some cities in the Babylonish empire, from whence many went along with the Jews to Judea. They were of the Jewish religion, and probably were the children of those who had been carried captive before the general captivity; but they had lost their genealogies, and could not show from what families they were derived, and therefore could not obtain any certain possession in Judea, as those did who knew and could show to what family and city they belonged.

A. M. 3168. B. C. 536. 61 ¶ And of the children of the priests: the children of Habaiah, the children of Koz, the children of Barzillai: which took a wife of the daughters of ° Barzillai the Gileadite, and was called after their name:

62 These sought their register *among* those that were reckoned by genealogy, but they were not found: ° therefore ¹⁹ were they, as polluted, put from the priesthood.

63 And the ²⁰ Tirshatha said unto them, that they ° should not eat of the most holy things, till there stood up a priest with ° Urim and with Thummim.

64 ¶ ° The whole congregation together was forty and two thousand three hundred and threescore,

°2 Sam. xvii. 27.—° Num. iii. 10.—¹⁹ Heb. *they were polluted from the priesthood.*—²⁰ Or, *governor*, Neh. viii. 9.

Verses 61, 62. *And was called after their name*—Namely, *Barzillai*; a name which he preferred before that of his own family, accounting it, as appears, a greater honour to be allied to so noble a family than to be a priest of the Lord. But by this vain ambition he deprived himself of the honour and advantage of the priesthood, as is here noted. *They sought their register*—The Jews were generally very exact in their genealogies, from their own choice and interest, that they might preserve the distinctions of the several tribes and families, which was necessary both to make out their titles to offices or inheritances, and to govern themselves thereby in the matter of marriages, and from the special providence of God, that so it might be certainly known of what tribe and family the Messiah was born.

Verse 63. *The Tirshatha*—The governor or king's commissioner, namely, Zerubbabel: whence Nehemiah is so called, Neh. viii. 9, and x. 2. *That they should not partake of the most holy things*—That they should not partake of the sacrifices offered for sin, nor of the right shoulder of peace-offerings, nor of the show-bread; which were all most holy, and the portion of the priests alone. *Till there stood up a priest with Urim and Thummim*—Till the Lord himself should show, by an answer given to some high-priest, inquiring of him by *Urim and Thummim*, as had been anciently done, whether they were of the line of Aaron or not. But as God had ceased to give an answer this way long before this time, therefore, it was as much as to say, that as their names were not found in the authentic genealogical registers of the priests, they should for ever be excluded, till some divine oracle pronounced them to have a right to the priesthood. Hereby it appears, that the Urim and Thummim were lost in the destruction of the city and temple, though the Jews fed themselves with hopes of recovering them,

A. M. 3168. B. C. 536. 65 Besides their servants and their maids, of whom *there were seven thousand three hundred thirty and seven*: and *there were among them two hundred singing-men and singing-women.*

66 Their horses were seven hundred thirty and six; their mules, two hundred forty and five;

67 Their camels, four hundred thirty and five; *their asses*, six thousand seven hundred and twenty.

68 ¶ ° And *some* of the chief of the fathers, when they came to the house of the LORD which is at Jerusalem, offered freely for the house of God to set it up in his place:

69 They gave after their ability unto the ° treasure of the work threescore and one thousand drachms of gold, and five thousand

° Lev. xxii. 2, 10, 15, 16.—° Exod. xxviii. 30; Num. xxvii. 21. ° Neh. vii. 67.—° Neh. vii. 70.—° 1 Chron. xxvi. 20.

but in vain. And by the want of that oracle, they were taught to expect the great oracle, the Messiah.

Verse 64. *Forty and two thousand three hundred and threescore*—This is more than double the number which were carried away captive by Nebuchadnezzar. But here occurs a small difficulty; (like that in the end of the foregoing chapter;) for if we put together the several sums before mentioned, they amount to no more than twenty-nine thousand eight hundred and eighteen; so there wants about twelve thousand to make up this number of forty-two thousand three hundred and sixty. Therefore, either these were of the rest of the tribes of Israel, who came up with those of Judah and Benjamin: or, they might be Levites or other Israelites, who could not make out their descent: or else, which is most probable, some mistake in the numbers has been made by transcribers, which might easily happen, even though in general very great care was taken.

Verse 65. *And singing-women*—For women as well as men were employed in this exercise, in the temple-service.

Verse 68. *When they came to the house of the Lord*—That is, to the place in which the temple had stood, and where the ruins still remained. *Offered freely*—Made a new offering, besides that which they had brought out of Babylon, from their brethren there, mentioned chap. i. 4, 6. By this it appears that the Jews were not made absolute slaves in Babylon, but had liberty to trade and get riches for themselves; some of them being advanced to considerable offices in the king's court. Otherwise they could not have been able to offer such sums as are mentioned in the next verse.

Verse 69. *Threescore and one thousand drachms of gold, &c.*—About seventy-five thousand and five hundred pounds of our money; for every drachm of gold is worth ten shillings of our money, and every

A. M. 3468. pounds of silver, and one hundred
B. C. 536. priests' garments.

70 * So the priests, and the Levites, and some

* Chap. vi. 16 ;

mina, or pound of silver, nine pounds; for it contains sixty shekels, and every shekel of silver is worth three shillings of our money. *And one hundred priests' garments*—Garments, as well as gold and silver, were wont to be laid up in treasuries, Matt. vi. 20. We may infer then, from these rich offerings, not only, as has been just intimated, that the Jews were not made such poor slaves in Babylon as wrought for their lords and masters, but that there may not be all the truth imaginable in that common saying among them, that they were only the *bran*, that is, the dregs of the people, who returned to Jerusalem at the end of the captivity, and that all the *fine flour* stayed behind at Babylon. See *Prideaux's Connect.*, Ann. 536, and Dodd.

Verse 70. *And all Israel in their cities*—In the cities which their families had inhabited before their

of the people, and the singers, and the A. M. 3468
porters, and the Nethinims, dwelt in B. C. 536.
their cities, and all Israel in their cities.

Neh. vii. 73.

captivity. As to those who could not prove themselves Israelites by any genealogical register, they probably settled in those lands which were not claimed, or followed handicraft employments, of one sort or other, in the cities. Although their cities were out of repair, yea, in a ruinous state, yet, because they were *their* cities, such as God had assigned them, they were content to dwell in them; and were thankful for liberty and property, though they had little of pomp, plenty, or power. Their poverty was an afflictive cause, but their unity and unanimity were happy effects of it. Here was room enough for them all, and all their substance, so that there was no strife among them, but perfect harmony: a blessed presage of their comfortable settlement, as their discords in the latter times of that state were of their ruin.

CHAPTER III.

They set up the altar, offer sacrifices thereon, and keep the feasts, 1-8. They contribute, and lay the foundation of the temple, 7-13.

A. M. 3468. **AND** when the seventh month was
B. C. 536. come, and the children of Israel
were in the cities, the people gathered themselves
together as one man to Jerusalem.

2 Then stood up ¹ Jeshua the son of Jozadak, and his brethren the priests, and ² Zerubbabel the son of ^b Shealtiel, and his brethren, and builded the altar of the God of Israel, to offer

¹ Or, *Joshua*, Hag. i. 1; ii. 2; Zech. iii. 1.—^a Called *Zorobabel*, Matt. i. 12; Luke iii. 27.

NOTES ON CHAPTER III.

Verse 1. *When the seventh month was come*—We may suppose they left Babylon in the spring, and were four months on their journey; for so long Ezra and his company were in coming, Ezra vii. 9. The seventh month therefore commenced soon after their arrival in Judea, when, as many of the feasts of the Lord were then to be solemnized, *the people gathered themselves together*—By agreement among themselves, rather than by the command of authority; *to Jerusalem*—Though they were newly come to their cities, and had their hands full of business there, to provide necessities for themselves and their families, which might have excused them from attending on God's worship in public, till the hurry was a little over, as many with us foolishly put off their coming to the communion till they are settled in the world; yet, such was their zeal for religion, now they were newly come from under correction for their irreli-

396

burnt-offerings thereon, as *it is* ^c writ- A. M. 3468.
ten in the law of Moses the man of B. C. 536.
God.

3 And they set the altar upon his bases; for fear *was* upon them because of the people of those countries: and they offered burnt-offerings thereon unto the LORD, *even* ^d burnt-offerings morning and evening.

^b Matt. i. 12; Luke iii. 27, called *Salathiel*.—^c Deut. xii. 5.
^d Num. xxviii. 3.

gion, that they left all their business in the country to attend God's altar; and in this pious zeal they were all of a mind, they came *as one man*.

Verse 2. *Then stood up Jeshua the son of Jozadak*—He was the high-priest, called Joshua, Hag. i. 1. *And Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel*—That is, his grandson; for, properly speaking, he was the son of Pedaiah. *And builded the altar of the God of Israel*—Which was of more present necessity than the temple, both to make atonement to God for all their sins, and to obtain God's assistance for the building of the temple, and to strengthen their own hearts and hands in that great work.

Verse 3. *They set the altar upon his bases*—That is, in the place where it anciently stood; *for fear was upon them, because of the people of those countries*—And therefore they made the more haste, lest they should be hindered. Apprehension of dangers should quicken us in our duty. **Have we many ene-**

2

A. M. 3469. 4 ¶ They kept also the feast of
B. C. 535. tabernacles, ^fas it is written, and
^eoffered the daily-burnt-offerings by number,
according to the custom, ^gas the duty of every
day required;

5 And afterward ^hoffered the continual burnt-offering, both of the new-moons, and of all the set feasts of the LORD that were consecrated, and of every one that willingly offered a free-will-offering unto the LORD.

6 From the first day of the seventh month began they to offer burnt-offerings unto the LORD. But ⁱthe foundation of the temple of the LORD was not yet laid.

7 ¶ They gave money also unto the masons, and to the ^jcarpenters; and ^kmeat, and drink, and oil, unto them of Zidon, and to them of Tyre, to bring cedar-trees from Lebanon to the sea of ^lJoppa, ^maccording to the grant that they had of Cyrus king of Persia.

8 ¶ Now in the second year of their coming

^e Neh. viii. 14, 17; Zechariah xiv. 16.—^f Exodus xxiii. 16.
^g Num. xxix. 12, &c.—^h Heb. the matter of the day in his day.
ⁱ Exod. xxix. 38; Numbers xxviii. 3, 11, 19, 26; xxix. 2, 8, 13.
^j Heb. the temple of the LORD was not yet founded.—^k Or, workmen.

mies? We have the more need to have God for our friend, and to keep up our correspondence with him. Some translate the clause, *Although fear was upon them*; that is, although they were in great fear of their evil neighbours, yet, notwithstanding, they would not desist from restoring the worship of God.

Verse 4. *They kept also the feast of tabernacles*—This seems to be mentioned for all the solemnities of the month, whereof this was the most eminent; otherwise it is not probable that they would neglect the day of atonement, which was so solemnly enjoined, (Lev. xxiii. 27-29,) and was so exceeding suitable to their present condition.

Verse 5. *And afterward offered the continual burnt-offering*—The morning and evening sacrifice. The law required much, but they offered more; for though they had little wealth, they had much zeal. Happy they that bring with them out of the furnace of affliction such a holy heat as this!

Verse 6. *To offer burnt-offerings*—And the other sacrifices which were to be offered with them upon that first day of the seventh month, which was the feast of trumpets. Burnt-offerings are often put for all sacrifices, and the meaning of these two verses is, that the holy rites of sacrificing were restored, and continued ever after, in their several seasons, on the new moons, and other festival solemnities.

Verse 7. *Meat, and drink, and oil, unto them of Zidon and Tyre*—The inhabitants of those towns wanted provisions more than money, as appears by the history of Solomon's building, 1 Kings v. 10. *To bring cedar-trees from Lebanon*—Tyre and

unto the house of God at Jerusalem, A. M. 3469
B. C. 535. in the second month, began Zerubba-
bel the son of Shealtiel, and Jeshua the son of Jozadak, and the remnant of their brethren the priests and the Levites, and all they that were come out of the captivity unto Jerusalem; ⁿand appointed the Levites, from twenty years old and upward, to set forward the work of the house of the LORD.

9 Then stood ^oJeshua with his sons and his brethren, Kadmiel and his sons, the sons of ^pJudah, ^qtogether, to set forward the workmen in the house of God: the sons of Henedad, with their sons and their brethren the Levites.

10 And when the builders laid the foundation of the temple of the LORD, ^rthey set the priests in their apparel with trumpets, and the Levites the sons of Asaph with cymbals, to praise the LORD, after the ^sordinance of David king of Israel.

^l 1 Kings v. 6, 9; 2 Chron. ii. 10; Acts xii. 20.—^m 2 Chron. ii. 16; Acts ix. 36.—ⁿ Chap. vi. 3.—^o 1 Chron. xxiii. 24, 27.
^p Chap. ii. 40.—^q Or, Hodaviah, Chap. ii. 40.—^r Hebrew, as one.—^s 1 Chronicles xvi. 5, 42.—^t 1 Chron. vi. 31; xvi. 4; xxv. 1.

Zidon now, as of old, furnished them with workmen, and Lebanon with timber, orders for both which they had from Cyrus. What God calls us to we may depend upon his providence to furnish us with.

Verse 8. *In the second month began Zerubbabel, &c.*—The building of the temple was begun as soon as ever the season of the year would permit, and as soon as they had ended the solemnities of the pass-over. They took little more than half a year for preparing the ground and materials; so much were their hearts upon the work. *And Jeshua, and their brethren the priests and Levites, &c.*—Then the work of God is likely to go on well when magistrates, ministers, and people are zealously affected toward it, and agree in their places to promote it. It was God that gave them one heart for this service, and it promised a happy issue.

Verse 9. *Then stood Jeshua with his sons*—This person was not the high-priest, so called, but a Levite, of whom see chap. ii. 40. *To set forward the workmen*—To encourage them to a cheerful and vigorous prosecution of the work.

Verse 10. *To praise the Lord*—The priests, with the trumpets appointed by Moses, and the Levites, with cymbals appointed by David, made up a concert of praise at the laying of the foundation of the temple, to assist the singing of that everlasting hymn which will never be out of date, and for which our tongues should never be out of tune, the burden of Psalm cxxxvi. Whatever our condition is, let it be owned that God is good; and whatever fails, that his mercy fails not.

A. M. 3469. B. C. 535. 11 ^a And they sang together by course in praising and giving thanks unto the LORD; ^r because *he is good,* ^a for his mercy *endureth* for ever toward Israel. And all the people shouted with a great shout, when they praised the LORD, because the foundation of the house of the LORD was laid.

12 ^r But many of the priests and Levites, and chief of the fathers, *who were* ancient men, that

^a Exod. xv. 21; 2 Chron. vii. 3; Neh. xii. 24.—^r 1 Chron. xvi. 34;

Verses 11, 12. *And they sang together by course*—That is, answered one another alternately. *And all the people shouted with a great shout*—The people were very differently affected upon this occasion. Those that had only known the misery of having no temple at all, praised the Lord with shouts of joy when they saw the foundation of this laid, for to them this was as life from the dead. *But many that had seen the first house*—Which divers of them had, because it had not been destroyed quite sixty years ago, and who remembered the glory of that temple, *wept with a loud voice*—“Not only because this temple was likely to prove far inferior to that of Solomon, as to its outward structure, but because it was to want those extraordinary marks of the divine favour wherewith the other temple was honoured. Both the temples, without all doubt, were of the same dimensions; but here was the sad difference which drew tears from the eyes of the *elders*, that in all appearance there were no hopes that the poor beginnings of the *latter* temple would ever be raised to the grandeur and magnificence of the former, since the *one* had been built by the wisest and richest king, and constantly adorned by some one or other of his posterity; the other now begun by a small company of exiles just returned from their captivity: the one in a time of profound peace and the greatest opulence; the other in a time of common calamity and distress: the one finished with the most costly stones and timber, wrought with exquisite art, and overlaid with vast quantities of gold; the other to be raised out of no better materials than what could be dug from the ruinous foundation of the old

had seen the first house, when the A. M. 3469. B. C. 535. foundation of this house was laid before their eyes, wept with a loud voice; and many shouted aloud for joy:

13 So that the people could not discern the noise of the shout of joy from the noise of the weeping of the people: for the people shouted with a loud shout, and the noise was heard afar off.

Psa. cxxxvi. 1.—1 Chron. xvi. 41; Jer. xxxiii. 11.—Hag. ii. 3.

one. But the occasion of their grief was not only this, that the materials and ornaments of the second temple were even as nothing in comparison with the first, (Hag. ii. 3.) but that the ark of the covenant, and the mercy-seat which was upon it, the holy fire upon the altar, the Urim and Thummim, the spirit of prophecy, the Shechinah or divine presence, the five great things for which the former temple was so renowned, were lost and gone, and never to be recovered to this other. This was a just matter of lamentation to those who had seen these singular tokens of the divine favour in the former temple, and a discouragement of their proceeding with the building of the present; and therefore the Prophet Haggai was sent to inform them that all these wants and defects should be abundantly repaired by the coming of the Messiah, the true Shechinah of the Divine Majesty, in the time of the second temple: (chap. ii. 7-9:) *I will shake all nations, and the desire of all nations shall come; and I will fill this house with glory: the glory of this latter house shall be greater than of the former, saith the Lord of hosts.*—Dodd.

Verse 13. *So that the people could not discern, &c.*—The mixture of sorrow and joy here is a representation of this world. In heaven all are singing and none sighing; in hell all are wailing and none rejoicing: but here on earth we can scarce discern the shouts of joy from the noise of the weeping; let us learn to rejoice with them that rejoice, and weep with them that weep. Meantime, let us ourselves rejoice as though we rejoiced not, and weep as though we wept not.

CHAPTER IV.

The adversaries, not being allowed to build with them, endeavour to hinder the work, 1-5. They falsely accuse them to Artaxerxes, 6-16. Who thereupon orders the work to be stopped, 17-22. It is stopped, 23, 24.

A. M. 3469. B. C. 535. NOW when ^a the adversaries of Judah and Benjamin heard that ¹ the

children of the captivity builded the temple unto the LORD God of Israel; A. M. 3469. B. C. 535.

^a Verses 7, 9.

¹ Heb. the sons of the transportation.

NOTES ON CHAPTER IV.

Verse 1. *Now when the adversaries of Judah, &c.*—The Samaritans, the relics of the ten tribes, and foreigners that had joined themselves to them, and

patched up that mongrel religion of which we had an account 2 Kings xvii. 33, where it is said, *They feared the Lord, and served their own gods.* They are called *the people of the land*, verse 4. Thus,

A. M. 3326. 2 Then they came to Zerubbabel, B. C. 678. and to the chief of the fathers, and said unto them, Let us build with you; for we seek your God, as ye do; and we do sacrifice unto him ^bsince the days of Esar-haddon king of Assur, which brought us up hither.

3 But Zerubbabel, and Jeshua, and the rest of the chief of the fathers of Israel, said unto them, ^cYe have nothing to do with us to build a house unto our God; but we ourselves together will build unto the LORD God of Israel, as ^dKing Cyrus the king of Persia hath commanded us.

^b 2 Kings xvii. 24, 32; xix. 37; Verse 10.—^c Neh. ii. 20.
^d Chap. i. 1, 3.

the worst enemies that Judah and Benjamin had were those that said they were Jews, and were not.

Verse 2. *They came to Zerubbabel, &c., and said, Let us build with you*—Hearing that the temple was in building, they were presently aware that it would be a fatal blow to their superstition, and therefore set themselves to oppose it. But as they had not power to do it openly and by force, they endeavoured to do it secretly and by wiles. They offer their service to build with them, but only that by this conjunction with them they might pry into their counsels, find some matter of accusation against them, and thereby retard the work, while they pretended to further it. *For we seek your God, as ye do*—This was false; for though they sought the same God, they did not seek him only, nor seek him in the way he had appointed, as the true Jews did. *And we do sacrifice unto him since the days of Esar-haddon*—Son of Sennacherib, and after him king of Assyria, who brought or sent these persons thither, either, 1st, in the days of Shalmaneser, who reigned in Assyria but eight years before Esar-haddon, and so Esar-haddon might be one of his commanders, and the man by whom that colony was sent; or, 2d, in the reign of Esar-haddon, who sent a second colony to strengthen the first.

Verse 3. *Ye have nothing to do with us*—The chief of the fathers were soon aware that they meant them no kindness, whatever they might pretend, but really designed to do them an injury; and therefore, (though they had need enough of help, if it had been such as they could confide in,) they told them plainly they could not accept it, nor unite with them, as being of another nation and religion, and therefore not concerned in Cyrus's grant, which was confined to the Israelites. *But we ourselves will build*—For you are none of those with whom we dare hold communion. Thus we ought to take heed with whom we go partners, and on whose hand we lean. While we trust God with an absolute confidence, we must trust men with a prudent caution. They do not plead to them the law of their God, which forbade them to mingle themselves with stran-

4 Then ^ethe people of the land A. M. 3470. weakened the hands of the people of B. C. 534. Judah, and troubled them in building,

5 And hired counsellors against them, to frustrate their purpose, all the days of Cyrus king of Persia, even until the reign of Darius king of Persia.

6 And in the reign of ^fAhasuerus, B. C. 529. in the beginning of his reign, wrote they unto him an accusation against the inhabitants of Judah and Jerusalem.

7 ¶ And in the days of Artaxerxes B. C. 522. wrote ^gBishlam, Mithredath, Tabeel, and the rest of their ^hcompanions unto Arta-

^e Chap. iii. 3.—^f Heb. *Ahashverosh*.—^g Or, *the peace*.
^h Heb. *societies*.

gers, though they especially had an eye to that, but they urge what they knew would have greater weight with them, the king's commission, which was directed to themselves only. In doing good we have need of the wisdom of the serpent, as well as of the innocence of the dove.

Verse 4. *But the people of the land*—Hebrew, *of that land*; namely, the Samaritans, the present inhabitants of that province. *Weakened the hands of the people of Judah*—As they could not divert them from the work, they endeavoured to discourage them in it, by persuading them it was in vain to attempt it, and that they would never be able to finish what they had begun. *And troubled them in building*—Laying all the impediments they could in their way; by false reports and slanders; by threatenings; and by preventing materials or provisions from coming to them; or by enticing away their workmen, and other means described afterward.

Verse 5. *And hired counsellors against them*—Bribed some of the king's council, in order that by their artifices, and interests in his court, they might give some stop to the work, and frustrate the purpose of the Jews. *All the days of Cyrus king of Persia*—For though Cyrus still favoured the Jews, yet he was then diverted by his wars, and his son Cambyses was left his viceroy, who was a wicked prince, and an enemy to the Jews. *Even until the reign of Darius*—The son of Hystaspis, who, having killed the magi, (that, after Cambyses, had possessed themselves of the kingdom,) was made king; and marrying Atossa, the daughter of Cyrus, and loving her very much, confirmed the decree of Cyrus, and followed his steps, that he might stand the safer himself.

Verse 6. *In the reign of Ahasuerus*—A common name of divers kings of Persia. This Ahasuerus was probably Smerdis, one of the magi who seized the kingdom after Cambyses. *Wrote they unto him an accusation against Judah and Jerusalem*—Importing that they intended to set up for themselves, and not to depend upon the king of Persia.

Verse 7. *In the days of Artaxerxes, &c.*—The

A. M. 3482. xerxes king of Persia ; and the writing
B. C. 522. of the letter was written in the Syrian tongue, and interpreted in the Syrian tongue.

8 Rehum the chancellor and Shimshai the scribe wrote a letter against Jerusalem to Artaxerxes the king in this sort :

9 Then wrote Rehum the chancellor, and Shimshai the scribe, and the rest of their companions ; the Dinaites, the Apharsathchites, the Tarpelites, the Apharsites, the Archevites, the Babylonians, the Susanchites, the Dehavites, and the Elamites,

B. C. 678. 10 And the rest of the nations whom the great and noble Asnapper brought over, and set in the cities of Samaria, and the rest that are on this side the river, and at such a time.

11 ¶ This is the copy of the letter that they

^a Or, secretary. — ^b Chald. societies. — ^c 2 Kings xvii. 30, 31. ^d Verse 1. — ^e Verses 11, 17 ; Chap. vii. 12. — ^f Chald. Cheemath.

sacred writer, having in the foregoing verse mentioned a stop being put to the building of the temple, till the reign of Darius, now proceeds to relate particularly how it was effected. By Artaxerxes here is probably meant the son of Cyrus, called Cambyses by heathen writers. *Written in the Syrian tongue, and interpreted in the Syrian tongue*—That is, it was written both in the Syrian character, and the Syrian language : for sometimes the Chaldee or Syrian words were written in the Hebrew character.

Verses 8, 9. *Rehum the chancellor and Shimshai the scribe wrote a letter, &c.*—These two, as it was their office, put into writing, or drew up, a letter, agreeable to what had been resolved on in a council of the great men, or governors, mentioned in the foregoing verse. *The Dinaites, &c.*—These nine nations came out of Assyria, Persia, Media, Susiana, and other provinces of that vast empire ; who, with one consent, joined in this letter or petition.

Verse 10. *Whom the great and noble Asnapper brought over*—Some take Asnapper to be another name for Shalmaneser, or for Esar-haddon, who sent these colonies hither. But it is more reasonable to think he was some great commander, or other person of eminence, who was appointed captain of this colony, and intrusted with the office of conducting them over the river Euphrates, and seeing them settled in these countries.

Verse 12. *Thy servants, and at such a time, &c.*—The particular time when the letter was written was no doubt expressed therein ; but in this narrative it was sufficient to mention it in general.

Verse 12. *And have set up the walls thereof*—This was a mere calumny, for they had attempted no such thing as to build the walls of Jerusalem. They had indeed built some houses, without which the place could not be inhabited, and were now em-

sent unto him, even unto Artaxerxes the king ; Thy servants the men on this side the river, and at such a time.

12 Be it known unto the king, that the Jews which came up from thee to us, are come unto Jerusalem, building the rebellious and the bad city, and have set up the walls thereof, and joined the foundations.

13 Be it known now unto the king, that if this city be builded, and the walls set up again, then will they not pay toll, tribute, and custom, and so thou shalt endamage the revenue of the kings.

14 Now because we have maintenance from the king's palace, and it was not meet for us to see the king's dishonour, therefore have we sent and certified the king ;

15 That search may be made in the book of

^a Or, finished. — ^b Chald. sewed together. — ^c Chald. give. — ^d Chap. vii. 24. — ^e Or, strength. — ^f Chald. we are salted with the salt of the palace.

ployed in erecting the walls of the temple : but they had not begun to encompass the city with walls, to defend it against the incursions of their enemies. This was not undertaken till long after. The assertion of the Samaritans, therefore, was without foundation. But being confidently affirmed, they thought it would be easily credited by the king, whose heart and ears they had contrived to possess by their counsellors.

Verse 13. *Then will they not pay toll, tribute, and custom*—“ By the first of these, Grotius understands that which every head paid to the king, and which we call poll-money ; by the second, the excise, as we now speak, which was upon commodities and merchandise ; and by the last, the land-tax.”—Dodd.

Verse 14. *Now because we have maintenance from the king's palace*—In the Hebrew it is, *we are salted with the salt of the palace*. That is, are sustained by the king's munificence, or have a salary from him, as Junius translates it. In ancient times, it appears, it was usual to allow those who had deserved well, and on that account were honourably provided for at the king's charge, among other things, a daily quantity of salt ; it being a thing very necessary in human life. Locke, however, who translates the clause, *we have eaten of the king's salt*, understands the meaning to be, “ We have engaged ourselves in a covenant of friendship with him.” *It was not meet for us to see the king's dishonour*—Thus they represent themselves as very loyal to the government, and mightily concerned for the honour and interest of it ; and hence they urge the king to put a stop to the building of the city and temple of Jerusalem, as what would certainly be to his loss and dishonour.

Verse 15. *In the book of the records of thy fathers*—That is, thy predecessors, the former emperors of

A. M. 3482. the records of thy fathers: so shalt
B. C. 522. thou find in the book of the records,
and know that this city is a rebellious city, and
hurtful unto kings and provinces, and that they
have ¹³ moved sedition ¹⁴ within the same of old
time: for which cause was this city destroy-
ed.

16 We certify the king that, if this city be
buildd *again*, and the walls thereof set up, by
this means thou shalt have no portion on this
side the river.

17 ¶ Then sent the king an answer unto
Rehum the chancellor, and to Shimshai the
scribe, and to the rest of their ¹⁵ companions that
dwell in Samaria, and unto the rest beyond the
river, Peace, and at such a time.

18 The letter which ye sent unto us hath been
plainly read before me.

19 And ¹⁶ I commanded, and search hath been
made, and it is found that this city of old time
hath ¹⁷ made insurrection against kings, and

¹³ Chald. *made*.—¹⁴ Chald. *in the midst thereof*.—¹⁵ Chald.
societies.—¹⁶ Chald. *by me a decree is set*.—¹⁷ Chald. *lifted up*

this empire; namely, in the Assyrian and Babylonish
records; which, together with the empire, were now
in the hands of the Persian kings.

Verses 19, 20. *That rebellion and sedition have
been found therein*—One instance or two of it, in
later times, had served to fasten this odious charac-
ter upon them, as if they had been always guilty of
these crimes. *There have been mighty kings also
over Jerusalem*—And therefore the king thought it
not advisable to permit them to go on with rebuild-
ing the city, lest they should become powerful
again.

Verse 21. *Give ye now commandment to cause
these men to cease*—Thus he suffered himself to be
imposed upon by their fraud and falsehood, and took
no care to examine the allegations of their petition
concerning what the Jews were now doing; but
took all they had asserted for matter of fact, and
therefore was very ready to gratify them with an or-
der of council to stay proceedings. *Until another
commandment shall be given*—So that, it appears,
however, he kept his ears open to further informa-
tion; which if he should receive, different from
theirs, he might give other orders.

Verse 22. *Take heed now that ye fail not, &c.*—
Let not a thing, which may be of such ill conse-
quence, grow to a head, whereby others may be ex-
cited to follow the example, and rebel against the
king.

Verse 23. *And made them to cease by force and
power*—As they abused the king by their misin-
formations, in the obtaining of this order, so they

that rebellion and sedition have been A. M. 3482.
made therein. B. C. 522.

20 There have been mighty kings also over
Jerusalem, which have ^k ruled over all *countries*
^l beyond the river: and toll, tribute, and cus-
tom, was paid unto them.

21 ¹⁸ Give ye now commandment to cause
these men to cease, and that this city be not
buildd, until *another* commandment shall be
given from me.

22 Take heed now that ye fail not to do this: why
should damage grow to the hurt of the kings?

23 ¶ Now when the copy of King Artaxerxes'
letter was read before Rehum, and Shimshai
the scribe, and their companions, they went up
in haste to Jerusalem unto the Jews, and made
them to cease ¹⁹ by force and power.

24 Then ceased the work of the B. C. 320.
house of God which is at Jerusalem.

So it ceased unto the second year of the reign
of Darius king of Persia.

itself.—^k 1 Kings iv. 21; Psa. lxxii. 8.—^l Gen. xv. 18; Josh.
i. 4.—¹⁸ Chald. *Make a decree*.—¹⁹ Chald. *by arm and power*.

abused him in the execution of it; for the order was
only to prevent the building of the city and its walls.
But, having power in their hands, they on this pre-
tence stopped the building of the temple. See what
need we have to pray, not only for kings, but for *all
in authority* under them; because the quietness of
our lives depends much on the integrity and wisdom
of inferior magistrates as well as the supreme.

Verse 24. *Then ceased the work of the house of
God*—For they neither could nor might proceed in
that work against their king's prohibition, without a
special command from the King of heaven, which,
however, they afterward received. But even then
they were cold and indifferent about it, and were ac-
cordingly reproved by the Prophets Haggai and Ze-
chariah, chap. v. 1, compared with Hag. i. 2. So
that the work, in a great measure, stood still until *the
second year of the reign of Darius*—This, as was
intimated on verse 6, was Darius the son of Hystas-
pis, successor of Cambyses; not, as some would have
it, Darius Nothus, the son of Artaxerxes Longima-
nus: for he was not emperor till above one hundred
years after Cyrus, and, if he had been the Darius
here intended, there must consequently have been
about one hundred and thirty years from the begin-
ning of the building of the temple to the finishing of
it; which is not credible to any one that considers,
1st, That the same Zerubbabel did both lay the founda-
tion, and finish the work, Zech. iv. 9. 2d, That
some of the same persons who saw the finishing of
this second house, had seen the glory of the first
house, Hag. ii. 3.

CHAPTER V.

Zerubbabel, encouraged by Haggai and Zechariah, sets the work forward again, 1, 2. Their adversaries oppose them again, 3-5. Write to Darius, 6-17.

A. M. 3484. B. C. 520. **THEN** the prophets, ^b Haggai the prophet, and ^c Zechariah the son of Iddo, prophesied unto the Jews that were in Judah and Jerusalem in the name of the God of Israel, even unto them.

2 Then rose up ^d Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, and Jeshua the son of Jozadak, and began to build the house of God which is at Jerusalem: and with them were the prophets of God helping them.

3 ¶ At the same time came to them ^e Tatnai, governor on this side the river, and Shethar-boznai, and their companions, and said thus unto them, ^f Who hath commanded you to build this house, and to make up this wall?

4 ^g Then said we unto them after this manner,

^b Hag. i. 1.—^c Zech. i. 1.—^d Chap. iii. 2.—^e Verse 6; Chap. vi. 6.—^f Verse 9.—^g Verse 10.—^h Chald. *that build*

NOTES ON CHAPTER V.

Verse 1. *Haggai and Zechariah*—Concerning these prophets, see the books which bear their names. They are both thought to have been born at Babylon during the captivity, and both with united zeal encouraged the people to go on with the work of the temple. Upon the accession of Darius to the throne, Haggai, in particular, by reproaching the people with their indolence and insensibility; by telling them that they were careful enough to lodge themselves very commodiously, while the house of the Lord lay buried in its ruins; and by putting them in mind that the calamities of drought and famine, wherewith God had afflicted them since their return, were owing to their neglect in repairing the temple, prevailed with them to set about the work in good earnest; so that, by virtue of these reproofs, as well as some encouragements which God occasionally authorized him to give them, they brought the whole to a conclusion in a short time. *The son of Iddo*—That is, the grandson; for Zechariah was the son of Barachiah. *Prophesied unto the Jews*—Commanding them from God to return to building the temple, with a promise of his favour and assistance.

Verse 2. *Then rose up Zerubbabel and Jeshua, and began to build the house*—It had been begun to be built long before, but from the first had gone on very slowly, and afterward had been quite intermitted, till those great men, excited by the prophets, set the work forward again. *With them were the prophets of God helping them*—Encouraging them by their presence, and by assuring them that God would be with them to protect them from their enemies, and give them success. It is supposed the work had been stopped about fifteen years. The first chapter of Haggai is the best comment on these two verses.

What are the names of the men ¹ that make this building? A. M. 3484 B. C. 520.

5 But ^h the eye of their God was upon the elders of the Jews, that they could not cause them to cease, till the matter came to Darius: and then they returned ⁱ answer by letter concerning this matter.

6 ¶ The copy of the letter that Tatnai, governor on this side the river, and Shethar-boznai, ^k and his companions the Apharsachites, which were on this side the river, sent unto Darius the king: B. C. 519.

7 They sent a letter unto him, ^l wherein was written thus: Unto Darius the king, all peace.

8 Be it known unto the king, that we went

this building.—^h Chap. vii. 6, 28; Psa. xxxiii. 18.—ⁱ Chap. vi. 8.—^k Chap. iv. 9.—^l Chald. *in the midst whereof.*

Verses 3, 4. *Tatnai and Shethar-boznai*—These were probably new governors, or prefects, whom Darius had sent; for it was usual with new kings to change the governors of provinces. *Who hath commanded you to build this house?*—No sooner did the Spirit of God stir up the friends of the temple to appear for it, but the evil spirit stirred up its enemies to appear against it. While the people builded and ceiled their own houses, their enemies gave them no molestation, (Hag. i. 4.) though the king's order was to put a stop to the building of the city, chap. iv. 21. But when they fell to work again at the temple, then the alarm was taken, and all heads were at work to hinder it. *Then said we unto them*—We Jews; *What are the names, &c.*—Certainly there ought to be no interrogation in this verse, but the words should be rendered, *Then we told them accordingly* (that is, according to what they asked) *what were the names of the men that made this building;* that is, who were the chief undertakers and encouragers of the work. For it appears, from verse 10, that Tatnai and his companions inquired who were the chief promoters of the work, to which a true answer was immediately given.

Verse 5. *But the eye of God was upon the elders, &c.*—The peculiar favour, watchful providence, and powerful protection of God, giving them courage and resolution to go on with the work, notwithstanding the threats of their enemies; and so overruling the hearts and hands of their enemies, that they did not hinder them by force, as they might have done. While we are employed in God's work, we are taken under his special protection, and his eye is upon us for good.

Verse 8. *To the house of the great God*—Whom the Jews account the great God, the God of gods,

A. M. 3485. into the province of Judea, to the
B. C. 519. house of the great God, which is build-
ed with ³ great stones, and timber is laid in the
walls, and this work goeth fast on, and prosper-
eth in their hands.

9 Then asked we those elders, *and* said unto
them thus, ¹ Who commanded you to build this
house, and to make up these walls?

10 We asked their names also, to certify thee,
that we might write the names of the men that
were the chief of them.

11 And thus they returned us answer, saying,
We are the servants of the God of heaven and
earth, and build the house that was builded
these many years ago, which a great king of
Israel builded ^m and set up.

12 But ^a after that our fathers had provoked
the God of heaven unto wrath, he gave them
into the hand of ^o Nebuchadnezzar the king
of Babylon, the Chaldean, who destroyed this
house, and carried the people away into Babylon.

B. C. 519. 13 But in the first year of ^p Cyrus
the king of Babylon, *the same* king
Cyrus made a decree to build this house of God.

³ Chald. *stones of rolling*.—¹ Verses 3, 4.—^m 1 Kings vi. 1.
² 2 Chron. xxxvi. 16.—² Kings xxiv. 2; xxv. 8, 11.—^p Chap. i. 1.

esteeming all others to be but little, or rather false
gods. And, indeed, thus far the greater part of the
Samaritans agreed with them.

Verse 11. *We are the servants of the God of hea-
ven and earth*—The God we worship is not a local
deity; and therefore we cannot be charged with
making a faction, or forming a sect in building this
temple to his honour. But we pay our homage to
the God on whom the whole creation depends, and
therefore ought to be protected and assisted by all,
and hindered by none. It is the wisdom as well as
duty of kings to countenance the servants of the
God of heaven. *And build the house that was build-
ed*—Or rather, *rebuild the house* that was first built
many years ago.

Verses 12-14. *After that our fathers had pro-
voked the God of heaven*—It was to punish us for
our sins, that we were, for a time, put out of the pos-
session of this house, and not because the gods of the
nations had prevailed against our God. *But in the
first year of Cyrus, &c.*—We have the royal decree
of Cyrus to justify us, and bear us out in what we
do. And he not only permitted, but charged and
commanded us, to build this house, and to build it *in
its place*, (verse 15,) the same place where it had
stood before. *And the vessels also, &c.*—These also
he delivered to one whom he intrusted with the care
of them, and commanded him to restore them to
their ancient place and use. And these we have to
show in confirmation of what we allege.

14 And ^q the vessels also of gold and ^r silver of the house of God, which Ne-
buchadnezzar took out of the temple that *was*
in Jerusalem, and brought them into the temple
of Babylon, those did Cyrus the king take out
of the temple of Babylon, and they were deliver-
ed unto *one* ^r whose name *was* Sheshbazzar,
whom he had made ^q governor;

15 And said unto him, Take these vessels,
go, carry them into the temple that *is* in Jeru-
salem, and let the house of God be builded in
his place.

16 Then came the same Sheshbazzar, *and*
^a laid the foundation of the house of God which
is in Jerusalem: and since that time even until
now hath it been in building, and ^t yet it is not
finished.

17 Now therefore, if *it seem* good to the king,
^u let there be search made in the king's treasure-
house, which *is* there at Babylon, whether it
be so, that a decree was made of Cyrus the
king to build this house of God at Jerusalem,
and let the king send his pleasure to us con-
cerning this matter.

^q Chap. i. 7; vi. 5.—^r Hag. i. 14; ii. 2, 21.—^s Or, *deputy*.
^t Chap. iii. 8, 10.—^u Chap. vi. 15.—^v Chap. vi. 1, 2.

Verse 16. *Then came the same Sheshbazzar, and
laid the foundation, &c.*—The building was begun
according to this order, as soon as ever we were re-
turned, so that we have not forfeited the benefit of
the order, for want of pursuing it in time; still it has
been in building; but because we have met with op-
position, it is not finished. But observe, they men-
tion not the falsehood and malice of the former go-
vernors, nor make any complaint of that, (though
they had cause enough,) to teach us not to render
bitterness for bitterness; nor the most just reproach
for that which is most unjust; but to think it enough,
if we can obtain fair treatment for the future, with-
out an invidious repetition of former injuries. Let
us learn hence, with meekness and fear to give a
reason of the hope that is within us, 1 Pet. iii. 15;
rightly to understand, and then readily to declare
what we do in God's service, and why we do it.

Verse 17. *Now therefore, let there be search made,
&c.*—So they properly propose, that the real facts
might be ascertained; *in the king's treasure-house*—
The house or place where the records of the king-
dom were preserved very carefully, as rich trea-
sures are wont to be. Thus these Samaritans seem
to have given a fair representation of the cause of the
Jews to the king, telling him only what was done,
namely, that they were rearing the temple, as per-
sons that intended to worship, and not what was not
done, that they were fortifying the city, as if they
intended war; as those Samaritans that had written

to Artaxerxes had falsely represented. It is probable, if their case had been as fairly stated to the former king (see the foregoing chapter) as it was now to Darius, he would not have ordered the work to be

hindered. God's people could not be persecuted if they were not belied. Let but the cause of God and truth be fairly stated and heard, and it will keep its ground.

CHAPTER VI.

Darius's answer, 1-7. His decree, 8-12. The temple is finished, 13-15. The dedication of it, 16-18. The passover kept, 19-22.

A. M. 3485.
B. C. 519. **T**HEN Darius the king made a decree, ^a and search was made in the house of the ¹ rolls, where the treasures were ² laid up in Babylon.

2 And there was found at ³ Achmetha, in the palace that *is* in the province of the Medes, a roll, and therein *was* a record thus written :

3 In the first year of Cyrus the king, *the same* Cyrus the king made a decree *concerning* the house of God at Jerusalem, Let the house be builded, the place where they offered sacrifices, and let the foundations thereof be strongly laid; the height thereof threescore cubits, *and* the breadth thereof threescore cubits;

4 ^b *With* three rows of great stones, and a row of new timber: and let the expenses be given out of the king's house :

5 And also let ^c the golden and silver vessels of the house of God, which Nebuchadnezzar took forth out of the temple which *is* at Jeru-

saalem, and brought unto Babylon, be ^{A. M. 3485.} restored, and ^{B. C. 519.} brought again unto the temple which *is* at Jerusalem, *every one* to his place, and place *them* in the house of God.

6 ^d Now *therefore*, Tatnai, governor beyond the river, Shethar-boznai, and ^e your companions the Apharsachites, which *are* beyond the river, be ye far from thence :

7 Let the work of this house of God alone; let the governor of the Jews, and the elders of the Jews, build this house of God in this place.

8 Moreover, ^f I make a decree what ye shall do to the elders of these Jews for the building of this house of God: that of the king's goods, *even* of the tribute beyond the river, forthwith expenses be given unto these men, that they be not ^g hindered.

9 And that which they have need of, both young bullocks, and rams, and lambs, for the burnt-offerings of the God of heaven, wheat, salt,

^a Chap. v. 17.—¹ Chald. books.—² Chald. made to descend.
³ Or, Ecbatana, or, in a coffer.—^b 1 Kings vi. 36.—^c Chap. i. 7;

v. 14.—^d Chald. go.—^e Chap. v. 3.—^f Chald. their societies.
^g Chald. by me a decree is made.—^h Chald. made to cease.

NOTES ON CHAPTER VI.

Verse 1. *Then Darius the king made a decree*—To search the rolls in Babylon, where search was fairly made; but not finding the edict there, they searched in Achmetha, or Ecbatana, the royal city of the Medes and Persians, and found it there. As Darius, the better to fortify his title to the crown, had married two of the daughters of Cyrus, he thought himself concerned to do every thing which might tend to the honour of that great prince, and therefore more readily confirmed the decree which he had granted to the Jews.

Verse 3. *The height thereof threescore cubits*—These proportions differ from those of Solomon's temple, which was but thirty cubits high, only the porch was a hundred and twenty cubits high, and but twenty cubits in breadth. Either therefore Solomon's cubits were sacred cubits, which were larger than the other, and these but common cubits; or, the sixty cubits of height are meant only for the porch. And the word rendered *breadth*, should be rendered *the extension or the length* of it; it be-

ing improbable that the king should give orders about the breadth, and none about the length of it.

Verse 5. *And place them in the house of God*—Thus far the decree of Cyrus is recited, which justified all the allegations of the Jews in the foregoing chapter. In the next verse the decree of Darius thereupon appears to begin.

Verses 6, 7. *Be ye far from thence*—Come not near Jerusalem to give the Jews any hinderance or disturbance. *Let the work of the house of God alone*—The manner of expression intimates that he knew they had an inclination to hinder it. Thus was the wrath of the enemy made to praise God, and the remainder thereof did he restrain.

Verses 8, 9. *That of the king's goods, forthwith expenses be given*—That the work might not be stopped for want of money to carry it on, he orders certain sums to be paid them out of his own revenue. *And that which they have need of, both young bullocks, &c.*—He orders that they should be supplied with every thing they wanted for maintaining the sacrifices at the temple, when it should be built, both

A. M. 3485. wine, and oil, according to the appoint-
B. C. 519. ment of the priests which are at Jeru-
salem, let it be given them day by day without
fail :

10 * That they may offer sacrifices ^o of sweet
savours unto the God of heaven, and ^f pray for
the life of the king, and of his sons.

11 Also I have made a decree that whosoever
shall alter this word, let timber be pulled down
from his house, and being set up, ^o let him be
hanged thereon ; ^o and let his house be made a
dunghill for this.

12 And the God that hath caused his ^b name
to dwell there destroy all kings and people, that
shall put to their hand to alter and to destroy

* Chap. vii. 23 ; Jer. xxix. 7.—^o Chald. of rest.—^f 1 Tim.
ii. 1.—^o Chald. let him be destroyed.—^o Dan. ii. 5 ; iii. 29.

for burnt-offerings and meat-offerings. *Let it be
given them day by day*—That the morning and even-
ing sacrifices might not fail to be offered every day.

Verse 10. *And pray for the life of the king and
his sons*—Persuaded that he, whom he once and
again reverently calls *the God of heaven*, was ready
to hear and answer his people in all things for which
they called upon him, he desires an interest in their
prayers for himself and family, and, in order that he
might obtain it, was kind to them. For though the
Jews were not allowed to desire the heathen to
pray to their deities for them, because they were
forbidden to acknowledge any other gods but one :
yet the heathen might with reason ask the Jews to
pray to Jehovah for them ; because they acknow-
ledged a plurality of gods, and allowed the God of
Israel to be really a God, as well as those they them-
selves worshipped. And the Jews were not pro-
hibited either by reason or revelation from addressing
their prayers to God for the heathen, when they
were desired by them so to do. What then are we to
think of the spirit of those Christians, so called, who
hold it unlawful to pray for those whom they denomi-
nate *heretics*, though they are not heathen, but wor-
shippers of the same living and true God, whom
they themselves profess to worship ? Let them blush
when they read this, to think how far the spirit of the
Jewish religion excels theirs !

Verse 12. *The God that hath caused his name to
dwell there*—Who hath willed that a temple should
be built there, called the temple or house of Jehovah.
*Destroy all kings and people that shall put to their
hand to alter, &c.*—Darius was touched with such
a sense of the greatness of the God of the Jews,
that he prays, that He who had all power in heaven
and earth, and was King of kings, would not only
punish all those kings who went about to obstruct
this work, but destroy both them and their people.
Though this temple was at length most justly de-
stroyed by the righteous hand of God, yet perhaps
the Romans, who were the instruments of that de-
struction, felt the effects of this curse. For that em-

this house of God which is at Jerusa- A. M. 3485.
lem. I Darius have made a decree ; B. C. 519.
let it be done with speed.

13 ¶ Then Tatnai, governor on this side the
river, Shethar-boznai, and their companions, ac-
cording to that which Darius the king had sent,
so they did speedily.

14 ⁱ And the elders of the Jews builded, and
they prospered through the prophesying of
Haggai the prophet and Zechariah the son of
Iddo. And they builded, and finished it, ac-
cording to the commandment of the God of
Israel, and according to the ¹⁰ commandment of
^k Cyrus, and ^l Darius, and ^m Artaxerxes king
of Persia.

ⁱ 1 Kings ix. 3.—^l Chap. v. 1.—¹⁰ Chald. decrees.—^k Chap.
i. 1 ; v. 13 ; Verse 3.—^l Chap. iv. 24.—^m Chap. vii. 1.

pire sensibly declined ever after, till it was wholly
destroyed.

Here let us admire, how the divine providence
overruleth every thing according to its purpose, to
bring about all its wise designs. The great men, we
here find, stood up against the poor and shattered
remnant of Judah ; they took counsel together how
to oppress them, and keep them down. They laid
their plans, exhibited their complaints against them,
and thought to overturn them : but, quite contrary
to their thoughts, the steps they took for this purpose
operated the contrary way, and proved the means
of exalting and raising those whom they intended to
ruin to a higher pitch of power and pre-eminence.
The king, whose governors these men were, and to
whom, undoubtedly, they represented how much it
was for his interest to put a stop to the rise of Judah,
instead of hearkening to their complaints, as was
natural, and acting accordingly, sent back a decree,
not only forbidding them to molest the Jews in any
way, but also granting them the most extraordinary
privileges and encouragements, as to the greatest
favourites. To what can we attribute this extraordi-
nary behaviour in the king, but to an overruling
providence ? which ruleth even the hearts of kings,
and turneth them as it seemeth best to his sovereign
wisdom.

Verse 13. *They did it speedily*—When they re-
ceived this order from the king, they applied them-
selves with as much haste to encourage and assist
the work, as their predecessors had used to put a
stop to it. Thus the enemies of the Jews were
suddenly made their friends.

Verse 14. *They prospered through the prophesy-
ing of Haggai, &c.*—This is a seasonable intimation
that this great and unexpected success was not to be
ascribed to chance, or to the kindness or good-hu-
mour of Darius, but unto God only, who, by his
prophets, had required and encouraged them to pro-
ceed in the work, and by his mighty power disposed
Darius's heart to such kind and noble purposes.
And Artaxerxes—That is, Artaxerxes Longimanus,

A. M. 3489. 15 And this house was finished on B. C. 515. the third day of the month Adar, which was in the sixth year of the reign of Darius the king.

16 ¶ And the children of Israel, the priests, and the Levites, and the rest of ¹¹ the children of the captivity, kept ² the dedication of this house of God with joy,

17 And ³ offered at the dedication of this house of God a hundred bullocks, two hundred rams, four hundred lambs; and for a sin-offering for all Israel, twelve he-goats, according to the number of the tribes of Israel.

¹¹ Chald. *the sons of the transportation*.—² 1 Kings viii. 63; 2 Chron. vii. 5.—³ Chapter viii. 35.—¹ 1 Chronicles xxiv. 1. ¹ 1 Chron. xxiii. 6.

who is here joined with Cyrus and Darius; because, though the temple was built before he came to the throne, in Darius's reign, (verse 15,) yet it was afterward beautified and adorned in consequence of the commission he gave Ezra and Nehemiah for that purpose, the latter of whom was invested with full power to take measures for the building of the city, and also the ordering of all other things that concerned the Jewish nation and religion.

Verse 15. *This house was finished in the third day of the month Adar*—The tenth of March, in the year of the world 3489, in little more than four years after the Jews had returned to the work, and engaged heartily in it, in consequence of the reproofs and exhortations of Haggai and Zechariah; in something more than two years after the forementioned decree of Darius had been given forth; in about twenty years after the return from captivity; and five hundred and fifteen before the coming of the Messiah.

Verse 16. *The children of Israel*—Probably some out of each of the twelve tribes; *the priests and Levites, &c., kept the dedication of the house of God with joy*—When it was built, being designed only for sacred uses, "they now showed by an example how it should be used," which, says Bishop Patrick, is the proper and simple sense of *dedicating*. They entered upon it with solemnity, and probably with a public declaration of the separating it from common uses, and the surrendering it to the honour of God, to be employed in his service.

Verse 17. *And offered a hundred bullocks, &c.*—Few in number in comparison of those which Solomon had offered at the dedication of his temple. But, being according to their present ability, their offering was accepted, for it was made *after a great trial of affliction*, and in the midst of *deep poverty*, as the apostle speaks in another case, 2 Cor. viii. 2. Indeed, these hundreds were more to them than Solomon's thousands to him. And they offered them willingly and cheerfully, for this service was performed *with joy*, all being glad to see the temple built, and the concerns of it in so good a posture. *For a sin-offering for all Israel, twelve he-goats*—

18 And they set the priests in their ⁴ divisions, and the Levites in their ⁵ courses, for the service of God, which is at Jerusalem; ¹² as ⁷ it is written in the book of Moses.

19 And the children of the captivity kept the passover ⁸ upon the fourteenth *day* of the first month.

20 For the priests and the Levites were ⁹ purified together, all of them *were* pure, and ¹⁰ killed the passover for all the children of the captivity, and for their brethren the priests, and for themselves.

¹² Chaldee, *according to the writing*.—⁷ Numbers iii. 6; viii. 9.—⁸ Exod. xii. 6.—² 2 Chron. xxx. 15.—⁹ 2 Chron. xxxv. 11.

One for every tribe, to make atonement for their sins, which they looked upon as necessary in order to the acceptance of their services. It appears from many passages of Scripture, that though Shalmaneser had carried captive the ten tribes, yet many of them had remained in their country, and were carried away by Nebuchadnezzar, together with Judah and Benjamin, with whom they returned out of Babylon, as many others of the ten tribes did, who were carried away at the taking of Samaria.

Verse 18. *They set the priests in their divisions, &c.*—When they had dedicated the house, they settled the household: they would have had small comfort in the *temple*, however solemnly dedicated, without the *temple-service*: and therefore having set up the worship of God in it, in this dedication of it, they took measures for keeping it up, and in doing so made the *book of Moses* their rule, to which they had a regard in this establishment. Though the temple-service could not be performed with so much pomp, and such a multitude of sacrifices, and other oblations, as formerly, because of their poverty; yet perhaps it was performed with as much purity, and close adherence to the divine institution, as ever, which was the true glory of it.

Verse 19. *And the children of the captivity kept the passover*—Now they were newly delivered out of their bondage in Babylon, it was seasonable to commemorate their deliverance out of their bondage in Egypt. Fresh mercies should put us in mind of former mercies. We may suppose that they had kept the passover, after a sort, every year since their return; for they had an altar and a tabernacle. But they were liable to frequent disturbances from their enemies, were straitened for room, and had not conveniences about them, so that they could not do it with duo solemnity, till the temple was built; and now they made a joyful festival of it, it falling out in the next month after the temple was finished and dedicated.

Verse 20. *The priests and Levites were purified together*—Hebrew, כִּתְּוֹר, *cheechad*, as one man, so the word signifies. They were unanimous, both in their resolutions, and in their endeavours, to make

A. M. 3489. 21 And the children of Israel, which
B. C. 515. were come again out of captivity, and
all such as had separated themselves unto
them from the ^afilthiness of the heathen of
the land, to seek the LORD God of Israel, did
eat,

^a Chapter ix. 11.—⁷ Exod. xii. 15; xiii. 6; 2 Chron. xxx. 21;
xxxv. 17.

and keep themselves ceremonially clean for this solemnity: and they joined together in their preparations, that they might help one another; so that all of them were legally pure, and, in this respect, excelled the priests and Levites in Hezekiah's time, who were many of them under blame for not purifying themselves according to the law. The purity of ministers adds much to the beauty and honour of their ministrations, as doth their unity also.

Verse 21. *All such as had separated themselves unto them, &c.*—Had left their country, and the superstitions and vices of it; had become proselytes to the Jewish religion, and cast in their lot with the Israel of God, professing an entire subjection to the law of Moses. Such, and only such, might eat of the passover, Exod. xii. 48, 49. From the manner in which the sacred writer expresses himself here, it would seem as if there were many proselytes, who forsook their heathenish customs, and were brought to the knowledge and worship of the true God, influenced, probably, by the encouragement which Cyrus and Darius had given to the Jewish religion. People of all nations, it must be observed, till proselyted, were accounted by the Jews polluted both in body and mind, because of their worshipping false gods, and not abstaining from the things which were accounted unclean by the law of Moses. The description here given of proselytes to Judaism may serve to characterize converts to the true religion in every age: they separate themselves from the filthiness of sin, and fellowship with sinners; join themselves to the Israel of God in conformity and communion, and set themselves to seek the God of Israel: and those that do so in sincerity, though

22 And kept the ⁷ feast of unleavened A. M. 3489.
bread seven days with joy: for the B. C. 515.
LORD had made them joyful, and ^a turned the
heart ^a of the king of Assyria unto them, to
strengthen their hands in the work of the house
of God, the God of Israel.

^a Prov. xxi. 1.—^a 2 Kings xxiii. 29; 2 Chronicles xxxiii. 11;
Chap. i. 1; Verse 6, &c.

strangers and foreigners, are welcome to eat of the gospel-feast, as *fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God.*

Verse 22. *And kept the feast with joy: for the Lord had made them joyful*—Had given them both cause to rejoice, and hearts to rejoice. "It was now near twenty years," says Henry, "since the foundation of this temple was laid, and it is probable that most of the old men, who then wept at the remembrance of the first temple, were dead by this time, so that now there were no tears mingled with their joys." Those that are upon good grounds joyful, have therefore reason to be thankful, because it is God that makes them to rejoice. He is the fountain from whence all the streams of our joy flow. *And turned the heart of the king of Assyria*—Of the king of Persia, called the king of Assyria, as now reigning over all the kingdoms which were formerly under the power of the Assyrians; and to signify the great power and goodness of God in turning the hearts of these great monarchs, whose predecessors in empire and dominion, in these parts of the world, had formerly been the chief persecutors and oppressors of the people of God. Darius, as we have seen, was now on the throne, of whom Dr. Prideaux gives this character: "He was a prince of great wisdom, clemency, and justice; and has the honour to be recorded in holy writ for a favourer of God's people, a restorer of his temple at Jerusalem, and a promoter of his worship therein. For all this God was pleased to make him his instrument; and with respect to this, I doubt not, it was, that he blessed him with a numerous issue, a long reign, and great prosperity."

CHAPTER VII.

An account of Ezra, and his expedition to Jerusalem, 1-10. The commission which Artaxerxes gave him, 11-26. His thankfulness to God for it, 27, 28.

A. M. 3547. NOW after these things, in the reign
B. C. 457. of ^b Artaxerxes king of Persia,

^b Neh. ii. 1.

NOTES ON CHAPTER VII.

Verse 1. *In the reign of Artaxerxes*—The same of whom he speaks chap. vi. 14. *Ezra the son of Seraiah*—Descended from him, but not immediately. For Seraiah, being high-priest when Jerusalem was taken, was then slain by the Chaldeans, (2 Kings

Ezra ^c the son of Seraiah, the son of A. M. 3547.
Azariah, the son of Hilkiah, B. C. 457.

^c 1 Chron. vi. 14.

xxv. 18, 21,) at which time, it is likely, Ezra was not in being: but he was his grandson, or great-grandson, and his descent is mentioned from him, because he was an eminent person, who flourished before the destruction of the temple, whereas Ezra's father, if not also his grandfather, lived obscurely in captivity.

A. M. 3547. 2 The son of Shallum, the son of
B. C. 457. Zadok, the son of Ahitub,

3 The son of Amariah, the son of Azariah,
the son of Meraioth,

4 The son of Zerariah, the son of Uzzi, the
son of Bukki,

5 The son of Abishua, the son of Phinehas, the
son of Eleazar, the son of Aaron the chief priest :

6 This Ezra went up from Babylon ; and he
was ^d a ready scribe in the law of Moses, which
the LORD God of Israel had given : and the
king granted him all his request, * according to
the hand of the LORD his God upon him.

7 ^f And there went up *some* of the children
of Israel, and of the priests, and ^g the Levites,

^d Verses 11, 12, 21.—^e Verse 9 ; Ch. viii. 22, 31.—^f Ch. viii. 1.—^g Ch. viii. 15, &c.—^h Ch. ii. 43 ; viii. 20.—ⁱ Heb. was the foundation of the going up.

Verse 3. *The son of Azariah, the son of Meraioth*—There are six generations omitted between Azariah and Meraioth, as before some were omitted between Seraiah and Ezra, which are to be supplied out of 1 Chron. vi. 7, &c.

Verse 6. *This Ezra went up from Babylon*—With the king's consent and commission. *And he was a ready scribe in the law of Moses*—He is called a scribe, as Buxtorf observes in his *Tiberias*, not from writing and describing, but from declaring and explicating those things that are contained in the Scripture. For, as כֹּהֵן, *sepher*, signifies a book, סוֹפֵר, *sopher*, signifies one skilful and learned in that book, an interpreter and teacher out of it. And, there being no book comparable to the book of the law, therefore *Sopher* became a name of great dignity, and signified one that taught God's law, and expounded it to his people. Thus, in the New Testament, the scribes were those who instructed the people in the law. It is said he was a *ready scribe*, because he was expert in the law, and understood it thoroughly, both in all things belonging to the priesthood, and to the civil power ; in which he was so well versed, that he could give a ready account of any part of it. The Jews say, he collected and collated all the copies of the law, and published an accurate edition of it, with all the books that were given by divine inspiration, and so made up the canon of the Old Testament. Moses in Egypt, and Ezra in Babylon, were wonderfully fitted for eminent service in the church. This was the second time that Ezra came up from Babylon, for he came up at first with Zerubbabel, as we learn from Nehemiah, chap. xii. 1, and probably returned to Babylon to persuade those who had staid behind to come up to Jerusalem, and to obtain some further assistance from the king. *According to the hand of the Lord his God upon him*—God not only stirred up Ezra to this undertaking, but was so favourable to him as to incline the king to give a gracious answer to his petition.

and the singers, and the porters, and ^{A. M. 3547.}
^{B. C. 457.} the Nethinims, unto Jerusalem, in
the seventh year of Artaxerxes the king.

8 And he came to Jerusalem in the fifth
month, which *was* in the seventh year of the king.

9 For upon the first *day* of the first ^{B. C. 457.}
month ¹ began he to go up from Ba-
bylon, and on the first *day* of the fifth month
came he to Jerusalem, ⁱ according to the good
hand of his God upon him.

10 For Ezra had prepared his heart to ^k seek
the law of the LORD, and to do *it*, and to ^l teach
in Israel statutes and judgments.

11 ¶ Now this *is* the copy of the letter that
the King Artaxerxes gave unto Ezra the priest,

ⁱ Verse 6 ; Neh. ii. 8, 18.—^k Psalm cxix. 45.—^l Verses 6, 25 ; Deuteronomy xxxiii. 10 ; Nehemiah viii. 1-8 ; Malachi ii. 7.

Verse 7. *There went up some of the children of Israel*—This was the second company that went up to Jerusalem, consisting of such like persons as went up at first with Zerubbabel, Jeshua, and others, chap. ii. 2, 70. For, hearing the temple was rebuilt, and the worship of God restored, we may very well think many went along with Ezra, who had not such a strong motive to go at the first.

Verse 9. *According to the good hand of his God upon him*—There was great reason to acknowledge the favour and protection of God, in conducting them safe to Jerusalem ; for the journey was long and difficult, and they had many impediments, (going with wives and children, flocks and herds,) and were not without enemies, by whom they were in danger of being waylaid. These, however, Ezra did not fear, but relied on the divine protection, as he told the king, chap. viii. 2, being inspired with supernatural courage and fortitude.

Verse 10. *For Ezra had prepared his heart, &c.*—He had set his mind and affections upon it, and made it his chief business. *To seek the law of the Lord*—To search and find out the true sense and meaning of it, and thence to learn what sins or errors were to be reformed, and what duties were to be performed. *And to do it, and to teach in Israel*—The order of things in this verse is very observable: first, he endeavours to understand God's law and word, and that not for curiosity or ostentation, but in order to practice ; next, he conscientiously practises what he did understand, which made his doctrine much more effectual ; and then he earnestly desires and labours to instruct others, that they also might know and do it.

Verse 11. *This is the copy of the letter that the King Artaxerxes gave unto Ezra*—“It can hardly be supposed, but that some more than ordinary means were used to obtain so great a favour from Artaxerxes, as this commission was upon which Ezra went ; and therefore we may suppose that it was granted at the solicitation of Esther ; for this Ar-

A. M. 3547. the scribe, *even* a scribe of the words
B. C. 457. of the commandments of the LORD,
and of his statutes to Israel.

12 Artaxerxes, ¹ king of kings, ² Unto Ezra
he priest, a scribe of the law of the God of
heaven, perfect *peace*, ³ and at such a time.

13 I make a decree, that all they of the peo-
ple of Israel, and of his priests and Levites, in
ny realm, which are minded of their own free
will to go up to Jerusalem, go with thee.

14 Forasmuch as thou art sent ³ of the king,
and of his ^o seven counsellors, to inquire con-
cerning Judah and Jerusalem, according to the
law of thy God which *is* in thy hand;

15 And to carry the silver and gold, which
the king and his counsellors have freely offered
unto the God of Israel, ^p whose habitation *is* in
Jerusalem.

16 ^q And all the silver and gold that thou
canst find in all the province of Babylon, with
the free-will-offering of the people, and of the
priests, ^r offering willingly for the house of their
God which *is* in Jerusalem:

17 That thou mayest buy speedily with this

¹ Ezek. xxvi. 7; Dan. ii. 37.—² Or, *Ezra the priest, a perfect
scribe of the law of the God of heaven, peace, &c.*—³ Chap. iv.
10.—⁴ Chald. *from before the king.*

taxerxes was the Ahasuerus of Esther. She was be-
come the best beloved of the king's concubines,
though not yet advanced to the dignity of queen;
for, it being usual for the kings of Persia, on some
particular days and occasions, to allow their women
to ask what boons they pleased, it is not unlikely
that, by the direction of Mordecai, upon some such
occasion as this, Esther, though she had not dis-
covered her kingdom and nation, might make this
the matter of her request.—Dodd. See also Pri,
Ann. 459, and Le Clerc. *Even a scribe of the
words, &c.*—The phrase seems emphatical, denoting
that he explained both the *words* and the *things*:
for the Jews, in the land of their captivity, had, in a
great measure, lost both the language and the know-
ledge of God's commands, and therefore Ezra and
his companions instructed them in both.

Verse 12. *Unto Ezra the priest, a scribe of the
law of the God of heaven*—Or, as the Hebrew may
be rendered, *a perfect scribe of the law, &c.*, a title
which, it seems, Ezra delighted in, and desired no
other; no, not when he was advanced to the procon-
sular dignity, and made the governor of a province.
He reckoned it more to his honour to be a scribe of
God's law than to be a peer or prince of the empire.

Verse 14. *And of his seven counsellors*—His chief
nobles and officers of state; of whom see Esther i.
10, 14. This decree, being made by their advice,
had the greater authority. *To inquire concerning
Judah according to the law of thy God*—To make

money bullocks, rams, lambs, with A. M. 3547.
their ^s meat-offerings and their drink- B. C. 457.
offerings, and ^t offer them upon the altar of the
house of your God which *is* in Jerusalem.

18 And whatsoever shall seem good to thee,
and to thy brethren, to do with the rest of the
silver and the gold, that do after the will of your
God.

19 The vessels also that are given thee for
the service of the house of thy God, *those* de-
liver thou before the God of Jerusalem.

20 And whatsoever more shall be needful for
the house of thy God, which thou shalt have
occasion to bestow, bestow *it* out of the king's
treasure-house.

21 And I, *even* I Artaxerxes the king, do
make a decree to all the treasurers which *are*
beyond the river, that whatsoever Ezra the
priest, the scribe of the law of the God of hea-
ven, shall require of you, it be done speedily,

22 Unto a hundred talents of silver, and to
a hundred ^u measures of wheat, and to a hun-
dred baths of wine, and to a hundred baths of
oil, and salt without prescribing *how much*.

^o Esther i. 14.—^p 2 Chron. vi. 2; Psa. cxxxv. 21.—^q Chap.
viii. 25.—^r 1 Chron. xxix. 6, 9.—^s Num. xv. 4-13.—^t Deut.
xii. 5, 11.—^u Chald. *cors.*

inquiry into all abuses and deviations from your law,
and to redress them. *Which is in thy hand*—
With which thou art very conversant, and in which
thou art well skilled. It may seem strange that the
edict should be drawn up in this manner, as it is
more in the style of a Jewish supreme governor
than of a heathen king; but it is not improbable that
Ezra, being in such favour in the Persian court,
might get the edict drawn up in the manner and
words which he thought would be most proper for
the purposes for which he had obtained it.

Verses 15, 16. *Which the king and his counsellors
have freely offered unto the God of Israel*—This
shows that they had a high opinion of the God of
Israel, and were desirous of his favour. *And all the
silver and gold that thou canst find*—That is, *pro-
cure*, as חֶכֶח, *shechach*, often signifies. Whatsoever
thou canst get of my subjects, by way of free gift.
With the free-will-offering of the people—Namely,
of Israel.

Verse 20. *Whatsoever more shall be needful for
the house of thy God*—Toward the reparation, or
adorning, or completing of it.

Verse 22. *Salt, without prescribing how much*—
He limits all the other expenses, except salt, which
was of low price, and of very common and necessa-
ry use in all their sacrifices; and therefore, since he
would not have any sacrifice hindered, he did not
prescribe any measure of it, but permitted them to
take as much as they found necessary. The sum

A. M. 3547. 23 ⁵ Whatsoever is commanded by
B. C. 457. the God of heaven, let it be diligently
done for the house of the God of heaven: for
why should there be wrath against the realm of
the king and his sons?

24 Also we certify you, that touching any of
the priests and Levites, singers, porters, Nethinims,
or ministers of this house of God, it shall
not be lawful to impose toll, tribute, or custom,
upon them.

25 And thou, Ezra, after the wisdom of thy
God, that is in thy hand, ⁶ set magistrates and
judges, which may judge all the people that
are beyond the river, all such as know the

⁵ Heb. *Whatsoever* is of the decree.—⁶ Exod. xviii. 21, 22; Deut. xvi. 18.—⁷ Verse 10; 2 Chron. xvii. 7; Mal. ii. 7; Matt.

here ordered, in silver, amounts to thirty-five thousand three hundred pounds sterling; the wheat to eight hundred bushels; the wine to twelve or thirteen hogsheads; and the oil to the same quantity, which shows the princely liberality of Artaxerxes.

Verse 23. *Whatsoever is commanded by the God of heaven, let it be diligently done*—Here Jacobus Capellus cries out in a kind of rapture, "O, words to be written upon the palaces of kings, in golden letters, and engraven on the minds of all, with a style of adamant! For they express an exceeding great sense of God, and of his supreme authority, and the regard due to him from the greatest kings and potentates." It appears from this verse, that Ezra had informed Artaxerxes that the God of Israel had appointed and given his people certain laws, according to which he was to be worshipped, and therefore the edict enjoins these laws to be exactly observed. *For why should there be wrath against the realm of the king and his sons?*—For the omission of any part of his worship, occasioned by my neglect. He discerned his duty in this matter, and the danger of incurring God's displeasure if he neglected it, partly by the light of nature, and principally by the information of Ezra. The neglect and contempt of religion brings the judgments of God upon kings and kingdoms; and the likeliest expedient to turn away his wrath, when it is ready to break out against a people, is to support and encourage religion.

Verse 24. *It shall not be lawful to impose tolls, &c.*—Thus he discharged all the ministers of religion, from the greatest of the priests to the least of the Nethinims, from paying taxes to the government, and made it unlawful for the king's officers to impose any taxes on them. This was putting a great honour upon them, as free denizens of the empire, and would gain them respect as favourites of the crown, at the same time that it gave them liberty to attend on their ministry with freedom and cheerfulness.

Verse 25. *After the wisdom of thy God in thy hand*—That is, which God hath put into thy heart, and

laws of thy God; and ⁸ teach ye them ⁹ that know *them* not. A. M. 3547. B. C. 457.

26 And whosoever will not do the law of thy God, and the law of the king, let judgment be executed speedily upon him, whether *it be* unto death, or ⁶ to banishment, or ⁷ to confiscation of goods, or to imprisonment.

27 ¶ ¹ Blessed be the LORD God of our fathers, ² which hath put *such a thing* as this in the king's heart, to beautify the house of the LORD which is in Jerusalem:

28 And ³ hath extended mercy unto me before the king, and his counsellors, and before all the king's mighty princes. And I was

xviii. 2, 3.—⁴ Chald. *to rooting out*.—⁵ 1 Chron. xxix. 10. ⁶ Chap. vi. 22.—⁷ Chap. ix. 9.

which appears in the works of thy hand. Wisdom is sometimes ascribed to the hand, as Psalm lxxviii. 72. Or, by the *wisdom of God*, he means the law of God, which was said to be in his hand, verse 14. *Set magistrates and judges, which may judge all the people, &c.*—All the Jews on that side of the river. *All such as know the laws of thy God*—All that professed the Jewish religion were to be under the jurisdiction of these judges; which intimates that they were exempt from the jurisdiction of heathen magistrates. It was a great favour to the Jews to have such magistrates of themselves, and especially of Ezra's nomination. *And teach ye them that know them not*—They were to instruct in the laws of God those that were ignorant of them, whether Jews or others, which implies that he had no objection to their making proselytes to the Jewish religion.

Verse 26. *Whosoever will not do the law of thy God, &c.*—They were not allowed to make new laws, but were to see the law of God duly executed, (which is here made *the law of the king*,) and therefore were intrusted with the sword, that they might be a terror to evil-doers. What could Jehoshaphat, or Hezekiah, or David himself, as king, have done more for the honour of God and the furtherance of religion?

Verse 27. *Blessed be the Lord God of our fathers, &c.*—Ezra cannot proceed in his story without inserting this thankful acknowledgment to God's goodness to him and the people. *Which hath put such a thing as this into the king's heart*—God can and frequently does put things into men's hearts which would not rise there of themselves, and that both by his providence and by his grace. If any good appear to be in our own hearts, or in the hearts of others, we must acknowledge it was God that put it there, and must bless him for it, for it is he that *worketh in us both to will and to do that which is good*.

Verse 28. *And hath extended mercy to me, &c.*—The king, in the honour he did Ezra, we may suppose, had an eye to his merits, and preferred him because he judged him to be an intelligent, disinterested, and upright man: but he himself ascribes

A. M. 3547. strengthened as ^b the hand of the
B. C. 457. LORD my God *was* upon me, and I

^b Chap. v. 5; Verses 6, 9;

his elevation purely to God's mercy. *And I was strengthened*—Endowed with courage and ability to undertake the services; *as the hand of the Lord my God was upon me*—To direct and support me.

gathered together out of Israel chief A. M. 3547.
men to go up with me. B. C. 457.

Chap. viii. 18.

If God gives us his hand, we are bold and cheerful. if he withdraws it, we are weak as water. What-ever service we are enabled to do for God and our generation, God must have all the glory of it.

CHAPTER VIII.

The company that went up with Ezra, 1-15. He sends for the Levites, 16-20. Proclaims a fast, 21-23. Delivers the treasure he brought to the priests and Levites, 24-30. Goes on to Jerusalem, 31, 32. The treasure delivered in there, 33, 34. The people offer, 35. The king's commissions delivered to his lieutenants, 36.

A. M. 3547. **T**HESSE are now the chief of their
B. C. 457. fathers, and *this is* the genealogy

of them that went up with me from Babylon, in the reign of Artaxerxes the king.

2 Of the sons of Phinehas; Gershom: of the sons of Ithamar; Daniel: of the sons of David; ^b Hattush.

3 Of the sons of Shechaniah, of the sons of Phares; Zechariah: and with him were reckoned by genealogy of the males a hundred and fifty.

4 Of the sons of Pahath-moab; Elihoenai the son of Zerariah, and with him two hundred males.

5 Of the sons of Shechaniah; the son of Jazziel, and with him three hundred males.

6 Of the sons also of Adin; Ebed the son of Jonathan, and with him fifty males.

7 And of the sons of Elam; Jeshaiah the son of Athaliah, and with him seventy males.

8 And of the sons of Shephatiah; Zebadiah

the son^c of Michael, and with him A. M. 3547.
fourscore males. B. C. 457.

9 Of the sons of Joab; Obadiah the son of Jehiel, and with him two hundred and eighteen males.

10 And of the sons of Shelomith; the son of Josiphiah, and with him a hundred and threescore males.

11 And of the sons of Bebai: Zechariah the son of Bebai, and with him twenty and eight males.

12 And of the sons of Azgad; Johanan ¹the son of Hakkatan, and with him a hundred and ten males.

13 And of the last sons of Adonikam, whose names *are* these, Eliphelet, Jeiel, and Shemariah, and with them threescore males.

14 Of the sons also of Bigvai; Uthai, and ²Zabbud, and with them seventy males.

15 ¶ And I gathered them together to the river that runneth to Ahava; and there ³abode

^b 1 Chron. iii. 22.—^c Chap. ii. 3.—¹ Or, the youngest son.

² Or, Zaccur, as some read.—³ Or, pitched.

NOTES ON CHAPTER VIII.

Verse 1. *That went up with me from Babylon*—Multitudes of the Jews, who loved their ease better than their religion, thinking themselves well where they were, and either not believing that Jerusalem would better their condition, or being deterred by a prospect of the difficulties they might meet with on their journey, preferred staying in Babylon. Some, however, willingly offered themselves to go with Ezra, and the heads of their several families are here recorded for their honour, and the number of males that each brought in, amounting in all to one thousand four hundred and ninety-six.

Verse 2. *Of the sons of Phinehas—of Ithamar*—By the *sons*, he means the *families* of these two persons, two of which he particularly names, those of

Gershom and Daniel: not Daniel the prophet, but some eminent person of Ithamar's line.

Verse 3. *By genealogy of the males*—Though the *males* only be expressed, yet doubtless they carried the women along with them, as they did the *little ones*, verse 21.

Verse 7. *Of the sons of Elam, &c.*—Concerning these, and the families that follow, to verse 15, it may be observed, that out of them many went up with Zerubbabel, in the reign of Cyrus, as appears by the account given in the second chapter, and that now more went up with Ezra out of the very same families.

Verse 13. *Of the last sons of Adonikam*—It seems the rest went before, so that now all the sons of that family returned.

Verse 15. *To the river that runneth to Ahava*—

A. M. 3547. we in tents three days: and I viewed
B. C. 457. the people, and the priests, and found
there none of the ^d sons of Levi.

16 Then sent I for Eliezer, for Ariel, for She-
maiah, and for Elnathan, and for Jarib, and
for Elnathan, and for Nathan, and for Zecha-
riah, and for Meshullam, chief men; also for
Joiarib, and for Elnathan, men of understand-
ing.

17 And I sent them with commandment unto
Iddo the chief at the place Casiphia, and ^e I told
them what they should say unto Iddo, and to
his brethren the Nethinims, at the place Casi-

^d Chap. vii. 7.—^e Heb. *I put words in their mouth*, 2 Sam.

Or the river of Ahava, as it is called, verses 21, 31. By comparing of these places, it seems that Ahava was the name both of the river and of the town or place by which it ran. Either this was that river of Assyria, which other writers call Adiava, or Diava, which ran along the Adiabene, upon which Ptolemy places the city of Abane, or Aavane; or some other river which ran into the Euphrates. Here, some imagine, was the country which (2 Kings xvi. 24) is called *Ava*, from whence the king of Assyria translated the people called Avites into Palestine, and in their room settled some of the captive Israelites. It was a common thing for those who travelled from Babylon to Jerusalem, in order to avoid the scorching heat of the desert of Arabia, to shape their course northward at first, and then turning westward, to pass through Syria into Palestine. But Ezra had a further reason for his taking this route; for, as he intended to get together as many Israelites as he could, to carry along with him to Jerusalem, he took his course this way, and made a halt in the country of Ava, or Ahava, from whence he might send emissaries, to a place afterward mentioned, to invite such Jews as were there to come and join him. See Calmet's *Dict.* on the word *Ahava*. And found there none of the sons of Levi—To wit, who were simple Levites, and not priests; and therefore the Levites mentioned chap. vii. 7, by anticipation, were not yet come to him.

Verse 16. *Then sent I for Eliezer, &c.*—To come to me, and go along with me to Jerusalem. He sent for these eleven persons, that he might employ them in a message to a place where he knew there were a great many Levites, as it follows in the next verse. *Also for Joiarib and Elnathan, men of understanding*—Who seem to have had more knowledge than pious zeal for God and his house, and solemn worship, which was confined to Jerusalem.

Verse 17. *And I sent them unto Iddo the chief*—Chief among the Levites, who dwelt at the place here mentioned, and there had the free exercise of their religion, as this and many other passages in this book plainly enough prove. For we find the people resorting to Ezekiel in their captivity, and him preaching to them the word of God, in many

phia, that they should bring unto us A. M. 3547.
ministers for the house of our God. B. C. 457.

18 And by the good hand of our God upon us they ^{*} brought us a man of understanding, of the sons of Mahli, the son of Levi, the son of Israel; and Sherebiah, with his sons and his brethren, eighteen;

19 And Hashabiah, and with him Jeshaiah of the sons of Merari, his brethren and their sons, twenty;

20 ^f Also of the Nethinims, whom David and the princes had appointed for the service of the Levites, two hundred and twenty Nethinims:

xiv. 3, 19.—^f Neh. viii. 7; ix. 4, 5.—^g Chap. ii. 43.

places of his book, particularly chap. xxxiii. 30, 31, &c. And Ezra, in all likelihood, was an instructor among them, as Joiarib and Elnathan also were, and Iddo, to whom these were sent. By which means many proselytes were made, who left their own country, and came with them to Jerusalem when they returned, chap. vi. 21. *At the place Casiphia*—It is not easy to guess what place this was. The text calls it *Casiphia the place*. Some have taken it for the Caspian mountains, situate between Media and Hyrcania. But certainly these must have been at too great a distance from the road he was taking. Perhaps it was in Parthia, where was a city called *Caspi*, known to the ancient geographers. The LXX. render it, *a place of silver*, for קספ, *keseph*, signifies silver. *That they should bring us ministers for the house of our God*—The furnishing of God's house with good ministers is a good work, and which will redound to the comfort and credit of all that have any hand in it.

Verse 18. *By the good hand of our God*—That is, by the blessing of God upon us, they brought us a man of understanding, &c.—They did not return without their errand; but, though the warning was short, they brought about forty Levites to attend Ezra. By this it appears they were not averse to go, but were slothful, and only wanted to be called upon to go.

Verse 20. *Also of the Nethinims, whom David and the princes had appointed*—The Gibeonites, who were devoted to the service of the Levites by Joshua and the princes of his time, (Josh. ix. 21.) and are said to have been appointed by David and his princes, because they were confirmed by them in their former office, and more particularly applied to the several services of the temple. Of them two hundred and twenty, upon this hasty summons, listed themselves, and had the honour to be expressed by name in Ezra's muster-roll. This success Ezra ascribes to the good hand of God upon them. If, where ministers have been wanting, the vacancies are well supplied, let God have the glory, and his good hand, qualifying them for the service, inclining them to it, and then opening a door of opportunity for them.

A. M. 3547. all of them were expressed by name.
B. C. 457.

21 ¶ Then I ^s proclaimed a fast there, at the river of Ahava, that we might ^b afflict ourselves before our God, to seek of him a ⁱ right way for us, and for our little ones, and for all our substance.

22 For ^k I was ashamed to require of the king a band of soldiers and horsemen to help us against the enemy in the way: because we had spoken unto the king, saying, ¹ The hand of our God *is* upon all them for ^m good that seek him; but his power and his wrath *is* ^a against all them that ^o forsake him.

23 So we fasted and besought our God for this: and he was ^p entreated of us.

^a 2 Chron. xx. 3.—^b Lev. xvi. 29; xxiii. 29; Isa. lviii. 3, 5. ^c Psa. v. 8.—^d 1 Cor. ix. 15.—^e Chap. vii. 6, 8, 28.—^f Psa. xxxiii. 18, 19; xxxiv. 15, 22; Rom. viii. 28.

Verse 21. *Then I proclaimed a fast there*—Ezra had procured Levites to go along with him, but what would that avail unless he had God with him? this is therefore his chief care. No doubt he had himself begged of God direction in this affair, from the first time he had it in his thoughts: but for public mercies, public prayers must be made, that all who are to share in the comfort of them, may join in requests for them. Thus, in all our ways we must acknowledge God, and in those particularly wherein we are endeavouring to serve the interests of his kingdom among men. *That we might afflict ourselves before our God*—For our sins, and so be qualified for the pardon of them. When we are entering on any new condition of life, our care should be to bring none of the guilt of the sins of our former condition into it. When we are in any imminent peril, let us be sure to make our peace with God, and then we are safe; nothing can do us any real hurt. *To seek of him a right way for us*—A safe and prosperous journey; such a way and course as might be best for us. *And for our little ones, and for all our substance*—They had the greater reason to fast and pray, because they carried with them their little children, treasures of gold and silver, and divers vessels, and other things, of very considerable value, and were apprehensive of enemies, who would waylay them to plunder them of their substance; namely, the Arabs, Samaritans, and others, against whom they peculiarly needed the divine protection and aid.

Verse 22. *For I was ashamed to require of the king a band of soldiers, &c.*—He might have obtained from the king any thing that he desired; but he had so openly declared that he depended solely upon God for safe conduct, that he was ashamed to ask a guard of the king to secure them on their journey from their enemies. For the king, not being much instructed in divine matters, might possibly have thought that what they had said of God's favour toward them, and the prophecies concerning their restoration, were but vain boasts, in case they

24 ¶ Then I separated twelve of the chief of the priests, Sherebiah, Hashabiah, and ten of their brethren with them, A. M. 3547.
B. C. 457.

25 And weighed unto them ^a the silver, and the gold, and the vessels, *even* the offering of the house of our God, which the king, and his counsellors, and his lords, and all Israel *there* present, had offered:

26 I even weighed unto their hand six hundred and fifty talents of silver, and silver vessels a hundred talents, *and* of gold a hundred talents;

27 Also twenty basins of gold, of a thousand drachms; and two vessels of ^b fine copper, ^c precious as gold.

^a Psa. xxxiv. 16.—^b 2 Chron. xv. 2.—^c 1 Chronicles v. 20; 2 Chron. xxxiii. 13; Isa. xix. 22.—^d Chap. vii. 15.—^e Heb. yellow, or, shining brass.—^f Heb. desirable.

had seemed to distrust the power and favour of that God of whom they had spoken so magnificently, by making application to the king for his protection and defence. Rather, therefore, than give any such umbrage, they were resolved to commit themselves entirely to God: but then it was necessary they should beseech that of him which they would not ask of the king; this they did, as we have just seen, by fasting and prayer.

Verse 23. *And he was entreated of us*—They had some comfortable assurance in their own minds that their prayers were answered; and the event showed that they were, for they escaped all the dangers they had been afraid of, and in due time arrived safe in Judea.

Verse 24. *Then I separated twelve of the chief of the priests*—With whom he might intrust the gifts that had been offered for the temple. Having committed the keeping of them to God, he also committed the keeping of them, under God, to proper men, whose business it should be to *watch* over and take care of them. Thus our prayers must always be seconded with our endeavours; the care of Christ's gospel, his church and ordinances, must not be so left with him, but that it must also be *committed to faithful men*, 2 Tim. ii. 2.

Verse 25. *And weighed unto them the silver and the gold*—Because he expected to receive it from them again by weight. In all trusts, but especially sacred ones, we ought to be punctual, and preserve a right understanding on both sides. In Zerubbabel's time the vessels were delivered by number, here by weight, that all might be forth-coming, and it might easily appear if any were missing.

Verses 26, 27. *Six hundred and fifty talents of silver*—Making, at £375 sterling to the talent, £243,750 sterling. *And silver vessels a hundred talents*—Making near £40,000 sterling. *And of gold (probably in coin) a hundred talents*—Which, at £4,500 per talent, make £450,000 sterling. *Also twenty basins of gold of a thousand drachms*—About

A. M. 3547. B. C. 457. 28 And I said unto them, *Ye are* [†]holy unto the LORD; the vessels *are* [†]holy also; and the silver and the gold *are* a free-will-offering unto the LORD God of your fathers.

29 Watch ye, and keep *them*, until ye weigh *them*, before the chief of the priests and the Levites, and chief of the fathers of Israel, at Jerusalem, in the chambers of the house of the LORD.

30 So took the priests and the Levites the weight of the silver and the gold, and the vessels, to bring *them* to Jerusalem unto the house of our God.

31 ¶ Then we departed from the river of Ahava on the twelfth *day* of the first month, to go unto Jerusalem: and [†]the hand of our God was upon us, and he delivered us from the hand of the enemy, and of such as lay in wait by the way.

32 And we [†]came to Jerusalem, and abode there three days.

[†] Leviticus xxi. 6, 8; Deut. xxxiii. 8.—[†] Lev. xxii. 2, 3; Num. iv. 4, 15, 20.

£1,000 sterling value. *And two vessels of fine copper*—As valuable as gold.

Verses 28, 29. *I said, Ye are holy unto the Lord; the vessels are holy also*—Being men consecrated to God's service, you are bound, above all others, to be faithful in the discharge of your duty, especially being intrusted with holy things, which must be carefully delivered at Jerusalem, just as they were committed to your trust. *Watch ye, and keep them, until ye weigh them, &c.*—That they be not lost or embezzled, or mingled with other things, keep them together; keep them by themselves; keep them safe, till you weigh them in the temple, before the great men there.

Verses 31, 32. *The hand of our God was upon us*—To protect and strengthen us in so dangerous and long a journey. *And he delivered us from the hand of the enemy*—There were not only many enemies who hated them, and were desirous to cut them off; but many robbers, who watched for a booty, whom God either diverted some other way, or disheartened from attempting any thing against them. *And of such as lay in wait by the way*—To wit, in the direct way. From this it may be conjectured, that God inclined them to fetch a little compass, and to go a more unsuspected way, as they had begged of him. *And abode there three days*—Before Ezra opened out his commission, or did any thing material.

Verse 34. *All the weight was written at that time*

33 ¶ Now on the fourth day was the ^{A. M. 3547. B. C. 457.} silver and the gold and the vessels

[†]weighed in the house of our God by the hand of Meremoth the son of Uriah the priest; and with him *was* Eleazar the son of Phinehas; and with them *was* Jozabad the son of Jeshua, and Noadiah the son of Binnui, Levites;

34 By number *and* by weight of every one: and all the weight was written at that time.

35 *Also* the children of those that had been carried away, which were come out of the captivity, [†]offered burnt-offerings unto the God of Israel, twelve bullocks for all Israel, ninety and six rams, seventy and seven lambs, twelve he-goats *for* a sin-offering: all *this was* a burnt-offering unto the LORD.

36 ¶ And they delivered the king's [†]commissions unto the king's lieutenants, and to the governors on this side the river: and they furthered the people, and the house of God.

[†] Chapter vii. 6, 9, 28.—[†] Nehemiah ii. 11.—[†] Verses 26, 30. [†] Chap. vi. 17.—[†] Chap. vii. 21.

—There was a public record made of it; and the persons before mentioned, who brought the money and the vessels, were discharged by a public instrument signed by them that received it.

Verse 35. *Which were come out of the captivity*—Namely, those new-comers whom God had safely conducted thither. *Offered burnt-offerings unto the God of Israel*—Whereby they acknowledged the Lord for their God, and expressed their gratitude for their restoration. *Twelve he-goats for a sin-offering*—For it is the atonement that secures every mercy to us, which will not be truly comfortable, unless *iniquity be taken away*, and our peace be made with God. They offer twelve bullocks, twelve he-goats, and ninety-six rams, (eight times twelve,) signifying the union of the two kingdoms. They did not any longer go two tribes one way, and ten tribes another; but all the twelve met by their representatives at the same altar.

Verse 36. *They delivered the king's commissions to the lieutenants, and they furthered the people*—Even the enemies of the Jews became their friends, yielded to Ezra's commission, and, instead of hindering the people of God, furthered them, purely out of complaisance to the king. When he appeared moderate, they all coveted to appear so too. *And the house of God*—The completion of which they furthered, adorning and furnishing it with these vessels and other conveniences, and promoting God's worship and service therein.

CHAPTER IX.

Ezra is troubled at the marriages with strange women, 1-4. His solemn confession to God, 5-15.

A. M. 3547. **N**OW when these things were done,
B. C. 457.

the princes came to me, saying, The people of Israel, and the priests, and the Levites, have not ^b separated themselves from the people of the lands, ^c *doing* according to their abominations, *even* of the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Perizzites, the Jebusites, the Ammonites, the Moabites, the Egyptians, and the Amorites.

2 For they have ^d taken of their daughters for themselves, and for their sons: so that the ^e holy seed have ^f mingled themselves with

^b Chap. vi. 21; Neh. ix. 2.—^c Deut. xii. 30.—^d Exod. xxxiv. 16; Deut. vii. 3; Neh. xiii. 23.—^e Exod. xix. 6; xxii. 31;

NOTES ON CHAPTER IX.

Verse 1. *The princes came to me*—Those who feared God, and understood that Ezra was come with a large commission and ample powers from the king, and with a design to reform all disorders, whereof this which they came to complain of was not the least: *saying, The people, and the priests, &c., have not separated themselves from the people of the lands*—From the heathen nations round about them, which God had expressly commanded them to do, (Deut. vii. 2, 3,) but have associated with them both in trade and in conversation; have made themselves familiar with them; and, to complete the affinity, have taken the daughters of these heathen in marriages to their sons. *Doing according to their abominations*—Marrying promiscuously whomsoever they liked, as the heathen are wont to do, and imitating them in some of their wicked practices, into which they have been drawn by their heathenish affinities. *To do abominations*, is an expression, which, in Scripture language, generally means worshipping of idols; but here it seems only to signify imitating the heathen in promiscuous marriages with any nation whatsoever, a practice which, however, would soon have led them to commit idolatry.

Verse 2. *So that the holy seed, &c.*—They are called a *holy seed*, because of the covenant which God had made with them, whereby they were constituted a peculiar people, separated from all other nations. *Have mingled themselves with the people of those lands*—Since their return, as may be gathered from verses 8-14. *Yea, the hand of the princes and rulers hath been chief in this trespass*—Who ought to have restrained the people from it by their authority and example; and who, by acting otherwise, have made the sin more general, and have involved themselves and the nation in the guilt of it. The case, certainly, was much the more dangerous, because the great men of the nation were the principal offenders; for through this the people would be freed from all fear of punishment, and therefore would the more readily imitate their bad example.

the people of *those* lands: yea, the ^{A. M. 3547.} hand of the princes and rulers hath ^{B. C. 457.} been chief in this trespass.

3 And when I heard this thing, ^a I rent my garment and my mantle, and plucked off the hair of my head and of my beard, and sat down ^b astonished.

4 Then were assembled unto me every one that ^c trembled at the words of the God of Israel, because of the transgression of those that had been carried away; and I sat astonished until the ^d evening sacrifice.

Deut. vii. 6; xiv. 2.—^a 2 Cor. vi. 14.—^b Job i. 20.—^c Psa. cxliiii. 4.—^d Chap. x. 3; Isa. lxvi. 2.—^e Exod. xxix. 39.

It is probable the princes, who informed Ezra of this enormous practice, had endeavoured to reform it, but could not, because they were opposed by men as great as themselves.

Verse 3. *When I heard this thing, I rent my garment and my mantle, &c.*—Both my inner and my upper garment. This was a token, not only of his very great grief and sorrow, but of his sense of God's displeasure at their conduct. For the Jews were wont to rend their clothes, when they apprehended God to be highly offended. *And plucked off the hair of my head and of my beard*—This was still a higher sign of exceeding great grief. For, in ordinary sorrow, they only neglected their hair, and let it hang down scattered in a careless manner; but this was used in bitter lamentations. *And sat down astonished*—Through grief and shame at their sin, that they should be so ungrateful to God, who had so lately delivered them from captivity; and through an apprehension of some great and dreadful judgment befalling them, because of so open a violation of the divine law, the transgression of which had formerly proved their ruin.

Verse 4. *Then were assembled unto me*—To join with me, both in lamenting the sin, and in endeavouring to effect the redress of it; *every one that trembled at the words of the God of Israel*—Who stood in awe of God and of his word, and durst not violate his commands; or who feared his threatenings against those that did so, and trembled for fear of God's judgments upon them, and upon the whole land for their sakes, as the following words imply. Compare Isa. lxvi. 2, 5. *Because of the transgression of those that had been carried away*—To wit, into captivity, and were safely returned from it, but yet were little amended, either by their former banishment, or their late restoration. He speaks not of those who had lately come back with himself, but of those who had returned with Zerubbabel, and of their children. *And I sat astonished until the evening sacrifice*—When the people used to assemble together. All good people ought to own those that appear and act for God against vice and profaneness.

A. M. 3547. 5 ¶ And at the evening sacrifice I
B. C. 457. arose up from my ¹ heaviness; and having rent my garment and my mantle, I fell upon my knees, and ¹ spread out my hands unto the LORD my God,

6 And said, O my God, I am ^m ashamed and blush to lift up my face to thee, my God: for ⁿ our iniquities are increased over *our* head, and our ² trespass is ^o grown up unto the heavens.

7 Since the days of our fathers *have* ^p we been in a great trespass unto this day; and for our iniquities ^q have we, our kings, and our priests, been delivered into the hand of the

¹ Or, affliction.—¹ Exod. ix. 29, 33.—^m Dan. ix. 7.—ⁿ Psa. xxxviii. 4.—² Or, guiltiness.—² Chronicles xxviii. 9; Rev. xviii. 5.—^p Psa. cvi. 6; Dan. ix. 5, 8.—^q Deut. xxviii. 36, 64; Neh. ix. 30.

Every one that fears God ought to stand by them, and do what he can to strengthen their hands.

Verse 5. *I rose up from my heaviness*—From that mournful posture, and put myself into the posture of a petitioner. He did this at the time of the evening sacrifice, because then devout people used to come into the courts of the temple, that, hearing his confession, they likewise might be made sensible of the sins of the people. And he had an eye to that great propitiation, of which that sacrifice was a peculiar type.

Verse 6. *O my God, I am ashamed and blush*—“Nothing can be more humble, devout, and pathetic, than this address, in which Ezra acknowledges that he was confounded when he thought of the greatness of their sins, which were ready to overwhelm them, and of the boldness and insolence of them beyond measure, even though they had seen the divine vengeance upon their forefathers in so terrible a manner, that they had not yet worn off the marks of his displeasure. He had, indeed, begun to show favour to some of them; but this so much the more aggravated their wickedness, in that, so soon after their restoration and settlement in their native country, they had returned to their old provocations, notwithstanding the many admonitions, in the law and the prophets, to have nothing to do with the people of Canaan, except it were to expel and drive them out. What then can we expect, says he, but the utter destruction of the small remnant that is left of us, if after all the punishment which God hath inflicted upon us, and now that he is beginning to be gracious unto us, we relapse into the same offences for which we have so severely suffered? For while we remain monuments of his mercy, and yet appear before him in our abominations, we must be dumb, and have nothing to plead in excuse of our detestable ingratitude.”—Dodd. *For our iniquities*—He includes himself in the number of the transgressors, because he himself was guilty of many sins; and because the princes and priests, and so many of the people, having done this, the guilt was now become national.

kings of the lands, to the sword, to A. M. 3547.
captivity, and to a spoil, and to ^r con- B. C. 457.
fusion of face, as *it is* this day.

8 And now for a ³ little space grace hath been *showed* from the LORD our God, to leave us a remnant to escape, and to give us ⁴ a nail in his holy place, that our God may ⁴ lighten our eyes, and give us a little reviving in our bondage.

9 ⁴ For we *were* bondmen; ⁵ yet our God hath not forsaken us in our bondage, but ⁵ hath extended mercy unto us in the sight of the kings of Persia, to give us a reviving, to set up the house of our God, and ⁶ to repair the deso-

^r Dan. ix. 7.—³ Heb. *moment*.—⁴ Or, a pin; that is, a constant and sure abode: Isaiah xxii. 23.—⁴ Psalm xliii. 3; xxxiv. 5. ⁴ Nehemiah ix. 36.—⁵ Psalm cxxxvi. 23.—⁶ Chapter vii. 28. ⁵ Heb. to set up.

Are increased over our head—Like deep waters, in which we are, as it were, drowned, and ready to perish.

Verses 7, 8. *Since the days of our fathers have we been in a great trespass*—We are not purged from the guilt of our fathers' sins, but we are still feeling the sad effects of them; yea, and are repeating the same sins. *And now for a little space grace hath been showed*—It is but a little while since God hath delivered us, and yet we are already returned to our sin and folly. Or, we have enjoyed this favour but a little while, now we are sinning it away, and shortening our own happiness. *To leave us a remnant to escape*—That by his favour many of us should escape out of captivity; whom he calls but a remnant, because the greatest part of the Israelitish nation was yet in captivity. *To give us a nail*—Some kind of settlement; whereas before we were tossed and removed from place to place as our masters pleased. It is a metaphor from tents, which are fastened by cords and nails, or pins. *In his holy place*—In this holy land, as the land of Judah is called, Zech. ii. 12. Or, in Jerusalem, called *the holy city*, (Neh. xi. 1, 18; Dan. x. 24.) which is peculiarly mentioned, because of the temple, which was the nail that fastened their tents, and gave them some hopes of continuing in their land. *That our God may lighten our eyes*—That he might revive and comfort our hearts. For, as *darkness* is often put for a state of sorrow and affliction, so *light* is put for joy and comfort. *And give us a little reviving in our bondage*—For we are not quite delivered, being even here in subjection to our former lords.

Verse 9. *For we were bondmen*—In greater bondage than that in which we now are. *Our God hath extended mercy to us in the sight of the kings of Persia*—Hath given us to find favour in their eyes. *To give us a reviving*—To recover us from the grave of dreadful calamities in which we lay, like dead men and dry bones, Ezek. xxxvii. 1. *To repair the desolations thereof*—Of the temple: either

A. M. 3547. lations thereof, and to give us ^a a wall
B. C. 457. in Judah and in Jerusalem.

10 And now, O our God, what shall we say after this? for we have forsaken thy commandments,

11 Which thou hast commanded ^e by thy servants the prophets, saying, The land unto which ye go to possess it, is an unclean land with the ^f filthiness of the people of the lands, with their abominations, which have filled it ^g from one end to another with their uncleanness.

12 Now therefore ^a give not your daughters unto their sons, neither take their daughters unto your sons, ^b nor seek their peace or their wealth for ever: that ye may be strong, and eat the good of the land, and ^c leave it for an inheritance to your children for ever.

¹ Isa. v. 2.—² Heb. by the hand of thy servants.—³ Chap. v. 21.—⁴ Heb. from mouth to mouth, 2 Kings xxi. 16.—⁵ Exod. xxxii. 32; xxxiv. 16; Deut. vii. 3.—⁶ Deut. xxiii. 6.—⁷ Prov. xiii. 22; xx. 7.—⁸ Psa. ciii. 10.

to build the house where there was only a heap of the ruins of the old temple, or to frequent and celebrate the worship of God in that place which had long lain desolate and neglected. *And to give us a wall*—The protection of the kings of Persia, whose edicts were their security against all those enemies wherewith they were encompassed: and the gracious providence of God, which had planted them in their own land, and watched over them from time to time.

Verse 10. *And now, what shall we say after this?*—What apology can we make for ourselves, after thou hast conferred such great and high favours upon us, and we have so grossly abused them?

Verses 11, 12. *Is an unclean land with the filthiness of the people of the lands*—Or, of these lands, which are round about it. This expresses the cause or matter of this uncleanness: the land was not unclean of itself, but only polluted by the filthiness of its inhabitants. *Give not your daughters unto their sons, &c., that ye may be strong*—Although you may fancy making leagues and marriages with them is the only way to establish you, yet, I assure you, it will weaken and ruin you, and the contrary course will make you strong.

Verses 13, 14. *After all that is come upon us for our evil deeds*—After all our sore sufferings for our

13 And after all that is come upon us for our evil deeds, and for our great

trespass, seeing that thou our God ^a hast ^b punished us less than our iniquities *deserve*, and hast given us *such* deliverance as this;

14 Should we ^c again break thy commandments, and ^d join in affinity with the people of these abominations? wouldest not thou be ^e angry with us till thou hadst consumed us, so that *there should be* no remnant nor escaping?

15 O LORD God of Israel, ^b thou *art* righteous: for we remain yet escaped, as *it is* this day: behold, we *are* ¹ before thee ² in our trespasses; for we cannot ³ stand before thee because of this.

^a Heb. hast withheld beneath our iniquities.—^b John v. 14; 2 Pet. ii. 20.—^c Verse 2; Neh. xiii. 23, 27.—^d Deut. ix. 8. ^e Neh. ix. 33; Dan. ix. 14.—^f Rom. iii. 19.—^g 1 Cor. xv. 17. ^h Psa. cxxx. 3.

sins. *Seeing thou hast punished us less than our iniquities deserve*—After all thy favours shown us in the mitigation of thy judgments. *And hast given us such deliverance as this*—So full, so sudden, so unexpected and amazing, not only to our enemies, but also to ourselves. *Should we again break thy commandments, &c.*—Was this a fit and just requital of all thy kindnesses? Was this thy end and design in these actions? Wilt thou take this well at our hands? *That there should be no remnant nor escaping*—Can we reasonably expect any thing from thee less than utter ruin?

Verse 15. *O Lord, thou art righteous*—A just and holy God, who hatest, and wilt infallibly punish, sin and sinners. Or, *thou art merciful*, for the Hebrew word here rendered *righteous*, often signifies *merciful*. Notwithstanding all our sins, thou hast not utterly destroyed us, but left us a remnant; *for we remain yet escaped*—Not entirely destroyed, not punished as we deserved. *Behold, we are before thee in our trespasses*—We are here in thy presence, and so are all our sins; we are arraigning ourselves before thy tribunal, acknowledging thee to be just if thou destroy us. *For we cannot stand before thee*—In judgment, as that word is often used; we must needs fall and perish at thy presence.

CHAPTER X.

The people mourn, 1. Shechaniak encourages Esra to put away the strange wives, 2-4. All Israel swear to do it, 5. Esra, mourning, assembles the people, 6-9. They all, on his exhortation, agree to the reformation, 10-14. They perform it, 15-17. The names of them that had married strange wives, 18-44.

A. M. 3547. B. C. 457. **N**OW ^a when Ezra had prayed, and when he had confessed, weeping and casting himself down ^b before the house of God, there assembled unto him out of Israel a very great congregation of men and women and children; for the people ¹ wept very sore.

2 And Shechaniah the son of Jehiel, *one of the sons of Elam*, answered and said unto Ezra, We have ^c trespassed against our God, and have taken strange wives of the people of the land: yet now there is hope in Israel concerning this thing.

3 Now therefore let us make a ^d covenant

^a Dan. ix. 20.—^b 2 Chron. xx. 9.—¹ Heb. *wept a great weeping.*
^c Neh. xiii. 27.—^d 2 Chron. xxxiv. 31.

NOTES ON CHAPTER X.

Verse 1. *There assembled unto him a very great congregation*—The account of his grief and public expressions thereof in the court before the temple, being in an instant dispersed over all the city, brought a great company together; *of men, women, and children*—Awakened by the words and examples of this holy priest and wise ruler. See what a happy influence the example of great ones may have on their inferiors!

Verse 2. *We have trespassed against our God*—He says *we*, in the name of the people, and their several families, and his own among the rest. For this man's name is not in the following catalogue, but there we have his father Jehiel, and his father's brethren, five other sons of his grandfather Elam, verse 26. It was therefore an evidence of his great courage and disinterested faithfulness, that he durst so freely discharge his duty, whereby he showed that he honoured God more than his nearest and dearest relations, and set an admirable example of zealous integrity. *And have taken strange wives*—Into conjugal society with ourselves. *Yet now there is hope in Israel concerning this thing*—The case is sad, but not desperate: the disease threatening, but not incurable. Our ruin may yet be prevented by repentance and reformation. And there is hope that the people may be reformed, the guilty reclaimed, a stop put to the spreading of the contagion, and so the judgments which the sin deserves may be prevented. Therefore, let us not sorrow like persons without hope, or sit down in despair, but let us fall upon action, and amend our errors, and then trust to God's mercy.

Verse 3. *To put away all the wives, and such as are born of them*—If this seem to any to have been an act of great severity, if not injustice, "let it be observed that the law (Deut. vii. 1, &c.) was express, and enforced with weighty reasons against these pagan marriages; and, therefore, since whatever is done contrary to law is, *ipso facto*, null and void, these marriages with idolatrous women, which were strictly forbidden by God, were, properly speaking, no marriages at all; and the children which proceeded from them were in no better condition than

A. M. 3547. B. C. 457. with our God ² to put away all the wives, and such as are born of them, according to the counsel of my lord, and of those that ^e tremble at ^f the commandment of our God; and let it be done according to the law.

4 Arise; for *this matter belongeth* unto thee: we also *will be* with thee: ^g be of good courage, and do it.

5 Then arose Ezra, and made the chief priests, the Levites, and all Israel, ^h to swear that they should do according to this word. And they swear.

6 ¶ Then Ezra rose up from before the

² Heb. *to bring forth.*—^e Chap. ix. 4.—^f Deuteronomy vii. 2.
^g 1 Chron. xxviii. 10.—^h Neh. v. 12.

those whom we call bastards. No interposition of civil authority was therefore needful to dissolve these marriages; the infidelity and idolatry of the party espoused were as much an interdiction as any the most proximate degree of consanguinity, which, by the laws of all civilized nations, is known to vacate the marriage. But even suppose the civil authority thought proper to interpose in this matter, yet wherein had the Jews any reason to complain, if, in just punishment of their wilful breach of a known and positive law, they were excluded from cohabiting with these illegal wives; those Jews, who, for every light and trivial cause, made no scruple to give even their lawful wives a bill of divorce, and might, therefore, with much less difficulty, be supposed willing to repudiate those whom the laws of their God, for fear of their catching the infection of idolatry, had forbidden them to live with?"—Dodd. See Selden, *Uxor. Heb.*, l. 2, c. 18. It may be observed further here, that these wives and children were only cast out of the commonwealth of Israel, but were not utterly forsaken: probably care was taken by authority that they should have some provision made for them. For all was to be done according to the counsel of Ezra, and other good men, who feared God, and would not enjoin or advise any thing that was unjust or unmerciful. They would also probably take care that the children should be educated in the Jewish religion.

Verses 4, 5. *Arise, for this matter belongeth unto thee*—Who hast a perfect knowledge of the law, and full power from the king of Persia to see every thing done according to it; and who hast most skill to manage this matter. *We also will be with thee: be of good courage*—He promises him his assistance, and that of many other principal persons, which might give him confidence of success. *Then arose Ezra, and made the chief priests, &c., to swear*—He admonished them of their duty in the name of God; and then persuaded them to take a solemn oath, which they did, to put away their strange wives.

Verse 6. *Then rose up Ezra from before the house*—This seems to imply that he made them

A. M. 3547. house of God, and went into the cham-
B. C. 457. ber of Johanan the son of Eliashib :
and *when* he came thither, he ² did eat no bread,
nor drink water: for he mourned because of
the transgression of them that had been carried
away.

7 And they made proclamation throughout
Judah and Jerusalem unto all the children of
the captivity, that they should gather them-
selves together unto Jerusalem ;

8 And that whosoever would not come with-
in three days, according to the counsel of the
princes and the elders, all his substance should
be ³ forfeited, and himself separated from the
congregation of those that had been carried away.

9 ¶ Then all the men of Judah and Benja-
min gathered themselves together unto Jeru-
salem within three days. It *was* the ninth
month, and the twentieth *day* of the month ;

¹ Deut. ix. 18.—² Heb. devoted.—³ 1 Sam. xii. 18.—⁴ Heb. the showers.—⁵ Heb. have caused to dwell, or, have brought back.

swear before he would rise up; and went into the
chamber of Johanan—That, with the princes and
elders, he might consult about the execution of
their resolution. And when he came thither—The
word *when* is not in the Hebrew: the clause, there-
fore, had better be translated, *Till he came thither*;
that is, till he saw something done, he ate nothing.

Verse 8. *That whosoever would not come, &c., all his substance should be forfeited*—In the Hebrew it is *devoted*, which signifies that his goods were to be so forfeited as to become sacred to God, and so rendered incapable of being restored to the former owner, being put into the treasury of God's house. And himself separated from the congregation, &c.—No longer counted a Hebrew, but looked upon as a Gentile, and excluded all communication with the Israelites: shut out from the church, and people, and house, and public worship of God: "*excommunicated*," says Mr. Locke, "by which he was excluded from all society; was not permitted to come within four cubits of the altar till absolved upon repentance. After sixty days contumacy, the anathema or execration followed, which, however, was rescinded upon repentance: nevertheless, it was not allowable for any one to kill the person under such an anathema, but he might be supported in a tent or cottage entirely separated from all society." See Dodd.

Verse 9. *Then all the men of Judah and Benjamin, &c.*—Not only of these two tribes, as appears from the following catalogue, in which there are priests and Levites; but all the Israelites, (verse 25,) who are thus described, because the greatest part of them were of these tribes, though others were mixed with them: and because they all now dwelt in that land, which formerly was appropriated to those

and ¹ all the people sat in the street A. M. 3548.
of the house of God, trembling because B. C. 450.
of *this* matter, and for ⁴ the great rain.

10 And Ezra the priest stood up, and said
unto them, Ye have transgressed, and ⁵ have
taken strange wives to increase the trespass of
Israel.

11 Now therefore ² make confession unto the
LORD God of your fathers, and do his pleasure;
and ³ separate yourselves from the people of the
land, and from the strange wives.

12 Then all the congregation answered and
said with a loud voice, As thou hast said, so
must we do.

13 But the people *are* many, and *it is* a time
of much rain, and we are not able to stand
without, neither *is this* a work of one day or
two: for ⁶ we are many that have transgressed
in this thing.

² Josh. vii. 19; Prov. xxviii. 13.—³ Verse 3.—⁴ Or, we have greatly offended in this thing.

tribes. All the people sat in the street—Hebrew, בִּרְחוֹב, *birchob*, LXX., εν πλατεια, in a broad, open place, of the house of God. Houbigant renders it, the court, namely, that in which the people stood when they worshipped. This, lying open, and not being yet enclosed by a wall, as may be conjectured from Neh. ii. 8, is called in the original an open place, or street, and not חֲצֵר, *chatsar*, the name usually given to the court. Here the people were not only within view of the temple, but in a place adjoining to it, that so they might be as in God's presence, and be thereby awed to a more faithful and vigorous prosecution of their work. Trembling because of *this matter*—The offence they had committed against God, and the consequences thereof; and for the great rain—Hebrew, הַגֶּשְׁמִים, *haggeshamim*, the rains, or showers. It was now the depth of winter, when the rains in Judea are extremely cold; and the people seem to have taken the heavy rains on this occasion as a token of God's displeasure.

Verses 11, 12. *Make confession unto the Lord; and do his pleasure*—You have sinfully pleased yourselves, now please God, by your obedience to his command. And separate yourselves from your strange wives—There being no mention made here of putting away their children, but only their wives, it has been thought by some that they kept their children, and, by circumcision, dedicated them to God. For, though Shechaniah proposed the putting them away, yet it may seem not improbable that Ezra, to whom the matter was referred, when he came to order what should be actually done, mitigated the severity of the proposal. As thou hast said, so must we do—They saw no other remedy, and so submitted to what he required.

A. M. 3548. 14 Let now our rulers of all the con-
B. C. 456. gregation stand, and let all them
which have taken strange wives in our cities
come at appointed times, and with them the el-
ders of every city, and the judges thereof, until
the fierce wrath of our God for this matter be
turned from us.

15 ¶ Only Jonathan the son of Asahel and
Jahaziah the son of Tikvah were employed
about this matter: and Meshullam and Shab-
bethai the Levite helped them.

16 And the children of the captivity did so.
And Ezra the priest, with certain chief of the
fathers, after the house of their fathers, and
all of them by their names, were separated,
and sat down in the first day of the tenth month
to examine the matter.

17 And they made an end with all the men
that had taken strange wives by the first day
of the first month.

18 ¶ And among the sons of the priests there
were found that had taken strange wives:
namely, of the sons of Jeshua the son of Joza-
dak, and his brethren; Maaseiah, and Eliezer,
and Jarib, and Gedaliah.

19 And they gave their hands that they

^o2 Chronicles xxx. 8.—^rOr, till this matter be despatched.
^sHeb. stood.

Verse 14. *Let now our rulers stand*—They propose that the rulers in Jerusalem should meet, to take cognizance of this matter, and to judge and determine in all particular cases: and that, at appointed times, the offenders in every city should be brought before them by the elders and judges of those cities, who should either testify against them for offending, or witness that they had seen the divorces made, and their strange wives put away. For these elders and judges of the several cities were best able to inform the great council at Jerusalem, concerning the quality of the persons accused, and all matters of fact, and circumstances. And this proceeding, they proposed, should continue as long as there remained any thing to be done in this business, that the wrath of God might be turned away from them.

Verse 15. *Only Jonathan and Jahaziah were employed*—To take care that the business should be executed in the manner proposed, that the officers and delinquents of every city should come successively, in convenient time and order, as these should appoint, to keep an exact account of the whole transaction, and of the names of the cities and persons whose causes were despatched; to give notice to others to come in their turns; and to prepare the business for the hearing of the judges. These two were priests, as their helpers were Levites, that so

would put away their wives; and being guilty, they offered a ram of the flock for their trespass.

20 And of the sons of Immer; Hanani, and Zebadiah.

21 And of the sons of Harim; Maaseiah, and Elijah, and Shemaiah, and Jehiel, and Uziah.

22 And of the sons of Pashur; Elioenai, Maaseiah, Ishmael, Nethaneel, Jozabad, and Elasa.

23 Also of the Levites; Jozabad, and Shimei, and Kelaiah, (the same is Kelita,) Pethahiah, Judah, and Eliezer.

24 Of the singers also; Eliashib: and of the porters; Shallum, and Telem, and Uri.

25 Moreover, of Israel: of the sons of Parosh; Ramiah, and Jeziah, and Malchiah, and Miamin, and Eleazar, and Malchijah, and Benaiah.

26 And of the sons of Elam; Mattaniah, Zechariah, and Jehiel, and Abdi, and Jeremoth, and Eliah.

27 And of the sons of Zattu; Elioenai, Eliashib, Mattaniah, and Jeremoth, and Zabad, and Aziza.

28 Of the sons also of Bebai; Jehohanan, Hananiah, Zabbai, and Athlai.

p2 Kings x. 15; 1 Chron. xxix. 24; 2 Chron. xxx. 8.—^rLev. vi. 4, 6.

they might inform the persons concerned, in any matter of doubt.

Verses 16, 17. *Ezra the priest, &c., were separated, and sat down*—Sequestered themselves from all other business, and gave themselves wholly to this. *They made an end, by the first day of the first month*—Three months, therefore, were spent in this disquisition, which shows that it was very exact.

Verses 18, 19. *Among the sons of the priests there were found, &c.*—No wonder the people broke the law, when so many of those who were supposed to understand it best, namely, the priests, yea, some of the sons of the high-priest, set them such a foul example of lust and levity. *And they gave their hands*—They covenanted or swore by giving their hands, which was the usual ceremony in such cases, to put away their strange wives, and avoid such offences in future. *Offered a ram of the flock for their trespass*—Hereby confessing their guilt, and the desert of it, humbly suing for pardon, and taking the prescribed way of obtaining it, by bringing the trespass-offering appointed in the law, Lev. vi. 6. All those named to the end of verse 22, were priests, who, being deep in this guilt, and public persons, emboldened others to go fearlessly into the same sin.

Verse 25. *Moreover of Israel*—Of the people of Israel, distinguished from the priests and Levites

A. M. 3548. 29 And of the sons of Bani; Me-
B. C. 456. shullam, Malluch, and Adaiah, Ja-
shub, and Sheal, and Ramoth.

30 And of the sons of Pahath-moab; Adna,
and Chelal, Benaiah, Maaseiah, Mattaniah,
Bezaleel, and Binnui, and Manasseh.

31 And of the sons of Harim; Eliezer, Ishi-
jah, Malchiah, Shemaiah, Shimeon,

32 Benjamin, Malluch, and Shemariah.

33 Of the sons of Hashum; Mattenai, Mat-
tatah, Zabad, Eliphelet, Jeremai, Manasseh,
and Shimei.

34 Of the sons of Bani; Maadai, Amram, and Uel,

35 Benaiah, Bedeiah, Chelluh,

36 Vaniah, Meremoth, Eliashib,

37 Mattaniah, Mattenai, and Jaasau,

38 And Bani, and Binnui, Shimei,

39 And Shelemiah, and Nathan, and Adaiah,

40 * Machnadebai, Shashai, Sharai,

41 Azareel, and Shelemiah, Shemariah,

42 Shallum, Amariah, and Joseph.

43 Of the sons of Nebo; Jeiel, Mattithiah,
Zabad, Zebina, Jadau, and Joel, Benaiah.

44 All these had taken strange wives: and
some of them had wives by whom they had
children.

* Or, Machnadebai,

according to some copies.

hitherto named, who before, verse 9, were called Ju-
dah and Benjamin.

Verse 44. *All these had taken strange wives*—
“The number is not very great,” says Dr. Dodd, “if
compared with all who came out of captivity; but
they seem to have been eminent persons, and their
examples would, doubtless, have spread the conta-
gion, if a speedy stop had not been put to the evil.”
Some of them had wives by whom they had children
—This implies, that most of their wives were bar-
ren; which came to pass by God’s special provi-
dence, to manifest his displeasure against such
matches, and that the putting them away might not
be encumbered with too many difficulties. One
would think this grievance altogether removed; yet
we meet with it again, Neh. xiii. 22. Such corrup-
tions are easily and insensibly brought in, though

not easily purged out. The best reformers can but
do their endeavour. It is only the Redeemer him-
self, who, when he cometh to Sion, will effectually
turn away ungodliness from Jacob. It may not be
amiss to add here a remark of Mr. Locke: “Justin
Martyr, in his dialogue with Trypho, says that the
following speech of Ezra was in the ancient Hebrew
copies of the Bible, but was expunged by the Jews,
namely: ‘And Ezra said to the people, This passover
is our *Saviour*, and our *Refuge*,’ (namely, a type of
him,) ‘and if you will be persuaded of it, and will
let it enter into your hearts, that we are to humble
him in a sign, and afterward shall believe in him,
this place shall not be destroyed for ever, saith the
God of hosts; but if you believe not in him, neither
hearken to his preaching, ye shall be a laughing-
stock to the Gentiles.’”

THE

BOOK OF NEHEMIAH.

ARGUMENT.

As the book of Ezra gave us a history of the first restoration of the Jewish people after the Babylonish captivity, of their return to Judea, and the building of the second temple; so this of Nehemiah, who came into Judea about thirteen years after him, and succeeded him in the government there, contains a further account of their settlement in Jerusalem, particularly with respect to the building of the wall of the city, and the reformation of several corruptions which had crept in among them.

That Nehemiah himself, whose actions are recorded in this book, was the author of it, there can be no reasonable doubt: for he says as much in the beginning of it, and all along relates what he did in his own person in rebuilding the walls of Jerusalem, and in other things. But, as has been intimated in the note on Ezra ii. 2, there is great reason to suppose he was not the same person with the Nehemiah mentioned Ezra ii. 1, and chap. vii. 7 of this book, who returned with Zerubbabel. For, since from the first of Cyrus, (when Zerubbabel returned,) to the twentieth of Artaxerxes Longimanus, there are no less than ninety-two years intervening, that Nehemiah must have been a very old man; upon the lowest computation above a hundred, and consequently incapable of being the king's cup-bearer, which this Nehemiah was, of taking a journey from Shushan to Jerusalem, and of behaving there with all that courage and activity which is recorded of him. We may conclude, therefore, that this was a different person, though of the same name.

In this Nehemiah we have the shining character of an able governor and true patriot, deeply concerned for the good of his country and the honour of religion; choosing to leave an honourable and profitable post in the greatest court in the world, and generously spending the riches he had gained in it for the public benefit of his fellow-Israelites, and encountering also, for the same end, inexpressible difficulties, and that with a courage and spirit very extraordinary and wonderful, but such as were absolutely necessary to reform the manners, and procure the safety, of such a nation as the Jews were.

It has been universally observed, that the Jews never fell into any of their old idolatries after the time of the great Babylonish captivity; one great cause of which good effect, under God, without doubt, was the exceeding great zeal manifested, and care taken, by Ezra and Nehemiah, to instruct them in the law of God, and to give an early and vigorous check to the dangerous practice of marrying into heathen families. Of Nehemiah's cares and labours to accomplish these purposes we have a full account in these his commentaries, wherein he records not only the works of his hands, but the very workings of his heart, inserting many devout reflections and ejaculations, which are peculiar to his writings. Twelve years he was the *tirshatha*, or governor, of Judea, under the same Artaxerxes, as is probable, that gave Ezra his commission. We have in this book his concern for Jerusalem, and commission to go thither, chap. i., ii.; his building the wall of Jerusalem, notwithstanding much opposition, chap. iii., iv.; his redressing the grievances of the people, chap. v.; his finishing the wall, chap. vi.; the account he took of the people, chap. vii.; his calling the people to read the law, fast, and pray, and renew their covenant, chap. viii.-x. He peopled Jerusalem, and settles the tribe of Levi, chap. xi., xii. He reforms divers abuses, chap. xiii. After Nehemiah we read of no more governors appointed over Judæa by the Persian kings: but their affairs seem to have been left to the management of the high-priests, as we find they were in the following times of the Maccabees. This is the last historical book of the Old Testament that was written, as Malachi is the last prophetic book.

CHAPTER I.

Nehemiah is informed of the deplorable state of the Jews at Jerusalem, 1-3. He fasts and prays, 4-11.

A. M. 3558. B. C. 446. **T**HE words of ^a Nehemiah the son of Hachaliah. And it came to pass in the month Chisleu, in the twentieth year, as I was in Shushan the palace,

2 That Hanani, one of my brethren, came, he and *certain* men of Judah; and I asked them concerning the Jews that had escaped, which were left of the captivity, and concerning Jerusalem.

3 And they said unto me, The remnant that are left of the captivity there in the province are in great affliction and reproach: ^b the wall of Jerusalem also ^c is broken down, and the gates thereof are burned with fire.

4 And it came to pass, when I heard these words, that I sat down and wept, and mourned *certain* days, and fasted, and prayed before the God of heaven,

5 ¶ And said, I beseech thee, ^d O LORD God of heaven, the great and terrible God, ^e that keepeth covenant and mercy for them that

love him and observe his commandments: A. M. 3558. B. C. 446.

6 Let thine ear now be attentive, and ^f thine eyes open, that thou mayest hear the prayer of thy servant, which I pray before thee now, day and night, for the children of Israel thy servants, and ^g confess the sins of the children of Israel, which we have sinned against thee: both I and my father's house have sinned.

7 ^h We have dealt very corruptly against thee, and have ⁱ not kept the commandments, nor the statutes, nor the judgments, which thou commandedst thy servant Moses.

8 Remember, I beseech thee, the word that thou commandedst thy servant Moses, saying, ^k If ye transgress, I will scatter you abroad among the nations:

9 ^l But if ye turn unto me, and keep my commandments, and do them; ^m though there were of you cast out unto the uttermost part of the heaven, yet will I gather them from thence,

^a Chap. x. 1.—^b Chap. ii. 17.—^c 2 Kings xxv. 10.—^d Dan. ix. 4.—^e Exod. xx. 6.—^f 1 Kings viii. 28, 29; 2 Chron. vi. 40; Dan. ix. 17.—^g Dan. ix. 20.

^h Psa. cvi. 6; Dan. ix. 5.—ⁱ Deut. xxviii. 15.—^k Lev. xxvi. 33; Deut. iv. 25, 27; xxviii. 64.—^l Lev. xxvi. 39, &c.; Deut. iv. 29, 31; xxx. 2.—^m Deut. xxx. 4

NOTES ON CHAPTER I.

Verse 1. *The words of Nehemiah*—Or, the acts, as the Hebrew word here used often signifies; that is, the things which Nehemiah did. *In the month Chisleu*—Which answers to part of our November and December. *In the twentieth year*—Namely, of the reign of Artaxerxes. *As I was in Shushan the palace*—In the region of *Elimais*, where the Persian kings kept their court in the winter, and which, from its pleasant and beautiful situation, was called by heathen writers Susa, which signifies a *lily*, or, as Athenæus says, a *rose*.

Verse 2. *I asked them concerning the Jews that had escaped*—Either concerning those who were not carried captives when others were, but remained in the land; or rather, those that had escaped out of the slavery which they had endured in Assyria, Babylon, and other strange lands. *Which were left of the captivity*—The remnant of those numerous captives, now returned and settled in Jerusalem, and other parts of Judea. Though Nehemiah lived in ease, honour, and affluence himself, he could not forget that he was an Israelite, nor shake off the thoughts of his brethren, or his concern for their welfare. He therefore inquires in what condition they were, and whether Jerusalem was again become a flourishing city.

Verse 3. *They said, The remnant that are left in the province*—In Judea, which was now made a province under the Persian kings; *are in great affliction and reproach*—Despised and distressed by the

neighbouring nations. *The wall of Jerusalem also is broken down, &c.*—The walls and gates continue as the Chaldeans left them after their conquest of the city, the Jews not being in a condition to rebuild them, nor having commission from the kings of Persia to do so, but only to build the temple, and their own private houses. This made their condition both very despicable, under the abiding marks of poverty and slavery, and very dangerous, for their enemies might, when they pleased, make an easy prey of them.

Verse 4. *When I heard these words I sat down*—Probably upon the ground, as the manner was, in great sorrow, and perhaps in ashes; *and wept and mourned certain days*—Thus the desolations and distresses of the church of Christ ought to be the matter of our grief, how much soever we live at ease. *And fasted and prayed*—Not in public, which he had no opportunity of doing, but *before the God of heaven*—Who sees in secret, and will reward openly.

Verse 6. *Which I pray before thee night and day*—He refers to all the prayers which he had for some time been addressing to God, during his sorrow for the desolations of Jerusalem.

Verse 9. *But if ye turn unto me, I will gather them from thence, &c.*—This promise made by Moses he trusted God would fulfil, as he had the threatening. It is to be observed, that Nehemiah was directed in this prayer to God, and in his efforts for the restoration of Jerusalem, by the predictions

A. M. 3558. and will bring them unto the place that
B. C. 446. I have chosen to set my name there.

10 ^a Now these *are* thy servants and thy people, whom thou hast redeemed by thy great power, and by thy strong hand.

11 O LORD, I, beseech thee, ^o let now thine

^a Deut. ix. 29 ; Dan. ix. 15.—^o Verse 6.

of Moses, Deut. xxx. 1-4. And he plainly found the truth of that prophecy in the readiness of the king of Persia to grant his petition, which, no doubt, confirmed his faith in what Moses there declares.

Verse 10. *Whom thou hast redeemed by thy great power, &c.*—In days of old, and thy power is still the same ; wilt thou not therefore still redeem them, and perfect their redemption ? Let not them be overpowered by the enemy that have a God of infinite power on their side.

Verse 11. *Who desire to fear thy name*—Who are not only called by thy name, but really have a reverence for it : who now worship thee, and thee only, according to thy will, and have an awful sense of all the discoveries which thou art pleased to make of thyself. Those who truly desire to fear his name shall be graciously accepted of God. *Grant him mercy in the sight of this man*—The king, upon whom he was going to attend : who, though a god by office, was but a man by nature, and therefore his heart was wholly at God's disposal. Favour with men is then comfortable, when we see it

ear be attentive to the prayer of thy A. M. 3558.
servant, and to the prayer of thy ser- B. C. 446.
vants, who ^p desire to fear thy name : and prosper, I pray thee, thy servant this day, and grant him mercy in the sight of this man. For I was the king's ^q cup-bearer.

^p Isa. xxvi. 8 ; Heb. xiii. 18.—^q Chap. ii. 1.

springing from the mercy of God. *For I was the king's cup-bearer*—Whereby I had opportunity to speak to him, and some favour with him, which encouraged me to make this prayer, and to hope for some success. Many of the Jews, by the singular favour of God, obtained considerable dignities in their captivity, as Daniel and his companions, Zerubbabel and others ; among whom was this pious man, who was advanced to this office of cup-bearer when he was but a youth ; which, it must be observed, was a place of great honour and advantage in the Persian court, because of the privilege which it gave him who bore it, of being daily in the king's presence, and the opportunity which he had thereby of gaining his favour for the procuring of any petition he should make to him. That it was a place of great temporal advantage, seems evident by Nehemiah's gaining those immense riches which enabled him, for so many years, (chap. v. 14, 19), out of his own privy purse only, to live in his government with great splendour and expense, without burdening the people at all. See Prideaux, Anno 445.

CHAPTER II.

Artaxerxes sends Nehemiah to Jerusalem, with a commission to build the wall, 1-8. He comes thither, to the grief of his enemies, 9-11. He secretly views the ruins of it, 12-16. He informs the rulers of his commission, 17, 18. Answers them that derided him, 19, 20.

A. M. 3559. **A**ND it came to pass in the month
B. C. 445. Nisan, in the twentieth year of
^a Artaxerxes the king, *that wine was before him* : and ^b I took up the wine, and gave it unto the king. Now I had not been

^a Ezra vii. 1.—^b Chap. i. 11.

NOTES ON CHAPTER II.

Verse 1. *In the month Nisan*—Which answers to part of our March and April. So that there were almost four months between the time of his hearing the fore-mentioned sad tidings respecting the defenceless condition in which Jerusalem lay, and his requesting leave of the king to go thither. The reason of this long delay might be, either that his turn of attending upon the king did not come till that time ; or, that till then he wanted a fit opportunity to move it to him. *That wine was before him*—He was at dinner or supper, and called for wine,

beforetime sad in his presence. A. M. 3559.
B. C. 445. 2 Wherefore the king said unto me,
Why is thy countenance sad, seeing thou art not sick ? this is nothing else but ^c sorrow of heart. Then I was very sore afraid,

^c Prov. xv. 13.

which was ready for him. *Now I had not been beforetime sad, in his presence*—But always appeared cheerful and well pleased, as young men, so advanced, are wont to do.

Verse 2. *The king said, Why is thy countenance sad ?*—His fasting, joined with inward grief, had made a sensible change in his countenance. *Then I was sore afraid*—It was an unusual and ungracious thing to come into the king of Persia's presence with any token of sorrow. And he feared a disappointment, because his request was great and invidious, and odious to most of the Persian courtiers.

A. M. 3559. B. C. 445. **3** And said unto the king, ⁴ Let the

king live for ever: why should not my countenance be sad, when ^o the city, the place of my fathers' sepulchres, *lieth* waste, and the gates thereof are consumed with fire?

4 Then the king said unto me, For what dost thou make request? So I prayed to the God of heaven.

5 And I said unto the king, If it please the king, and if thy servant have found favour in thy sight, that thou wouldst send me unto Judah, unto the city of my fathers' sepulchres, that I may build it.

6 And the king said unto me, (the ¹ queen

⁴ 1 Kings i. 31; Dan. ii. 4; v. 10; vi. 6, 21.—^o Chap. i. 3.
¹ Heb. wife.

Verse 3. *Let the king live for ever*—My sadness comes not from any disaffection to the king, for whom my hearty prayers are that he may live for ever, but from another cause. *Why should I not be sad, when the place of my fathers' sepulchres lieth waste?*—Which by all nations are esteemed sacred and inviolable. He says not a word for the temple, as he spake before a heathen king, who cared for none of these things. There is a regard due to one's own country, which ought not to be extinguished by the pleasure or plenty of any other. It is not a weakness to be deeply affected with the distresses, or for the death of our friends and relations, at what distance soever we are from them; nor can any prosperity in another country excuse a man for not being so much afflicted for any calamity that befalls his own as not to entertain mirth and jollity in his heart. Nehemiah was in no mean station when he was cup-bearer to Artaxerxes, and we may very reasonably suppose, from the grace and bounty which that great king showed him, that he might have had any honour or preferment he would have requested in that great and flourishing empire; yet when that great king discerned that there was sorrow of heart in his countenance, and demanded the reason of it, he made no other excuse but, Jerusalem lay waste: and when the king so graciously invited him to ask some favour worthy of his royal bounty, he would require nothing else but permission and power to go and relieve his country. The grievances of the church, but especially its desolations, ought to be a grief to all good people, and will to all that have a concern for God's honour, and are of a public spirit.

Verse 4. *Then the king said, For what dost thou make request?*—Something thou wouldest have, what is it? The king had an affection for him, and was not pleased to see him dejected, and thus gave him encouragement to tell his mind. *So I prayed to the God of heaven*—I silently in my mind besought God to direct my thoughts and words, and to incline the king's heart to grant my request.

Verse 5. *I said, If it please the king, &c.*—My

also sitting by him,) For how long shall thy journey be? and when wilt thou return? So it pleased the king to send me; and I set him ^a a time.

7 Moreover, I said unto the king, If it please the king, let letters be given me to the governors beyond the river, that they may convey me over till I come into Judah;

8 And a letter unto Asaph the keeper of the king's forest, that he may give me timber to make beams for the gates of the palace which *appertained* ^e to the house, and for the wall of the city, and for the house that I shall enter into. And the king granted me, ^b according to

^f Chap. v. 14; xiii. 6.—^e Chap. iii. 7.—^b Ezra v. 5; vii. 6, 9, 28; Verse 18.

request, whatever it is, I humbly and wholly submit to the king's good pleasure, in which I am resolved to acquiesce. *If thy servant have found favour in thy sight*—I plead no merit, but humbly supplicate thy grace and favour, of which, having received some tokens, I am emboldened to make this farther request. *That thou wouldst send me unto Judah, &c.*—Wouldst give me a commission to go and build the walls of Jerusalem, and thereby make it a city again, for it is now in a defenceless state, as an open town, exposed on all sides to the attacks of its enemies. "A generous spirit," says Lord Clarendon, "can think of nothing but relieving his country while it is under a general misery and calamity."

Verse 6. *The queen also sitting by him*—Which is here noted as an unusual thing, for commonly the kings of Persia dined alone; and perhaps because the queen expressed some kindness to him, and promoted his request. *How long shall thy journey be?*—This question showed the king's affection for him, and that he was not willing to want his attendance longer than was necessary. *So it pleased the king to send me*—Having told the king how long he desired to be absent from his office, the king permitted him to go. How long that was, is not certain. But it is not likely it was for twelve years, mentioned chap. v. 14, and xiii. 6, but rather, he asked leave for a year, or perhaps for half that time: which made him so quick in despatching the building of the wall, which he finished in fifty-two days, chap. vi. 15. After which, it is likely, he returned to Shushan, according to his appointment, and that the king sent him back as his governor for twelve years; his presence being very serviceable, or perhaps necessary there, for the better ordering of that province to the king's satisfaction.

Verses 7, 8. *That they may convey me over till I come into Judah*—May conduct me with safety through their several territories, and furnish me with necessaries on my journey. *And a letter unto Asaph, the keeper of the king's forest*—The forest of Lebanon, famous for choice trees. *That he may give me timber for the gates*—The gates of the tem-

A. M. 3559. the good hand of my God upon
B. C. 445. me.

9 ¶ Then I came to the governors beyond the river, and gave them the king's letters. Now the king had sent captains of the army and horsemen with me.

10 When Sanballat the Horonite, and Tobiah the servant, the Ammonite, heard of it, it grieved them exceedingly that there was come a man to seek the welfare of the children of Israel.

11 So I came to Jerusalem, and was there three days.

12 ¶ And I arose in the night, I and some few men with me; neither told I any man what my God had put in my heart to do at Jerusalem: neither was there any beast with me, save the beast that I rode upon.

13 And I went out by night by the gate of the valley, even before the dragon-well, and to

¹ Ezra viii. 32.—² 2 Chron. xxvi. 9; Chap. iii. 13.—³ Chap. i. 3; Verse 17.—⁴ Chap. iii. 15.

ple. For though the temple itself was built, yet the several courts seem not to have been walled about, nor the gates made leading to the temple. *Of the palace*—The king's palace, which adjoined to the house of God. *And for the house that I shall enter into*—He desired leave to build a convenient house for himself, and for those that should be future governors. *According to the good hand of my God upon me*—By the divine favour, which inclined the king to do what he desired; which he calls God's good hand, because we extend favour with our hands.

Verse 9. *Now the king had sent captains of the army and horsemen with me*—This the king had done over and above what Nehemiah had desired; and it procured him the greater respect from the governors, when they saw the care which the king took for the safety of his person.

Verse 10. *Sanballat the Horonite*—So called either from the place of his birth or residence, which is supposed to have been Horonaim, an eminent city of Moab. This Sanballat was the person who afterward instigated Alexander the Great to build the temple of Gerizim, in order to occasion a division among the Jews. *Tobiah the servant, the Ammonite*—So called, probably, from the condition from which he had been advanced to his present power and dignity; which also may be mentioned as one reason why he now carried himself so insolently, it being usual for persons suddenly raised from a low state so to demean themselves. *It grieved them exceedingly that there was come a man*—With such authority from the king, and in such favour with him, as appeared by the letters he brought with him, and the guard that attended him,

the dung-port, and viewed the walls of Jerusalem, which were broken down, and the gates thereof were consumed with fire.

14 Then I went on to the gate of the fountain, and to the king's pool: but there was no place for the beast that was under me to pass.

15 Then went I up in the night by the brook, and viewed the wall, and turned back, and entered by the gate of the valley, and so returned.

16 And the rulers knew not whither I went, or what I did; neither had I as yet told it to the Jews, nor to the priests, nor to the nobles, nor to the rulers, nor to the rest that did the work.

17 ¶ Then said I unto them, Ye see the distress that we are in, how Jerusalem lieth waste, and the gates thereof are burned with fire: come, and let us build up the wall of Jerusalem, that we be no more a reproach.

¹ 2 Sam. xv. 23; Jer. xxxi. 40.—² Chap. i. 3; Psa. xlv. 13; lxxix. 4; Jer. xxiv. 9; Ezra v. 14; xxii. 4.

and the diligence of the several governors, through whose provinces he passed, to serve him.

Verse 12. *I arose in the night*—Concealing both his intentions and actions as far and as long as he could, as knowing that the life of his business lay in secrecy and expedition. *Neither was there any beast with me, &c.*—To prevent noise, and that no notice might be taken of what he did.

Verse 13. *I went out by night*—The footmen who accompanied him directing and leading him in the way. His design was to go around the city, to observe the compass and condition of the walls and gates, that he might make sufficient provisions for the work. *By the gate of the valley*—Of which see chap. iii. 13. *Even before the dragon-well*—A fountain of water so called, either from some figure of a dragon or serpent which was by it, or from some living dragon which had taken up its abode there when the city was desolate. *To the dung-port*—Through which they used to carry the dung out of the city.

Verses 14–16. *I went on to the gate of the fountain*—That is, which led to the fountain, to wit, of Siloah or Gihon. *And to the king's pool*—That which King Hezekiah had made, of which see 2 Chron. xxxii. 3–30. *But there was no place for the beast, &c.*—The way being obstructed with heaps of rubbish. *Then went I up by the brook*—Of Kidron, of which see on 2 Sam. xv. 23. *And so returned*—Having gone around about the city. *Nor to the rest that did the work*—Or were to do it, that is, whom he intended to employ in it.

Verses 17, 18. *That we be no more a reproach*—Exposed to the scorn and insults of the people around about, *I told them of the hand of my God,*

A. M. 3559. B. C. 445. 18 Then I told them of ^pthe hand of my God which was good upon me; as also the king's words that he had spoken unto me. And they said, Let us rise up and build. So they ^astrengthened their hands for *this* good work.

19 But when Sanballat the Horonite, and Tobiah the servant, the Ammonite, and Ge-

^p Verse 8.—^a2 Sam. ii. 7.—^b Psa. xlv. 13;

&c.—That is, he informed them how favourable God had made the king to him, and what discourse he had had with him, and what authority and commission he had received from him. *They said, Let us rise up and build*—Let us begin and proceed with vigour, diligence, and resolution, as those that are determined to go through with the work. *They strengthened their hands*—Their own and one another's.

Verses 19, 20. *When Sanballat, Tobiah, and Geshem, &c.*—These three seem to have been chief

shem the Arabian, heard *it*; they ^{A. M. 3559. B. C. 445.} laughed us to scorn, and despised us, and said, What *is* this thing that ye do? ^awill ye rebel against the king?

20 Then answered I them, and said unto them, The God of heaven, he will prosper us; therefore we his servants will arise and build: ^bbut ye have no portion, nor right, nor memorial, in Jerusalem.

lxxix. 4; lxxx. 6.—^c Chap. vi. 6.—^d Ezra iv. 3.

men among the Samaritans, and perhaps were invested with some offices or authority by the king of Persia. *You have no portion nor right*—Do not trouble yourselves about this matter, who have no possession among us, no authority over us, nor interest in our church or state; *nor memorial in Jerusalem*—No testimony or monument either of your relation to us by birth or religion, or of your kindness to us or to this place, but you are aliens from the commonwealth of Israel: therefore mind your own business, and do not meddle with ours.

CHAPTER III.

The names of those who presided over the builders, and the parts which each company built, 1–32.

A. M. 3559. B. C. 445. **T**HEN ^aEliashib the high priest rose up with his brethren the priests, ^band they builded the sheep-gate; they sanctified it, and set up the doors of it; ^ceven unto the tower of Meah they sanctified it, unto the tower of ^dHananeel.

2 And ¹next unto him builded ^ethe men of Jericho. And next to them builded Zaccur the son of Imri.

^a Chap. xii. 10.—^b John v. 2.—^c Chap. xii. 39.—^d Jer. xxxi. 38; Zech. xiv. 10.

NOTES ON CHAPTER III.

Verse 1. *Then Eliashib the high-priest rose up*—The grandchild of Jeshua, the first high-priest after their return from Babylon. He, with his brethren, set a noble example, in being the first that began to rebuild the walls of the holy city, which the Babylonians had demolished. Ministers should be foremost in every good work, animating others by their example as well as doctrine. *And they built the sheep-gate*—Which was on the south side of the city, in that part of the valley which looked toward mount Zion and the temple; called the sheep-gate, because the sheep were brought through it to be sacrificed. Thus he not only shows by whom, but in what order, the wall was built. *They sanctified it*—Or they prepared, or repaired it; for so the word sometimes signifies. But our translation seems best, both because that use of the word is most

3 ¹But the fish-gate did the sons of A. M. 3559. Hassenaah build, who *also* laid the ^{B. C. 445.} beams thereof, and ^aset up the doors thereof, the locks thereof, and the bars thereof.

4 And next unto them repaired Meremoth the son of Urijah, the son of Koz. And next unto them repaired Meshullam the son of Berèchiah, the son of Meshezabeel. And next unto them repaired Zadok the son of Baana.

¹ Heb. *at his hand*.—^a Ezra ii. 34.—^b 2 Chron. xxxiii. 14; Chap. xii. 39; Zeph. i. 10.—^c Chap. vi. 1; vii. 1.

common, and because this is spoken only of this gate, which, being built by the priests, and nearest to the temple, and with a special eye to the service of the temple, for which both men and things were most commonly brought in this way, and being also the first part of the building, might be in a peculiar manner *sanctified* by solemn prayer and sacrifice, whereby it was dedicated to God's service. *Even unto the tower of Meah they sanctified it*—That is, they sanctified the rest of the wall which they built as far as the tower of Meah on one side, and the tower of Hananeel on the other.

Verses 2, 3. *The men of Jericho*—The posterity of the ancient inhabitants of Jericho. *The fish-gate*—This gate, being on the north-west side of Jerusalem, looked toward the sea, from whence fish was wont to be brought, and sold in the fish-market near this gate.

A. M. 3559. 5 And next unto them the Tekoites
B. C. 445. repaired; but their nobles put not their
necks to ^b the work of their LORD.

6 Moreover, ⁱ the old gate repaired Jehoiada the son of Paseah, and Meshullam the son of Besodeiah; they laid the beams thereof, and set up the doors thereof, and the locks thereof, and the bars thereof.

7 And next unto them repaired Melatiah the Gibeonite, and Jadon the Meronothite, the men of Gibeon and of Mizpah, unto the ^k throne of the governor on this side the river.

8 Next unto him repaired Uzziel the son of Harhaiah, of the goldsmiths. Next unto him also repaired Hananiah the son of *one of the* apothecaries, and they ² fortified Jerusalem unto the ¹ broad wall.

9 And next unto them repaired Rephaiah the son of Hur, the ruler of the half part of Jerusalem.

10 And next unto them repaired Jedaiah the son of Harumaph, even over against his house. And next unto him repaired Hattush the son of Hashabniah.

11 Malchijah the son of Harim, and Hashub

the son of Pahath-moab, repaired the ^{A. M. 3559.}
^{B. C. 445.} ³ other piece, ^m and the tower of the
furnaces.

12 And next unto him repaired Shallum the son of Halohesh, the ruler of the half part of Jerusalem, he and his daughters.

13 ⁿ The valley-gate repaired Hanun, and the inhabitants of Zanoah; they built it, and set up the doors thereof, the locks thereof, and the bars thereof, and a thousand cubits on the wall unto ^o the dung-gate.

14 But the dung-gate repaired Malchiah the son of Rechab, the ruler of part of Beth-haccerem; he built it, and set up the doors thereof, the locks thereof, and the bars thereof.

15 But ^p the gate of the fountain repaired Shallum the son of Col-hozeh, the ruler of part of Mizpah; he built it, and covered it, and set up the doors thereof, the locks thereof, and the bars thereof, and the wall of the pool of ^q Siloah by the king's garden, and unto the stairs that go down from the city of David.

16 After him repaired Nehemiah the son of Azbuk, the ruler of the half part of Beth-zur, unto *the place* over against the sepulchres of

^b Judg. v. 23.—¹ Chap. xii. 39.—² Chap. ii. 8.—³ Or, left
Jerusalem unto the broad wall.—¹ Chap. xii. 39.

ⁿ Hebrew, *second measure*.—^m Chap. xii. 38.—^p Chap. ii. 13.
^o Chap. ii. 13.—^q Chap. ii. 14.—^r John ix. 7.

Verse 5. *Next unto them the Tekoites repaired*—The inhabitants of the city of Tekoa, in the tribe of Judah. *But their nobles put not their necks to the work*—Would not submit to it, would not further it, either through pride, or sloth, or covetousness, or secret compliance with the enemies of the Jews. *Of their Lord*—Of God, whom they owned for their Lord, whose work this was, because it had proceeded thus far by his singular providence; and because it was done for the defence of the city, and people, and temple of God. And therefore they are branded to all posterity. Let not nobles think any thing beneath them, by which they may benefit their country. What is their nobility good for, but that it places them in a higher and larger sphere of usefulness?

Verse 7. *Unto the throne of the governor on this side the river*—Unto the place where the governor of the country on this side Euphrates, under the Persian kings, sometimes had a palace or throne.

Verse 8. *Next unto him repaired Uzziel; also Hananiah*—These were two eminent persons, one among the workers or casters of gold, the other among the perfumers. *They fortified Jerusalem, &c., unto the broad wall*—It is not said, *they repaired*, but, *they fortified* it, either because this part of the wall was less demolished than the other, and therefore they needed not to repair it, but only to make it stronger; or, to note their extraordinary care and

diligence, that they would not only repair it, but make it stronger than ever.

Verses 9, 10. *The ruler of the half part of Jerusalem*—As Rome was anciently divided into several quarters or regions, so was Jerusalem; and especially into two parts, whereof one was in the tribe of Benjamin, and nearest the temple, the other in the tribe of Judah; these accordingly had two several rulers, this man and the other, (verse 12,) but both under the chief governor of the city. *Jedaiah over against his house*—That part of the wall which was next to him, which his own interest obliged him to repair.

Verse 12. *Shallum, the ruler of the half part, &c.*—That is, of the other half of Jerusalem: see on verse 9. *He and his daughters*—Who were either heiresses or rich widows, and caused part to be done at their charges.

Verses 14–16. *Beth-haccerem*—A town or territory, the government whereof was divided between two persons. *The wall of the pool of Siloah*—That part of the wall which was directly against that pool. *After him repaired Nehemiah*—One of the same name, but not of the same family, with the writer of this book. *Over against the sepulchres of David*—The place which David appointed for his own sepulchre, and the sepulchres of his successors, the kings of Israel and Judah. *To the pool that was made*—To wit, by Hezekiah, (2 Kings xx. 20.)

A. M. 3559. David, and to the ^rpool that was
B. C. 445. made, and unto the house of the
mighty.

17 After him repaired the Levites, Rehun the son of Bani. Next unto him repaired Hashabiah, the ruler of the half part of Keilah, in his part.

18 After him repaired their brethren, Bavai, the son of Henadad, the ruler of the half part of Keilah.

19 And next to him repaired Ezer the son of Jeshua, the ruler of Mizpah, another piece over against the going up to the armory, at the ^rturning of the wall.

20 After him Baruch the son of ^rZabbai earnestly repaired the other piece, from the turning of the wall unto the door of the house of Eliashib the high-priest.

21 After him repaired Meremoth the son of Urijah, the son of Koz, another piece, from the door of the house of Eliashib even to the end of the house of Eliashib.

22 And after him repaired the priests, the men of the plain.

^r 1 Kings xx. 20; Isa. xxxiii. 11.—^r 2 Chron. xxvi. 9.—^r Or, Zaccai.—^r Verse 19.—^r Jer. xxxii. 2; xxxiii. 1; xxxvii. 21. ^r Ezra ii. 43; Chap. xi. 21.

whereby it was distinguished from that pool, which was natural. *And unto the house of the mighty—Or, valiant.* The place where the king's guards were lodged, who were all mighty men, and from this circumstance probably it had its name.

Verse 19. *The going up to the armory—*Either to the house, or the forest of Lebanon, which was their armory from Solomon's days, (Isa. xxii. 8,) or to some other place, which, either before or since that time, had been used as another and less armory for common occasions. *At the turning of the wall—Or, at the corners.*

Verse 20. *Baruch earnestly repaired the other piece—*Did his work with eminent diligence and fervency; which is here noted to his commendation. And, it is probable, this good man's zeal provoked many to take the more pains, and make the more haste.

Verse 21. *From the door of the house of Eliashib, &c.—*He carried on the work from the place where the other left off, from the door of the house to the end of it, which, being the house of a great man, we may suppose was very large.

Verse 22. *The priests, the men of the plain—*Either of the plains of Jordan, or of the plain country round about Jerusalem, as it is called chap. xii. 28. Probably they were thus called, because they or their parents now or formerly dwelt in those parts, whence they came to Jerusalem when the service of the temple required it.

Verse 25. *Over against the turning of the wall—*

23 After him repaired Benjamin and Hashub over against their house. After ^rhim repaired Azariah the son of Maaseiah the son of Ananiah, by his house.

24 After him repaired Binnui the son of Henadad another piece, from the house of Azariah unto ^rthe turning of the wall, even unto the corner.

25 Palal the son of Uzai, over against the turning of the wall, and the tower which lieth out from the king's high house, that was by the ^rcourt of the prison. After him, Pedaiah the son of Parosh.

26 Moreover, ^rthe Nethinims ^rdwelt in ^rOphel, ^runto the place over against ^rthe water-gate toward the east, and the tower that lieth out.

27 After them the Tekoites repaired another piece over against the great tower that lieth out, even unto the wall of Ophel.

28 From above the ^rhorse-gate repaired the priests, every one over against his house.

29 After them repaired Zadok the son of Immer, over against his house. After him repair-

^r Or, which dwelt in Ophel, repaired unto.—^r 2 Chron. xxvii. 3.—^r Or, the tower.—^r Chap. viii. 1, 3; xii. 37.—^r 2 Kings xi. 15; 2 Chron. xxiii. 15; Jer. xxxi. 40.

In a part of the wall which jugged out. *And the tower—Or, even the tower.* Which lieth out from the king's high house—Either from the royal palace, or from some other house which the king formerly built there, either for prospect or for defence. *By the court of the prison—*A place often mentioned: see Jer. xxxii. 2, and xxxviii. 7, 13.

Verse 26. *The Nethinims dwelt in Ophel—Or, who dwelt in Ophel.* For this seems to be only a description of the persons whose work follows. Not only the priests and Levites, but the meanest persons that belonged to the house of God, inferior officers, contributed to this work. *Over against the water-gate—*So called, because by that gate water was brought in, either by the people, for the use of that part of the city, or rather, by these Nethinims, who were Gibeonites, for the uses of the temple, for which they were drawers of water, Josh. ix. 21.

Verse 27. *After them the Tekoites repaired—*The same spoken of before, who, having despatched their first share sooner than their brethren, freely offered to supply the defects of others, who, as it seems, neglected that part of the work which had been committed to them. And this their double diligence is noted, both for the greater shame of their nobles, who would not do any part of it, and for their own honour, who were so far from being corrupted by that bad example, that they were quickened to greater zeal and industry in this pious work.

Verses 28, 29. *From above the horse-gate—*Not

A. M. 3559. ed also Shemaiah the son of Shech-
B. C. 445. niah, the keeper of the east gate.

30 After him repaired Hananiah the son of Shelemiah, and Hanun the sixth son of Zalaph, another piece. After him repaired Meshullam the son of Berechiah over against his chamber.

31 After him repaired Malchiah the gold-

⁷Or, corner

that belonging to the king's palace, (2 Chron. xxiii. 15,) but one of the gates of the city, so called, probably, because the horses commonly went out that way to their watering-place. *Shechaniah the keeper of the east gate*—To wit, of the city or of the temple, which, being the chief gate, was committed to his particular care and custody.

Verse 30. *And Hanun the sixth son of Zalaph, another piece*—It seems his five elder brethren laid not their hands to the work. But in doing that which is good, we need not stay to see our betters go before us.

Verse 32. *The going up unto the sheep-gate*—There they began, and there they ended, which shows that they left not off till they had compassed

smith's son, unto the place of the A. M. 3559.
Nethinims, and of the merchants, over B. C. 445.
against the gate Miphkad, and to the ⁷going up of the corner.

32 And between the going up of the corner unto the sheep-gate repaired the goldsmiths and the merchants.

chamber.

the whole city with a wall. No man can think, (as Pellicanus observes,) that the names of them who repaired the walls of Jerusalem were set down so diligently as here they are, without some rational cause for it. And the reason was, because it was a work of great *virtue*, to love and to do honour to their country; a work of *piety*, to restore the holy city; a *religious* conduct, to defend the true worshippers of God, that they might serve him in quietness and safety; and a *courageous* behaviour, in the midst of so many enemies, to go on with this work in a pious confidence of the power of God to support them. The names, therefore, of such persons deserved to be preserved and transmitted to future generations, as a most noble example to them.

CHAPTER IV.

The enemies scoff, but Nehemiah prays, and continues the work, 1-6. To frustrate their design, he prays and sets a guard, 7-13. He encourages the workmen, and directs them how to proceed, 14-18. His further directions, 19-23.

A. M. 3559. **B**UT it came to pass, * that when
B. C. 445. Sanballat heard that we build-
ed the wall, he was wroth, and took great indignation, and mocked the Jews.

2 And he spake before his brethren, and the army of Samaria, and said, What do these feeble Jews? will they ¹fortify themselves? will they sacrifice? will they make an end in a day?

* Chap. ii. 10, 19.—¹ Heb. leave to themselves.

NOTES ON CHAPTER IV.

Verses 1, 2. *And mocked the Jews*—Pretending contempt in his words, when he had grief, anger, and vexation in his heart. *And he spake before his brethren*—Before Tobiah, Geshem, and others, whom Nehemiah calls his brethren, because of their conjunction with him in office and interest. *And the army in Samaria*—Whom he hereby designed to incense against them, or, at least, whose minds he thought thus to learn. *What do these feeble Jews? Will they fortify, &c.*—Do they intend to begin and finish the work, and keep the feast of dedication by sacrifice, all in one day? For if they spend any long time about it, they cannot think that we and the rest of their neighbours will suffer them to do it. Thus he persuaded himself and his companions that their attempt was ridiculous; and this mistake kept him from giving them any disturbance till it was

will they revive the stones out of the A. M. 3559.
heaps of the rubbish which are burn- B. C. 445.
ed?

3 Now ^bTobiah the Ammonite was by him, and he said, Even that which they build, if a fox go up, he shall even break down their stone wall.

4 ^cHear, O our God; for we are ^ddespised:

^b Chap. ii. 10, 19.—^c Psa. cxliii. 3, 4.—^d Heb. despite.

too late. So did God infatuate him to his own grief and shame, and to the advantage of the Jews. *Will they revive the stones out of the heaps of rubbish?*—Will they pick up their broken stones out of the ruins, and patch them together? *Which are burned*—Which stones were burned, and broken by the Chaldeans, when they took the city.

Verse 3. *If a fox go up*—He mentions foxes because they were very numerous in those parts, and because in the late desolation of Jerusalem, the foxes did frequent the mount and city of Zion, (Lam. v. 18,) wherewith he seems to upbraid them. *He shall even break down their stone wall*—It is so low that a fox can easily ascend to the top of it, and so weak, and built so hastily and carelessly, that the least weight or thrust will tumble it down.

Verses 4, 5. *Hear, O our God*—Nehemiah here interrupts the relation, to mention the prayer he

A. M. 3559. and ^d turn their reproach upon their
B. C. 445. own head, and give them for a prey
in the land of captivity :

5 And ^e cover not their iniquity, and let not
their sin be blotted out from before thee : for
they have provoked thee to anger before the
builders.

6 So built we the wall ; and all the wall was
joined together unto the half thereof : for the
people had a mind to work.

7 ¶ But it came to pass, that ^f when Sanbal-
lat, and Tobiah, and the Arabians, and the
Ammonites, and the Ashdodites, heard that the

⁴ Psa. lxxix. 12 ; Prov. iii. 31. — ^e Psa. lxxix. 27 ; cix. 14 ; Jer.
xviii. 23. — ^f Verse 1.

made on the occasion. *Turn their reproach upon their own head*—Let them really be as contemptible as they represent us to be. This and the following requests must seem harsh to us, who are taught by the Lord Jesus to *love our enemies, to bless those that curse us, and pray for those that despitefully use and persecute us*. Probably they were uttered rather by a spirit of prophecy than a spirit of prayer, and are to be considered as declaratory of the judgments of God against persecutors. They certainly had their accomplishment in the subsequent doom of these nations. *And give them for a prey in the land of their captivity*—Let them be removed from our neighbourhood, and carried into captivity ; and there let them find no favour, but further severity. Or, *give them for a prey* to their enemies, and let these carry them into the land of captivity. *And cover not their iniquity*—Let their wickedness be in thy sight, so as to bring down judgments upon them, that either they may be reformed, or others may be warned by their example. God is said to cover or hide sin, when he forbears to punish it. *For they have provoked thee*—They have not only provoked us builders, but thee also. Or, *they have provoked, or derided, the builders to their face* ; that is, openly and impudently, in contempt of God, and of this work, which is done by his direction and encouragement. Nehemiah, in these petitions, if they be petitions, and not rather predictions, as has just been intimated, is not to be imitated by us, but rather he, whose disciples we profess to be, and who, when upon the cross, and under the bitterest agonies, prayed most fervently for the forgiveness of those that crucified him.

Verse 6. *All the wall was joined unto the half thereof*—That is, the wall was built round the whole city, there being no space unbuilt, and it was carried up to half the height that it was intended to be. *For the people had a mind to work*—Were very much set upon it, and went about it cheerfully, notwithstanding the jeers and scoffs of their enemies.

Verses 7, 8. *That the breaches began to be stopped*—That is, the breaches which the Chaldeans had made and left in the walls were well nigh repaired.

walls of Jerusalem, ³ were made up, A. M. 3559
and that the breaches began to be B. C. 445.
stopped, then they were very wroth,

8 And ^g conspired all of them together to
come and to fight against Jerusalem, and ^h to
hinder it.

9 Nevertheless ⁱ we made our prayer unto our
God, and set a watch against them day and
night, because of them.

10 And Judah said, The strength of the
bearers of burdens is decayed, and there is
much rubbish ; so that we are not able to build
the wall.

^g Heb. ascended. — ^h Psa. lxxxiii. 3, 5. — ⁱ Heb. to make an
error to it. — ^j Psa. l. 15.

Then they were very wroth—They had flattered themselves with a notion that the work would soon stand still of itself ; but when they heard that it went on and prospered, they were angry at the Jews for pushing it forward so hastily, and at themselves for being so slow in opposing it. *And conspired all of them together*—Though of different interests among themselves, yet they were unanimous in their opposition to the work of God. *To come and fight against Jerusalem*—Why ? what quarrel had they with the Jews ? Had the Jews done them any wrong, or did they design them any ? No : they lived peaceably by them ; but it was merely out of envy and malice that this Sanballat and his brethren opposed and persecuted them. They hated the piety of the Jews, and were therefore vexed at their prosperity, and sought their ruin. *And to hinder it*—Or, *to cause the work to cease*, as it is expressed verse 11, which they doubted not but they should be able to effect. The hindering of a good work is that which bad men aim at, and promise themselves ; but as a good work is God's work, it shall prosper.

Verse 9. *We made our prayer unto God*—They committed themselves to the protection of God, whose servants they were, and whom they considered as being engaged for them. This was the way of good Nehemiah and his associates : all their cares, all their griefs, all their fears, they spread before God, and thereby made themselves easy. *And set a watch against them day and night*—They seconded their prayers by their endeavours, and kept a constant watch, that they might not be surprised by their enemies, for they knew them to be very vigilant to do mischief.

Verse 10. *And Judah said*—That is, the Jews now dwelling in Judah ; to wit, some of them, being partly terrified by their enemies, and partly wearied with continual labour : *the strength of the bearers of burdens is decayed*—The labourers have wrought so long and so hard that they are quite spent ; and *there is much rubbish*—More than we are able soon to remove : *so that we are not able to build the wall*—Being forced to spend our time in removing

A. M. 3559. 11 And our adversaries said, They
B. C. 445. shall not know, neither see, till we
come in the midst among them, and slay them,
and cause the work to cease.

12 And it came to pass, that when the Jews
which dwelt by them came, they said unto us
ten times, ⁵ From all places whence ye shall re-
turn unto us *they will be upon you.*

13 ¶ Therefore set I ⁶ in the lower places be-
hind the wall, *and* on the higher places, I even
set the people after their families with their
swords, their spears, and their bows.

14 And I looked, and rose up, and said unto
the nobles, and to the rulers, and to the rest
of the people, ¹ Be not ye afraid of them:
remember the LORD, *which is* ^k great and terri-
ble, and ¹ fight for your brethren, your sons,

⁵ Or, *That from all places ye must return to us.*—⁶ Heb. *from the lower parts of the places, &c.*

the rubbish, and therefore we must desist for a sea-
son. Can Judah, that warlike, valiant tribe, speak
thus? Active, leading men, have many times as
much to do to grapple with the fears of their friends
as with the terrors of their enemies.

Verse 11. *Our adversaries said, They shall not know, &c.*—Their enemies resolved not to appear
with an army before Jerusalem, but to march so se-
cretly that the Jews should have no notice of their
approach till they saw them in the city, armed and
prepared to attack them suddenly, and put them to
the sword.

Verse 12. *And the Jews which dwell by them—*
Who were neighbours to that people; or dwell
among them, as the words may be rendered, where-
by they became acquainted with their counsels.
They said unto us ten times—That is, they came
and informed us very often, for *ten times*, in Scrip-
ture, signifies a great many times. *From all places
whence ye shall return unto us, &c.*—That is, they
will attack you by all the ways by which we can
come to you, or you to us, or wherever there is any
communication between you and us; therefore take
care to keep watches on every side. Hence it ap-
pears, that though those Jews, who dwelt near or
among the Samaritans, had not zeal enough to in-
duce them to come to Jerusalem to help their breth-
ren in building the wall; yet, having discovered the
enemies' design, they had so much honesty, and af-
fection to the cause, as to give intelligence of it:
nay, that their information might be the more cred-
ited, they came themselves to make them acquainted
with it, repeating it many times, as men in earnest,
and under a concern to have it believed.

Verse 13. *Therefore, in the lower places behind
the wall*—Within the walls, where they were not yet
raised to their due height, and therefore most liable
to the enemies' assault. *On the higher places*—Upon
the tops of the walls, where they were finished, and

and your daughters, your wives, and ^{A. M. 3559.}
^{B. C. 445.} your houses.

15 And it came to pass, when our enemies
heard that it was known unto us, ^m and God
had brought their counsel to naught, that we
returned all of us to the wall, every one unto
his work.

16 And it came to pass from that time forth,
that the half of my servants wrought in the
work, and the other half of them held both the
spears, the shields, and the bows, and the ha-
bergeons; and the rulers *were* behind all the
house of Judah.

17 They which builded on the wall, and they
that bare burdens, with those that laded, *every
one* with one of his hands wrought in the work,
and with the other *hand* held a weapon.

¹ Num. xiv. 9; Deut. i. 29.—^k Deut. x. 17.—¹ 2 Sam. x. 12.
^m Job v. 12.

the towers which were built here and there upon
the wall, whence they might shoot arrows, or throw
stones.

Verse 14. *I said unto the nobles, Be not afraid of
them*—All was at stake; therefore he exhorts them
to be valiant, trusting in God. *Remember the Lord,
who is great and terrible, &c.*—You think your ene-
mies are great and terrible; but what are they in
comparison with God? especially in opposition to
him?

Verse 15. *When our enemies heard that it was
known unto us*—When they heard that their plot
was discovered, and they had no hope to surprise us,
but found that we were ready to receive them, they
laid aside their designs, and we went on with our
work.

Verse 16. *It came to pass from that time forth—*
Lest our enemies should repeat their enterprise;
that the half of my servants wrought in the work—
Of my domestic servants, and of my guards, who
should have attended upon my own person. *And the
other half held the spears, the shields, &c.*—That is,
all their weapons: they stood in their arms, pre-
pared for battle. *And the rulers were behind all*—
Partly to encourage them in their work, some-
times assisting them with their own hands; and
partly to direct and command them in case of an
assault.

Verse 17. *Every one with one of his hands
wrought in the work, and with the other held a wea-
pon*—That is, they were well prepared either to
build or fight; for the expression is figurative, it not
being possible for them to work, if both hands had
not been at liberty. Accordingly the next verse
says, *Every one had his sword girded by his side.*
Thus must we work out our salvation, with the wea-
pons of our warfare in our hands. For in every
duty we must expect opposition from our spiritual
enemies.

A. M. 3559. 18 For the builders, every one had
B. C. 445. his sword girded ⁷ by his side, and so
buildd. And he that sounded the trumpet *was*
by me.

19 And I said unto the nobles, and to the
rulers, and to the rest of the people, The work
is great and large, and we are separated upon
the wall, one far from another.

20 In what place *therefore* ye hear the sound
of the trumpet, resort ye thither unto us: ^a our
God shall fight for us.

⁷ Heb. on his loins.—^a Exod. xiv. 14, 25; Deut. i. 30; iii. 22;
xx. 4; Josh. xxiii. 10.

Verse 18. *He that sounded the trumpet was by me*
—To give the alarm, and call the people together,
when and where it was necessary. It appears by
this he was continually with them while they
wrought upon the wall.

Verses 21, 22. *Half of them held the spears*—For
the use of every man, if there should be occasion.
*From the rising of the morning till the stars ap-
peared*—Working very early and very late. *Let
every one with his servant lodge within Jerusalem*
—Not in the suburbs or adjoining villages, as proba-
bly many of them had done, returning thence to

21 So we laboured in the work: and A. M. 3559.
half of them held the spears from the B. C. 445.
rising of the morning till the stars appeared.

22 Likewise at the same time said I unto the
people, Let every one with his servant lodge
within Jerusalem, that in the night they may be
a guard to us, and labour on the day.

23 So neither I, nor my brethren, nor my ser-
vants, nor the men of the guard which followed
me, none of us put off our clothes, ^b *saving
that every one put them off for washing.*

^b Or, every one went with his weapon for water, Judges v. 11.

their work in the morning: but now he would have
them all lodge in Jerusalem, for the greater security
of the city; and in turns to watch by night, or work
on the walls by day.

Verse 23. *None of us put off our clothes*—Neither
by day nor by night, as the manner is when people
go to rest, but they constantly kept themselves in
readiness to fight, if any assault were made on the
city. *Saving that every one put them off for wash-
ing*—When they were to wash and cleanse them-
selves from some impurity, which might befall them
or their garments.

CHAPTER V.

The poor complain of being oppressed by the rich, 1-5. Nehemiah removes the oppression, 6-13. He sets an example of
compassion on the poor, 14-19.

A. M. 3559. **AND** there was a great ^a cry of the
B. C. 445. people and of their wives against
their ^b brethren the Jews.

2 For there were that said, We, our sons,
and our daughters, *are* many: therefore we

^a Isa. v. 7.

NOTES ON CHAPTER V.

Verse 1. *There was a great cry of the people, &c.*
—Of the poor against their rich brethren, who had
oppressed them; for though the people in general
were cured of their idolatry by their captivity, yet
they were not cured of their other sins, but loved
strange women, as we read before in the book of
Ezra; and were so covetous that they oppressed
the poor and needy; and this at a time when their
enemies threatened the destruction of them all. This
crime was the more heinous, because the twentieth
of Artaxerxes, when this was done, began about the
end of a sabbatic year, (as Dr. Alix observes,) which
raised the cry of the poor to a greater height against
their creditors, who exacted their debts of them con-
trary to the law, Deut. xv. 2; which was read to
them publicly in such a year, Deut. xxxi. 12.

Verse 2. *We, our sons, and our daughters, are*
Vol. II. (28)

take up corn *for them*, that we may A. M. 3559.
eat, and live. B. C. 445.

3 *Some* also there were that said, We have
mortgaged our lands, vineyards, and houses,
that we might buy corn, because of the dearth.

^b Lev. xxv. 35, 37; Deut. xv. 7.

many—Which indeed is in itself a blessing, but to us
is turned into a curse. The families that were most
necessitous were most numerous. Those who have
great families and little substance must learn to live
by faith in God's providence and promises: and
those who have little families and great substance
must make their abundance a supply for the wants
of others. *We take up corn for them, that we may
eat and live*—That is, we are compelled by our
and their necessities to take up corn on unreasonable
terms. Or, the sense of the words may be, *Where,
or how, shall we get corn, that we may eat and live?*

Verse 3. *Because of the dearth*—Not long before
this, there had been a great scarcity of corn through
want of rain, which God had withheld as a punish-
ment for the people's taking more care to build their
own houses than his temple, as we read Haggai i.
9-11. And, in this time of scarcity the rich had no

A. M. 3559. 4 There were also that said, We
B. C. 445. have borrowed money for the king's
tribute, and that upon our lands and vineyards.

5 Yet now ^e our flesh is as the flesh of our
brethren, our children as their children: and lo,
we ^d bring into bondage our sons and our daugh-
ters to be servants, and *some* of our daughters
are brought into bondage *already*: neither is
it in our power to *redeem* them; for other men
have our lands and vineyards.

6 ¶ And I was very angry when I heard
their cry and these words.

7 Then ¹ I consulted with myself, and I re-

^c Isa. lviii. 7.—^d Exod. xxi. 7; Lev. xxv. 39.—^e Heb. *my heart consulted in me.*—^f Exod. xxii. 25; Lev. xxv. 36; Ezek.

compassion on their poor brethren, who were forced to part with all they had for bread. And this dearth was now increased, from the multitude of the people in and near Jerusalem; from their work, which wholly took them up, and kept them from taking care of their families; and from the expectation of their enemies' invasion, which hindered them from going abroad to fetch provision, and the people round about from bringing it to them.

Verse 4. *We have borrowed money for the king's tribute*—Which was laid upon them all, Ezra iv. 13, and vii. 24. Houbigant renders the last part of this verse, *for the king's tribute on our lands and vineyards.*

Verse 5. *Yet now our flesh is as the flesh of our brethren*—We are of the same nature, nation, and religion with them; nor is there any other difference between us, but that they are rich and we are poor; and yet they treat us as if we were beasts or heathen, forgetting both humanity and God's law, Deut. xv. 7. *And our children as their children*—As dear to us as their children are to them; and, lo, we bring into bondage our sons and daughters—We are compelled to sell them for our subsistence. In case of great necessity this was lawful: but those Jews were very void of compassion who forced their brethren to do what was so much against nature. And it was especially distressing that they were driven to such an extremity as to be under a necessity of selling even their daughters for slaves, being more tender and weak, and unfit for servitude, and more exposed to injuries than their sons. *Neither is it in our power to redeem them*—None being willing to lend us money, and our lands being mortgaged to our oppressors. It was an aggravation of the sin of these oppressing Jews, that they were themselves so lately delivered out of the house of bondage, which surely obliged them in gratitude to undo the heavy burdens, Isa. lviii.

Verses 6, 7. *Then I was very angry*—Grieved exceedingly at this sin of the nobles. *Then I consulted with myself*—I restrained the emotions of my mind, being afraid to do any thing in a fit of anger or vexation, and coolly considered, and deliberated

buked the nobles, and the rulers, and ^{A. M. 3559}
^{B. C. 445.} said unto them, ^eYe exact usury, every one of his brother. And I set a great assembly against them.

8 And I said unto them, We, after our ability, have ^fredeemed our brethren the Jews, which were sold unto the heathen; and will ye even sell your brethren? or shall they be sold unto us? Then held they their peace, and found nothing to answer.

9 Also I said, It is not good that ye do: ought ye not to walk ^gin the fear of our God ^hbecause of the reproach of the heathen our enemies?

xxii. 18.—^f Lev. xxv. 48.—^g Lev. xxv. 36.—^h 2 Sam. xii. 14; Rom. ii. 24; 1 Pet. ii. 12.

with myself, what was best to be done. *And I rebuked the nobles and rulers*—Who were the moneyed men, and whose power, perhaps, made them more bold to oppress; and said, *You exact usury every one from his brother*—Which was against the plain and positive law of God, (Deut. xxiii. 19, 20,) especially in this time of public calamity and dearth. *And I set a great assembly against them*—I called a public congregation, both of the rulers and people, the greatest part whereof were free from this guilt, and therefore more impartial judges of the matter, and I represented it to them, that the offenders might be convinced and reformed; if not for fear of God, or love of their brethren, yet at least for the public shame, and the cries of the poor. Ezra and Nehemiah were both good and useful men; but of how different tempers! Ezra was a man of a mild, tender spirit, and when told of the sin of the rulers, *rent his clothes and wept.* Nehemiah forced them to reform, being of a warm and eager spirit. So God's work may be done, and yet different methods taken in doing it; which is a good reason why we should not arraign the management of others, nor make our own a standard.

Verse 8. *We, after our ability, have redeemed our brethren*—Nehemiah and his predecessors had used their utmost interest and power with the kings of Persia, that their brethren might be redeemed from bondage, whereby they had been restored both to their liberty and to their own country. And it is probable they had, with their money, procured the freedom of such as were slaves to some of the Babylonians, who would not part with them without a price paid for them. *Shall they be sold unto us?*—Do you expect that we should pay you a price for them, as we did to the Babylonians? Or must we use as much importunity to solicit you for their redemption as we used with their enemies? *Then held they their peace*—They made no reply, because they could neither deny the fact nor justify it, an express law of God being against them.

Verse 9. *It is not good that ye do*—Though you get money by it, you contract guilt, and expose yourselves to the displeasure of God; *ought ye not to*

A. M. 3559. B. C. 445. 10 I likewise, *and* my brethren, and my servants, might exact of them money and corn: I pray you, let us leave off this usury.

11 Restore, I pray you, to them, even this day, their lands, their vineyards, their oliveyards, and their houses, also the hundredth part of the money, and of the corn, the wine, and the oil, that ye exact of them.

12 Then said they, We will restore *them*, and will require nothing of them; so will we do as thou sayest. Then I called the priests, and took an oath of them, that they should do according to this promise.

¹ Ezra x. 5; Jer. xxxiv. 8.—² Matt. x. 14; Acts xiii. 51; xviii. 6.

walk in the fear of our God?—Certainly you ought, for you profess religion and relation to him; and if you do walk in his fear, you will neither be covetous of worldly gain, nor cruel toward your brethren. They that live in the fear of God, will not dare to do an ill thing. *Because of the reproach of the heathen our enemies*—Who are round about you, and are enemies to us, our God, and our religion. They observe all your actions, and will reproach both you for such barbarous usage of your brethren, and religion for your sakes.

Verse 10. *I likewise, and my brethren*—In office; who are employed with me in the government of this people; *and my servants*—In my name and for my use; *might exact of them money and corn*—As a just recompense for our pains and care for the public good, to which we wholly devote ourselves, even to the neglect of all our private concerns. But I freely remit my own right, and therefore you also ought to remit yours, seeing I lay no burden upon you but what I am willing to bear a part of upon my own shoulders.

Verse 11. *Restore their land, &c.*—Give them up their mortgages, put them again in possession of their estates, remit the interest, and give them time to pay the principal. *I pray you*—Though he had authority to command, yet, *for love's sake, he rather beseeches.* *Also the hundredth part of the money*—Require not this, as the next verse explains it, where it is expressed in their grant of this desire. The hundredth part of the money lent was wont to be required every month for the use of it, according to the custom then prevailing in those countries, and afterward adopted by the Romans. So that every year an eighth part of the principal was paid for interest, which was a very extravagant usury.

Verse 12. *Then said they, We will restore them*—Namely, the houses and lands; *and require nothing*—Demand no interest. Thus he got a promise from them, and proceeded afterward to bring them under the obligation of an oath to do as they had promised. *Then I called the priests*—As witnesses; that the oath being taken before the priests, who acted in

13 Also ¹ I shook my lap, and said, A. M. 3559. B. C. 445. So God shake out every man from his house, and from his labour, that performeth not this promise, even thus be he shaken out, and ² emptied. And all the congregation said, Amen, and praised the LORD. ¹ And the people did according to this promise.

14 ¶ Moreover, from the time that I was appointed to be their governor in the land of Judah, from the twentieth year ^m even unto the two and thirtieth year of Artaxerxes the king, *that is*, twelve years, I and my brethren have not ⁿ eaten the bread of the governor.

¹ Heb. empty, or, void.—² 2 Kings xxiii. 3.—^m Chap. xiii. 6. ⁿ 1 Cor. ix. 4, 15.

God's name, it might make the more deep and durable impression upon their consciences.

Verse 13. *Also I shook my lap*—The extreme parts of my garment, which I first folded together, and then shook it and scattered it asunder. This was one form of swearing then in use. *So God shake every man from his house, &c.*—Thus he represented, by an external sign, as the manner of the prophets often was, how God would cast them out of their possessions, and of the fruit of their labours, who did not observe this oath. *And all the congregation said, Amen!*—God so influenced the people's hearts, that even they who had been guilty of taking usury consented to this imprecation, and wished this mischief to themselves, if they did not do as he required. *And praised the Lord*—So far were they from promising with regret, that they promised and even took an oath to do as he desired, with all possible expressions of joy and gladness, and with thankfulness to God for giving them such a good governor, and inclining them to submit to him.

Verse 14. *Moreover, from the time that I was appointed governor*—He had mentioned his own practice, as an inducement to the nobles not to burden the poor, no, not with just demands; and he here relates more particularly what his practice was, not through pride or vain glory, but to excite both his successors, and the inferior magistrates, to be as tender as might be of the people's ease. *Twelve years*—Not that he had continued so long at one time at Jerusalem; but he had so long governed the Jews, by himself when present, and in his absence by deputies. *I and my brethren*—My fellow-officers and deputies, who, as they were to do my work, might have required my rights; *have not eaten the bread of the governor*—Have not taken that allowance which, by the laws of God and nations, and of the king of Persia, the governors might require. It is perfectly reasonable that they who do the public business should be maintained at the public charge. But Nehemiah would not accept that maintenance, because he saw it would be burdensome to his countrymen; but either lived upon his own estates, which

A. M. 3559. B. C. 445. 15 But the former governors that *had been* before me were chargeable unto the people, and had taken of them bread and wine, besides forty shekels of silver; yea, even their servants bare rule over the people: but ^{so} did not I, because of the ^p fear of God.

16 Yea, also I continued in the work of this wall, neither bought we any land: and all my servants *were* gathered thither unto the work.

17 Moreover, *there were* ^a at my table a hundred and fifty of the Jews and rulers, besides

* 2 Cor. xi. 9; xii. 13.—^p Verse 9.—^a 2 Sam. ix. 7; 1 Kings

he had in Judah, or upon the riches he had acquired in Babylon, when he was the king's cup-bearer.

Verse 15. *The former governors*—Not Ezra, who was no governor, nor Zerubbabel, but others between him and Nehemiah, whom he forbears to name; *were chargeable unto the people*—How chargeable they had been, and how dear the country had paid for the benefit of their government, the people well knew. It is no new thing for those who are in places of trust, to seek themselves more than the public welfare, nay, and to serve themselves upon the public loss. *Besides forty shekels of silver*—Which they required of the people every day, to defray their other expenses. *Yea, even their servants bare rule over the people*—Ruled them with rigour and cruelty, and demanded of them what they pleased, while their employers connived at their exactions. Thus the fault of the servants is charged upon their masters, because they did not restrain them. *But so did not I, because of the fear of God*—He had an awe of God's majesty, and a fear of offending him, and therefore he had not done as the former governors did. Those who truly fear God will not dare to do any thing cruel or unjust. And this is not only a powerful, but an acceptable principle, both of justice and charity.

Verse 16. *Yea, also I continued in the work*—Overseeing, directing, and encouraging the workmen, which was my whole business; and this at my own cost. *Neither bought we any land*—Of our poor brethren, whose necessities gave abundant opportunities of enriching myself by good bargains. *And all my servants were gathered unto the work*—They also were constantly employed in the same work, and received no pay for their labour, though they could not be so employed without the neglect of my own private business.

Verse 17. *There were at my table a hundred and fifty of the Jews and rulers*—Not only Jews of the inferior sort, for whom meaner provisions might

those that came unto us from among the heathen that *are* about us. A. M. 3559. A. D. 445.

18 Now *that* ^r which was prepared for me daily *was* one ox and six choice sheep; also fowls were prepared for me, and once in ten days store of all sorts of wine: yet for all this ^r required not I the bread of the governor, because the bondage was heavy upon this people.

19 ^r Think upon me, my God, for good, according to all that I have done for this people.

xviii. 19.—^r 1 Kings iv. 22.—^r Verses 14, 15.—^r Ch. xiii. 22.

have sufficed; but also their rulers, for whom better provision was to be made; who resorted to him upon all occasions, either to pour out their complaints to him, or to receive his orders. *Besides those that came from among the heathen*—Strangers, who came about business, and perhaps brought him intelligence concerning the state of the neighbouring people, and of their designs.

Verse 18. *Now that which was prepared for me daily, &c., was one ox, &c.*—"It is evident," says Dr. Dodd, "from the great and daily expenses of Nehemiah, here mentioned, that either he had large remittances from the Persian court, besides his own estate, to answer them; or that he did not continue at Jerusalem for the whole twelve years together; or that, if he did, he did not keep up this expensive way of living all the time, but only during the great and present exigencies of the Jews, which ceased in a good measure after the walls were built, the act against usury passed, and the people discharged to their ordinary course of maintaining themselves and families."

Verse 19. *Think upon me, my God, for good*—As I have done thy people good for thy sake, so do me good for thine own sake, for thou art pleased, and hast promised, graciously to reward us according to our works, and to mete to men the same measure which they mete to others. Thus he shows that he expected his reward only from God, who, he hoped, would show him kindness, similar to that which he had shown for his people. There is no reason to think he here speaks too much of himself, and his own worthy acts; for it was no more than was necessary in such a state of things, that posterity might be furnished with an example of extraordinary virtue; and no more than St. Paul was constrained to speak of himself in his second epistle to the Corinthians, of whom he would take nothing, that he might stop the mouths of false apostles, and covetous people.

CHAPTER VI.

Nehemiah's answer to his enemies, courting him to an interview, 1-4. To their charge of rebellion, 5-9. To Shemariah's false prophecy, 10-14. Notwithstanding the treachery of some of the nobles, the work is finished, 15-19.

A. M. 3559.
B. C. 415.

NOW it came to pass, ^a when Sanballat, and Tobiah, and ¹Geshem the Arabian, and the rest of our enemies, heard that I had builded the wall, and *that* there was no breach left therein; (^b though at that time I had not set up the doors upon the gates;)

2 That Sanballat and Geshem ^c sent unto me, saying, Come, let us meet together in *some one of the villages in the plain of* ^d Ono. But they ^e thought to do me mischief.

3 And I sent messengers unto them, saying, *I am* doing a great work, so that I cannot come down: why should the work cease, while I leave it, and come down to you?

4 Yet they sent unto me four times after this sort; and I answered them after the same manner.

5 ¶ Then sent Sanballat his servant unto me in like manner the fifth time with an open letter in his hand;

6 Wherein *was* written, It is reported among

^a Chap. ii. 10, 19; iv. 1, 7.—¹ Or, *Gashmu*, Verse 6.—^b Chap. iii. 1, 3.—^c Prov. xxvi. 24.

NOTES ON CHAPTER VI.

Verses 1, 2. *I had not set up the doors*—Not all of them. *Come, let us meet together*—To consult about the common service of our master the king of Persia, or to make a friendly accommodation. *In one of the villages in the plain of Ono*—A city in the tribe of Benjamin, of which see chap. xi. 35; 1 Chron. viii. 12. *But they thought to do me mischief*—It is likely they intended to kill him, of which, perhaps, he had received some private intelligence.

Verse 3. *I am doing a great work*—He acquainted them that he thought the business which they might have with him could not be of such importance as that which he had in hand; and therefore he would not put a stop to it to come and confer with them. Thus he tells them one, but not the only, nor the principal reason of his refusal; for he properly judged that it would answer no good end to intimate to them his suspicions of their design to compass his death.

Verse 4. *Yet they sent unto me four times after this sort*—We must never be overcome by the greatest importunity to do any thing ill or imprudent: but when we are attacked with the same temptation, still resist it with the same reason and resolution.

Verses 5, 6. *With an open letter in his hand*—Before, the message was delivered by word of mouth, but now by letter; yet *open*, as speaking of a thing commonly known, or in order that every one might see of what he was accused. *It is reported among the heathen*—The neighbouring people, whom you proudly and disdainfully call heathen. *And Gashmu saith it*—Probably the same as Geshem, mentioned verse 1. *That thou and the Jews think to*

the heathen, and ²Gashmu saith it, ^{A. M. 3559.} *that* thou and the Jews think to ^{B. C. 445.} rebel: for which cause thou buildest the wall, that thou mayest be their king, according to these words.

7 And thou hast also appointed prophets to preach of thee at Jerusalem, saying, *There is a king in Judah*: and now shall it be reported to the king according to these words. Come now therefore, and let us take counsel together.

8 Then I sent unto him, saying, There are no such things done as thou sayest, but thou feignest them out of thine own heart.

9 For they all made us afraid, saying, Their hands shall be weakened from the work, that it be not done. Now therefore, *O God*, strengthen my hands.

10 ¶ Afterward I came unto the house of Shemaiah the son of Delaiah, the son of Mehetabeel, who *was* shut up; and he said, Let us

^d 1 Chronicles viii. 12; Chap. xi. 35.—^e Psa. xxxvii. 12, 32.
² Or, *Geshem*, Verse 1.—^f Chap. ii. 19.

rebel—Thus he endeavours to possess Nehemiah with an apprehension that his undertaking to build the walls of Jerusalem was generally considered as a factious and seditious proceeding, and would be resented accordingly at court. Some of the best men, even in their most innocent and excellent performances, have lain under a similar imputation. *That thou mayest be king, according to these words*—That is, according to these reports; or, according to these things, namely, when these things, which thou art now doing, shall be finished.

Verse 7. *Saying, There is a king in Judah*—We have now a king of our own nation, and are free from the bondage of a foreign yoke. *Come now, therefore, and let us take counsel together*—That we may impartially examine the matter, that thy innocence may be cleared.

Verse 9. *For they all made us afraid*—That is, they endeavoured to do so, and actually did terrify some persons. *Now, therefore, O God, strengthen my hands*—It is a great relief to good people, that in all their straits and difficulties they can have recourse to God, and by faith and prayer derive from him grace to silence their fears and strengthen their hands, while their enemies are endeavouring to fill them with fears and to weaken their hands. And this prayer of Nehemiah is particularly suitable when we are entering on any particular services or conflicts in our Christian warfare, and especially need to have our hands strengthened.

Verse 10. *I came into the house of Shemaiah*—Who was a pretended prophet, as appears from verse 12, and taken by Nehemiah for his friend, who therefore went to advise and consult with him at his house. *Who was shut up*—In his chamber adjoining

A. M. 3559. meet together in the house of God,
B. C. 445. within the temple, and let us shut the doors of the temple: for they will come to slay thee; yea, in the night will they come to slay thee.

11 And I said, Should such a man as I flee? and who *is there that, being as I am,* would go into the temple to save his life? I will not go in.

12 And lo, I perceived that God had not sent him; but that ^g he pronounced this prophecy

^g Ezek. xiii. 22.—^h Chap. xiii. 20.

ing to the temple, either upon pretence of singular devotion and communion with God, or rather of having received certain knowledge, by the Spirit of God, of their approaching danger, from which they could be safe nowhere but in the temple. He probably intended also by this action to give Nehemiah to understand what he himself ought to do for his own security; for it was the manner of the prophets to instruct the people by actions and signs, as well as by words. *Let us meet together within the temple*—For the danger is so near that we cannot safely tarry here so long as to consult what to do in this juncture. *For they will come to slay thee; yea, in the night, &c.*—Even this very night will they fall upon thee; therefore consult thy safety by fleeing hither. Thus he hoped to intimidate Nehemiah, and thereby to strike a dread into all the people, and put a speedy and full stop to the work; which effect would indeed have been produced if Nehemiah had taken his advice, and through fear shut himself up: for then the people would have left their work, and every one have shifted for his own safety. He probably hoped also by this means to render Nehemiah contemptible among the people, by manifesting such cowardice as to desert his post and take refuge in the temple in time of danger; and by all these things to prepare the way for the enemies to assault and take the city.

Verse 11. *Should such a man as I flee?*—I, who am governor, and ought to show a good example of undaunted courage? I, upon whose presence, counsel, and conduct, the very life and being of the whole city and nation, in a great measure, depend? I, who have professed such resolution and confidence in God, and have had such eminent experience of his gracious and powerful assistance, of his calling me to this employment, and carrying me through it when our danger was greater than now it is? Shall I now dishonour God and religion, and betray the people and city of God, by my cowardice? God forbid! *Who is there that, being as I am, would go into the temple to save his life?*—Even though his life depended upon it. Shall I go in as if I had a bad cause or an evil conscience? as if I were a malefactor, and fled thither for refuge? as if I durst not trust God with my preservation except I went into the temple, which it is not lawful for me to do, not being a priest?

against me: for Tobiah and Sanballat A. M. 3559.
had hired him. B. C. 445.

13 Therefore *was* he hired, that I should be afraid, and do so, and sin, and *that* they might have *matter* for an evil report, that they might reproach me.

14 ^h My God, think thou upon Tobiah and Sanballat, according to these their works, and on the ⁱ Prophetess Noadiah, and the rest of the prophets, that would have put me in fear.

15 ¶ So the wall was finished in the twenty

ⁱ Ezek. xiii. 17.

Verse 12. *I perceived that God had not sent him*—Partly by considering the sinful nature and pernicious consequences of this counsel; partly by the suggestion of God's Spirit, whose direction I sought in this matter; and partly by the event, which manifested that there was no such danger from the approach of the enemy as was pretended.

Verse 13. *That I should be afraid, and do so, and sin*—By going into a place forbidden to me, and that in such a manner, which would have been both sinful and shameful. *That they might reproach me*—As a coward, and conscious of my own guilt, that they might make me contemptible and odious, both to my own people and to the king of Persia.

Verse 14. *My God, think thou upon Tobiah, &c.*—Thou knowest their hearts, and art the avenger of falsehood and wrong; take cognizance of this cause, judge between me and them, and take what way and time thou pleasest to call them to an account for their actions. This prayer we are not to imitate; and whatever injuries are done to us we must not avenge ourselves, but commit our cause to Him that judgeth righteously. *The Prophetess Noadiah*—One that falsely pretended to the spirit of prophecy, to deceive and destroy Nehemiah. *And the rest of the prophets, that would have put me in fear*—The law of Moses enjoined the governors of the Jews to punish such as were proved to be false prophets; but because Nehemiah was not in a capacity to do it, having such powerful enemies round about him, and so many rich and powerful Jews highly discontented for their great loss by his means, he prays to God to remember and punish them. It appears from this, and many other passages, that there were among the Jews many that pretended to be prophets who had no divine commission, and often drew aside and deceived the people, who ought to have done as Nehemiah did here, to have considered the spirit of these prophets, whether they spoke that which was agreeable to the divine laws, and was likely to promote the glory of God. By this test they should have tried these prophets; and because they did not do so, they were led to hearken to them, for which they are often severely rebuked.

Verse 15. *The wall was finished in the twenty and fifth day of the month Elul*—Answering part to our August and part to September. *In fifty and two days*—To be computed either from the time of

A. M. 3559. and fifth day of the month Elul, in
B. C. 445. fifty and two days.

16 And it came to pass, that ^k when all our enemies heard thereof, and all the heathen that were about us saw these things, they were much cast down in their own eyes: for ^l they perceived that this work was wrought of our God.

17 ¶ Moreover, in those days the nobles of Judah ^s sent many letters unto Tobiah, and

^k Chap. ii. 10; iv. 1, 7; vi. 1.—Psa. cxxvi. 2.

Sanballat's sending this letter to him, or, as most judge, from the beginning of the work, which, though a great thing, yet it is not at all incredible, considering, 1st, That the walls and gates were not wholly pulled down by the Chaldeans: for to what purpose should they make that waste of time and labour? 2d, That where the walls were thrown down, yet the materials remained, which they now used. 3d, That, in building the walls, they regarded not ornament, but only strength and safety. 4th, The great numbers of the builders, and the prudent distribution of the work among them, and their admirable zeal and diligence therein. 5th, That there want not parallel instances, even in heathen authors; for both Quintus Curtius and Arrian relate that Alexander the Great built the walls of new Alexandria, which were seven miles in compass, within twenty days' space. 6th, That the hand of God was manifest in carrying on this work, which their very enemies here acknowledge.

Verse 16. *They were much cast down in their own eyes*—That is, in their opinion, or themselves being judges. For though usually men are very prone to judge partially, and still to flatter themselves with vain hopes, yet this case was so clear and remarkable that they began to despair. Now they saw that all was lost, that their designs were broken, and that their mischief was likely to fall upon their own heads. *For they perceived that this work was of our God*—From that admirable courage, constancy, and quickness, wherewith this work was managed, notwithstanding all the difficulties and discouragements in the way, they concluded that it was the work of the mighty God of Israel, whom they had great reason to fear. And withal they took it for an

the letters of Tobiah came unto them. A. M. 3559. B. C. 445.

18 For *there were* many in Judah sworn unto him, because he *was* the son-in-law of Shechaniah the son of Arah; and his son Johanan had taken the daughter of Meshullam the son of Berechiah.

19 Also they reported his good deeds before me, and uttered my ⁴ words to him. And Tobiah sent letters to put me in fear.

⁴ Heb. multiplied their letters passing to Tobiah.—⁴ Or, matters.

ill omen to them, and a sure presage that God would still watch over that city and people, and crush those who should oppose or disturb them.

Verses 17, 18. *The nobles of Judah sent many letters unto Tobiah*—Corresponding with him against Nehemiah, and against their own city and nation. So that, added to all the other wickedness of this people, there were false brethren among their great men, who favoured, aided, and abetted the designs of their enemies, verse 18. *There were many in Judah sworn unto him*—To be true to him in the prosecution of his wicked designs. *Because his son had taken the daughter of Meshullam*—This is mentioned to show the mischief of such unequal and forbidden marriages, and how reasonable and necessary Ezra's action was in the dissolution of them.

Verse 19. *Also, they reported his good deeds before me*—To such a degree of impudence were they arrived, that they highly commended Tobiah as a very worthy man in the presence of Nehemiah, who knew so much of his wickedness. *And uttered my words to him*—Informed him of all I spake or did. We learn from the contents of this chapter, that pious people, especially those who labour for the glory of God, are exposed to many troubles and oppositions, not only from their declared enemies, who attack them with open force, or by craft and calumny, but also from those whom they look upon as their brethren. It appears also from the wise, steady, and pious conduct of Nehemiah, that those who labour for the public good ought never to be staggered by the threats and slanders of the wicked, because, with the blessing of God, who watches over them, they will happily overcome all opposition.

CHAPTER VII.

Nehemiah appoints persons to keep the city, 1-4. Reviews the people, 5-73.

A. M. 3559. NOW it came to pass, when the wall
B. C. 445. was built, and I had ^a set up the

^a Chap.

NOTES ON CHAPTER VII.

Verses 1, 2. *And the Levites were appointed*—When I had given orders that the Levites should be

doors, and the porters, and the singers, A. M. 3559. and the Levites were appointed, B. C. 445.

vi. 1.

summoned from all places to celebrate the dedication of the wall, as was done, chap. xii. 27. *I gave my brother Hanani*—Of whom see chap. i. 1, 2. *And*

A. M. 3559. 2 That I gave my brother Hanani,
B. C. 445.

and Hananiah, the ruler ^b of the palace, charge over Jerusalem: for he *was* a faithful man, and ^c feared God above many.

3 And I said unto them, Let not the gates of Jerusalem be opened until the sun be hot; and while they stand by, let them shut the doors, and bar *them*: and appoint watches of the inhabitants of Jerusalem, every one in his watch, and every one *to be over against* his house.

4 Now the city *was* ¹ large and great: but the people *were* few therein, and the houses *were* not builded.

B. C. 536. 5 ¶ And my God put into my heart to gather together the nobles, and the rulers, and the people, that they might be reckoned by genealogy. And I found a register of the genealogy of them which came up at the first, and found written therein,

6 ^d These *are* the children of the province, that went up out of the captivity, of those that had been carried away, whom Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon had carried away, and came again to Jerusalem and to Judah, every one unto his city.

7 Who came with Zerubbabel, Jeshua, Nehemiah, ² Azariah, Raamiah, Nahamani, Mordecai, Bilshan, Mispereth, Bigvai, Nehum,

^b Chap. ii. 8.—^c Exod. xxviii. 21.—¹ Heb. *broad in spaces*.

Hananiah, the ruler of the palace—Of Nehemiah's court, justly called a palace, because he lived in great splendour, like a viceroy, though it was wholly at his own cost. *Charge over Jerusalem*—To preserve its peace and safety, and to take particular care of shutting the gates of the city. *For he was a faithful man*—Namely, Hananiah, last mentioned: for it was needless to say any thing in commendation of Hanani, who had shown his piety and zeal for God and his country in taking a tedious journey from Jerusalem to Shushan, to inform Nehemiah of the sad state of Jerusalem, and to implore his helping hand to relieve it, chap. i. *And feared God above many*—More than most men did, or above the common pitch of piety. This is added as the ground and reason, both why he was faithful, and why Nehemiah put such confidence in him, because he knew that the fear of God would keep him from yielding to those temptations to perfidiousness which he was likely to meet with when Nehemiah was departed, and against which a man destitute of God's fear had no sufficient defence. Thus Nehemiah chose magistrates and officers, not out of any partial and carnal respects to his own kindred, or acquaintance, or favourites, but from true piety and

Baanah. The number, *I say*, of the men of the people of Israel *was this*; A. M. 3568.
B. C. 436.

8 The children of Parosh, two thousand and hundred seventy and two.

9 The children of Shephatiah, three hundred seventy and two.

10 The children of Arah, six hundred fifty and two.

11 The children of Pahath-moab, of the children of Jeshua and Joab, two thousand and eight hundred *and* eighteen.

12 The children of Elam, a thousand two hundred fifty and four.

13 The children of Zattu, eight hundred forty and five.

14 The children of Zaccai, seven hundred and threescore.

15 The children of ³ Binnui, six hundred forty and eight.

16 The children of Bebai, six hundred twenty and eight.

17 The children of Azgad, two thousand three hundred twenty and two.

18 The children of Adonikam, six hundred threescore and seven.

19 The children of Bigvai, two thousand threescore and seven.

20 The children of Adin, six hundred fifty and five.

^d Ezra ii. 1, &c.—² Or, *Seraiah*, Ezra ii. 2.—³ Or, *Bani*.

prudence, fixing on such as were most fit for, and would be most faithful in their employments.

Verse 3. *Let not the gates be opened until the sun be hot*—Till it be clear and broad day; when the people will be ready in case of an assault. *While they stand by*—The watches appointed to that end. Nehemiah was now about to return to the court, and left the charge of the city to these in his absence. *Every one to be over against his house*—That is, every one in his turn keeping watch with others, in that watching-place which is next to his house.

Verse 4. *The houses were not builded*—That is, not all, nor completely built; but only some slight buildings of boards or stones were erected, for the present use of the generality of the people.

Verse 5. *And my God put into my heart, &c.*—Whatever good motion is put into our minds, we must acknowledge it to come from God; and even what is done by human prudence is to be ascribed to the direction of divine providence. *To gather together the nobles and the rulers of the people*—Not only for the particular end here mentioned, but for divers other weighty purposes and matters, of which the following chapters treat. *That they might be reckoned by genealogy*—In order that it might ap-

- A. M. 3468.
B. C. 536.
- 21 The children of Ater of Hezekiah, ninety and eight.
- 22 The children of Hashum, three hundred twenty and eight.
- 23 The children of Bezai, three hundred twenty and four.
- 24 The children of ⁴Hariph, a hundred and twelve.
- 25 The children of ⁵Gibeon, ninety and five.
- 26 The men of Beth-lehem and Netophah, a hundred fourscore and eight.
- 27 The men of Anathoth, a hundred twenty and eight.
- 28 The men of ⁶Beth-azmaveth, forty and two.
- 29 The men of ⁷Kirjath-jearim, Chephirah, and Beeroth, seven hundred forty and three.
- 30 The men of Ramah and Gaba, six hundred twenty and one.
- 31 The men of Michmas, a hundred and twenty and two.
- 32 The men of Beth-el and Ai, a hundred twenty and three.
- 33 The men of the other Nebo, fifty and two.
- 34 The children of the other ⁸Elam, a thousand two hundred fifty and four.
- 35 The children of Harim, three hundred and twenty.
- 36 The children of Jericho, three hundred forty and five.
- 37 The children of Lod, Hadid, and Ono, seven hundred twenty and one.
- 38 The children of Senaah, three thousand nine hundred and thirty.
- 39 ¶ The priests: the children of ¹Jedaiah, of the house of Jeshua, nine hundred seventy and three.
- 40 The children of ²Immer, a thousand fifty and two.
- 41 The children of ³Pashur, a thousand two hundred forty and seven.

⁴ Or, Jora. — ⁵ Or, Gibbar. — ⁶ Or, Azmaveth. — ⁷ Or, Kirjatharim. — ⁸ Verse 12. — ¹ 1 Chron. xxiv. 7. — ² 1 Chron. xxiv. 14. — ³ 1 Chron. ix. 12; xxiv. 9.

- A. M. 3468.
B. C. 536.
- 42 The children of ¹Harim, a thousand and seventeen.
- 43 ¶ The Levites: the children of Jeshua, of Kadmiel, and of the children of ⁸Hodevah, seventy and four.
- 44 The singers: the children of Asaph, a hundred forty and eight.
- 45 The porters: the children of Shallum, the children of Ater, the children of Talmon, the children of Akkub, the children of Hatita, the children of Shobai, a hundred thirty and eight.
- 46 The Nethinims: the children of Ziha, the children of Hashupha, the children of Tabbaoth,
- 47 The children of Keros, the children of ⁹Sia, the children of Padon,
- 48 The children of Lebana, the children of Hagaba, the children of ¹⁰Shalmal,
- 49 The children of Hanan, the children of Giddel, the children of Gahar,
- 50 The children of Reaiah, the children of Rezin, the children of Nekoda,
- 51 The children of Gazzam, the children of Uzza, the children of Phaseah,
- 52 The children of Besai, the children of Meunim, the children of ¹¹Nephtesim,
- 53 The children of Bakbuk, the children of Hakupha, the children of Harhur,
- 54 The children of ¹²Bazlith, the children of Mehida, the children of Harsha,
- 55 The children of Barkos, the children of Sisera, the children of Tamah,
- 56 The children of Neziah, the children of Hatipha.
- 57 ¶ The children of Solomon's servants: the children of Sotai, the children of Sophereth, the children of ¹³Perida,
- 58 The children of Jaala, the children of Darkon, the children of Giddel,

¹ 1 Chron. xxiv. 8. — ⁸ Or, Hodaviah, Ezra ii. 40, or, Judah, Ezra iii. 9. — ⁹ Or, Siaha. — ¹⁰ Or, Shalmal. — ¹¹ Or, Nephtesim. — ¹² Or, Bazluth. — ¹³ Or, Perudah.

pear to what family each person belonged, and where their ancient habitations lay, which, for a great number of them, were in the city, the peopling of which was now his design. I found a register of them which came up at the first—To wit, with Zerubbabel, as it follows, verse 7. But this following catalogue differs in some particulars from that in Ezra, chap. ii., of which see the notes there. The author of the *Universal History* observes, that though the genealogies had been once rectified, soon after the

return, there were still many families of priests, Levites, and people, who could not make out their claim to their tribes. It is therefore likely that some of them were afterward enabled to do it, and were then inserted in this new register, together with those who came up with Nehemiah. Several of the old families, which came up on the first edict, might be, by this time, extinct, and these are the probable causes of the difference we find in the genealogies of the books of Ezra and Nehemiah.

A. M. 3468. B. C. 536. 59 The children of Shephatiah, the children of Hattil, the children of Pochereth of Zebaim, the children of ¹⁴ Amon.

60 All the Nethinims, and the children of Solomon's servants, were three hundred ninety and two.

61 ¹ And these were they which went up also from Tel-melah, Tel-haresha, Cherub, ¹⁵ Addon, and Immer: but they could not show their father's house, nor their ¹⁶ seed, whether they were of Israel.

62 The children of Delaiah, the children of Tobiah, the children of Nekoda, six hundred forty and two.

63 ¶ And of the priests: the children of Habaiah, the children of Koz, the children of Bazzilai, which took one of the daughters of Bazzilai the Gileadite to wife, and was called after their name.

64 These sought their register among those that were reckoned by genealogy, but it was not found: therefore were they, as polluted, put from the priesthood.

65 And ¹⁷ the Tirshatha said unto them, that they should not eat of the most holy things, till there stood up a priest with Urim and Thummim.

66 ¶ The whole congregation together was forty and two thousand three hundred and threescore.

¹⁴ Or, Ami.—¹⁵ Ezra ii. 59.—¹⁶ Or, Addan.—¹⁷ Or, pedegree.—¹⁷ Or, the governor, Chap. viii. 9.

Verse 70. *The Tirshatha*—The governor, namely, Nehemiah. So it is no wonder that the number of the moneys, and other things here contributed, differ from that of Ezra, chap. ii., because this was another collection: that was made in Zerubbabel's time, this in Ezra's.

Verse 73. *So the priests and the Levites, &c.,*

67 Besides their man-servants and their maid-servants, of whom there were seven thousand three hundred thirty and seven; and they had two hundred forty and five singing-men and singing-women.

68 Their horses, seven hundred thirty and six; their mules, two hundred forty and five:

69 Their camels, four hundred thirty and five: six thousand seven hundred and twenty asses.

70 ¶ And ¹⁸ some of the chief of the fathers gave unto the work. ¹ The Tirshatha gave to the treasure a thousand drachms of gold, fifty basins, five hundred and thirty priests' garments.

71 And some of the chief of the fathers gave to the treasure of the work ² twenty thousand drachms of gold, and two thousand and two hundred pounds of silver.

72 And that which the rest of the people gave was twenty thousand drachms of gold, and two thousand pounds of silver, and threescore and seven priests' garments.

73 So the priests, and the Levites, and the porters, and the singers, and some of the people, and the Nethinims, and all Israel, dwelt in their cities; ³ and when the seventh month came, the children of Israel were in their cities.

¹⁸ Hebrew, part.—¹ Chap. viii. 9.—² Ezra ii. 69.—³ Ezra iii. 1.

dwelt in their cities—When all the business before mentioned was finished, the people were sent back, by Nehemiah's direction, to the several cities to which they belonged; where they remained till the seventh month came, which was five days after the wall was finished, that being on the twenty-fifth day of the sixth month, chap. vi. 15.

CHAPTER VIII.

The solemn reading and expounding of the law, 1-8. The joy of the people, 9-12. The keeping of the feast of tabernacles, 13-18.

A. M. 3559. B. C. 445. AND all ^a the people gathered themselves together as one man into

the street that was ^b before the water-gate; and they spake unto Ezra the

^a Ezra iii. 1.

^b Chap. iii. 26.

NOTES ON CHAPTER VIII.

Verse 1. *Into the street that was before the water-gate*—Probably, in that space which was afterward called the court of the Gentiles. *They spake unto*

Ezra the scribe—This Ezra, without all doubt, is the same person who came from Babylon in the seventh year of Artaxerxes. It is thought he had been at Babylon since his first coming into Judah, and was

A. M. 3559. ^ascribe to bring the book of the law
B. C. 445. of Moses, which the LORD had com-
manded to Israel.

2 And Ezra the priest brought ^d the law be-
fore the congregation both of men and women,
and all ¹ that could hear with understanding,
^e upon the first day of the seventh month.

3 And he read therein before the street that
was before the water-gate ² from the morning
until mid-day, before the men and the women,
and those that could understand; and the ears
of all the people *were attentive* unto the book
of the law.

4 And Ezra the scribe stood upon a ³ pulpit
of wood, which they had made for the purpose;
and beside him stood Mattithiah, and Shema,
and Anaiah, and Urijah, and Hilkiah, and
Maaseiah, on his right hand; and on his left

^c Ezra vii. 6. — ^d Deut. xxxi. 11. — ¹ Heb. *that understood in hearing.* — ^e Lev. xxiii. 24. — ² Heb. *from the light.* — ³ Heb. *tower of wood.* — ⁴ Heb. *eyes.*

now returned; beholding, doubtless, with great joy, the wall of Jerusalem built, as before he had seen the temple finished. *To bring the book of the law of Moses*—They called to mind that place, (Deut. xxxi. 10, 11,) where God requires the law to be read publicly every seventh year, in the feast of tabernacles, which was appointed to be kept about the middle of this month. This office, no doubt, Ezra was ready to perform; but such was the forward zeal of the people at this time, that they prevented him by their pious entreaties, requesting that he would read the law before that feast began.

Verse 2. *Upon the first day of the seventh month*—This was the feast of trumpets, which is called a sabbath, and on which they were to have a holy convocation, Lev. xxiii. 24. And it was on this day the altar was set up, after their return from captivity; in remembrance of which they had probably kept it ever since, with more than ordinary solemnity.

Verse 3. *He read therein, from the morning until mid-day*—In the Hebrew, the words are, *from the light*, that is, from the break of day, or the sun-rising, until noon. Then, it is likely, they went to take some refreshment, it being a festival, and a day of great rejoicing.

Verse 4. *Ezra stood upon a pulpit of wood*—To raise him higher than the people; that he might be better seen and heard by them all; whence, in the Hebrew, it is called a *tower of wood*: but it was not like our pulpits, made to contain only one or two persons, but large and long, that many might stand in it at once, as appears from so many as fourteen, here mentioned, standing in it. *And beside him stood Mattithiah, &c.*—These stood with him, partly to declare their consent and concurrence with what he said and did; and partly that they, or some of them, might bear a part in the work.

Verse 5 6. *When he opened it, all the people*

hand, Pedajah, and Mishael, and A. M. 3559.
Malchiah, and Hashum, and Hashba- B. C. 445.
dana, Zechariah, and Meshullam.

5 And Ezra opened the book in the ⁴ sight of all the people; (for he was above all the people;) and when he opened it, all the people ^f stood up:

6 And Ezra blessed the LORD, the great God. And all the people ^g answered, Amen, Amen, with ^h lifting up their hands: and they ⁱ bowed their heads, and worshipped the LORD with *their faces* to the ground.

7 Also Jeshua, and Bani, and Sherebiah, Jamin, Akkub, Shabbethai, Hodijah, Maaseiah, Kelita, Azariah, Jozabad, Hanan, Pelaiah, and the Levites, ^k caused the people to understand the law: and the people *stood* in their place.

8 So they read in the book in the law of God

^f Judg. iii. 20. — ^g 1 Cor. xiv. 16. — ^h Lam. iii. 41; 1 Tim. ii. 8. — ⁱ Exod. iv. 31; xii. 27; 2 Chron. xx. 18. — ^k Lev. x. 11; Deut. xxxiii. 10; 2 Chron. xvii. 7, 9; Mal. ii. 7.

stood up—Either in reverence to God's word, or that they might hear his words more distinctly. *And Ezra blessed the Lord, the great God*—He blessed him as the great God, superior to all other powers whatsoever; and gave honour to him by praising his perfections, and praying for his favour. *And all the people answered, Amen! Amen!*—In token of their concurrence with him, both in the praises and prayers. *With lifting up their hands*—In token that their desire was toward God, and all their expectation from him. *And they bowed their heads*—In token of their reverence for him, and subjection to him. Thus must we adore and address ourselves to God, when we are going to read or hear his word, as those that see him in his word very great and very good.

Verse 7. *The Levites caused the people to understand the law*—As well the words, which, being Hebrew, needed to be translated into the Chaldee or Syriac language, now the common language of that people; who, together with their religion, had also, in a great part, lost their language; as also the meaning of them: they expounded the mind and will of God in what they read, and applied it to the people's present condition. *The people stood in their place*—That is, in their several places and stations, into which the company seems to have been distributed for convenience of hearing; it not being likely that so vast a congregation could distinctly hear one man's voice. Or, *by their stations*; that is, by the several stations of the Levites, and persons last named, who seem to have had several scaffolds, by comparing this with chap. ix. 4, upon which they stood, as Ezra, and those mentioned verse 4, did upon their pulpit.

Verse 8. *So they read in the book of the law*—To wit, Ezra and his companions, successively. *And gave the sense*—The meaning of the Hebrew words.

A. M. 3559. distinctly, and gave the sense, and B. C. 445. caused them to understand the reading.

9 ¶ ¹And Nehemiah, which is ⁵ the Tirshatha, and Ezra the priest the scribe, ² and the Levites that taught the people, said unto all the people, ³ This day is holy unto the LORD your God; ⁴ mourn not, nor weep. For all the people wept, when they heard the words of the law.

10 Then he said unto them, Go your way, eat the fat, and drink the sweet, ² and send portions unto them for whom nothing is prepared: for *this day is holy* unto our LORD: neither be ye sorry; for the joy of the LORD is your strength.

11 So the Levites stilled all the people, saying,

¹ Ezra ii. 63; Chapter vii. 65; x. 1.—⁵ Or, the governor.
² 2 Chron. xxxv. 3; Verse 8.—³ Lev. xxiii. 24; Num. xxix. 1.
⁴ Deut. xvi. 14; Eccles. iii. 4.

which they expounded in the common language—*And caused them to understand the reading*—Or that which they read, namely, the Holy Scriptures; the action being put for the object, as hearing for the thing heard, and fearing for the thing feared. So they gave them both a translation of the Hebrew words, into the Chaldee or Syriac, and an exposition of the things contained in them, and of the duty incumbent upon the people by virtue thereof; to declare which things was a great part of the priest's work, Mal. ii. 7.

Verse 9. *This day is holy unto the Lord your God*—Namely, as a day of feasting and thanksgiving to God, and rejoicing in his mercies; for otherwise even days of fasting were *holy to God* in general, though not in the sense here meant. *Mourn not, nor weep*—*Be not sorry*, verse 10. *Hold your peace: neither be ye grieved*, verse 11. Every thing is beautiful in its season. As we must not be *merry*, when God calls to *mourning*; so we must not afflict ourselves, and be swallowed up in sorrow, when God gives us occasion to rejoice. Even sorrow for sin must not grow so excessive as to hinder our joy in God, and cheerfulness in his service. *For all the people wept when they heard the words of the law*—Out of a deep sense of their great guilt, and extreme danger by reason of it.

Verse 10. *Eat the fat, and drink the sweet*—Feast before the Lord, as the duty of the day requires you to do. *Send portions, &c.*—For the relief of your poor brethren, who otherwise must mourn while you rejoice. Concerning this duty and practice, see Deut. xvi. 11, 14; Esth. ix. 10. *For this day is holy*—Being the first new moon in the year, and the feast of trumpets, (Lev. xxiii. 24,) and the beginning of this joyful month, in which so many days of thanksgiving are to be observed. *For the joy of the Lord is your strength*—That is, rejoicing in God, in the manner prescribed in his word, or serving him with cheerfulness and thankfulness, (which is al-

Hold your peace, for the day is holy; A. M. 3559. neither be ye grieved. B. C. 445.

12 And all the people went their way to eat, and to drink, and to ² send portions, and to make great mirth, because they had ¹ understood the words that were declared unto them.

13 ¶ And on the second day were gathered together the chief of the fathers of all the people, the priests, and the Levites, unto Ezra the scribe, even ⁶ to understand the words of the law.

14 And they found written in the law which the LORD had commanded ⁷ by Moses, that the children of Israel should dwell in ⁴ booths in the feast of the seventh month:

¹ Esth. ix. 19, 22; Rev. xi. 10.—² Verse 10.—³ Verses 7, 8.
⁴ Or, that they might instruct in the words of the law.—⁵ Heb. by the hand of.—⁶ Lev. xxiii. 34, 42; Deut. xvi. 13.

ways your duty, but now especially,) will give you that strength, both of body and mind, which you greatly need, that you may perform all the duties required of you, and oppose the designs of your enemies against you. But dejection of mind, and excessive grief, if you indulge it, will both offend God and damp your spirits, and will even weaken your very bodies, and make you unfit for God's service, and an easy prey to your enemies.

Verses 11, 12. *So the Levites stilled the people*—Whose passions, being once raised, could not very soon be composed. *Saying, Hold your peace, for the day is holy*—Cease from weeping and mournful cries, and turn your lamentations into thanksgivings. *And the people went their way to eat, &c.*—Their weeping was stilled, and they complied with the directions that were given them. *Because they understood the words that were declared to them*—Because they now knew God's will, and their own duty, which they were resolved to practise. This gave them ground of hope and trust in God's mercy, and consequently of just and great joy.

Verse 13. *On the second day were gathered to him the chief of the fathers, the priests, &c.*—Thus manifesting both humility and serious godliness, in that they chose rather to confess their ignorance, in order that they might be instructed, than vainly to pretend to more knowledge than they had, and were more careful to learn and practise their duty than to preserve their reputation with the people. *To understand the words of the law*—That they might obtain a more perfect knowledge of some things, which they had heard, and partly knew before, and so might instruct the people in them.

Verses 14, 15. *And they found written in the law*—Upon Ezra's information, and through their discourse with him; *that the children of Israel should dwell in booths*—As a memorial of their dwelling in tents in the wilderness, a representation of the tabernacle state of God's people in this world, and a type

A. M. 3559. B. C. 445. 15 And ¹ that they should publish and ² proclaim in all their cities, and ³ in Jerusalem, saying, Go forth unto the mount, and ⁴ fetch olive-branches, and pine-branches, and myrtle-branches, and palm-branches, and branches of thick trees, to make booths, as *it is* written.

16 ¶ So the people went forth, and brought *them*, and made themselves booths, every one upon the ⁵ roof of his house, and in their courts, and in the courts of the house of God, and in the street of the ⁶ water-gate, ⁷ and in the street of the gate of Ephraim.

¹ Lev. xxiii. 4. — ² Deut. xvi. 16. — ³ Lev. xxiii. 40. — ⁴ Deut. xxii. 8. — ⁵ Chap. xii. 37. — ⁶ 2 Kings xiv. 13; Chap. xii. 39.

of the holy joy of the gospel church. They that diligently search the Scriptures, will find those things written there which they had forgotten, or not duly considered before. *And that they should publish*—That is, they also found that written; *Saying, Go forth unto the mount, and fetch olive-branches*—Namely, the mount of Olives, which was next Jerusalem, and stored with *olive-trees*, and probably with the other trees here mentioned: for these trees seem to have been planted there, and in the neighbouring parts, principally for the use of the city in this very feast, which, though long neglected, ought to have been celebrated every year. And this place seems here to be referred to as being the most eminent, but to be put for any place near to the cities of Judah where these branches could be procured.

Verse 16. *Every one upon the roof of his house*—Which, according to the law, was made flat, Deut. xxii. 8. *And in their courts*—Those belonging to their houses: for the booths might be made anywhere in the open air. *And in the street of the gate of Ephraim*—The gate of the city which led to the tribe of Ephraim.

Verse 17. *Since the days of Jeshua, had not the children of Israel done so*—The meaning here can-

17 And all the congregation of ¹ them that were come again out of ² the captivity made booths, and sat under the booths; for since the days of Jeshua the son of Nun unto that day had not the children of Israel done so. And there was very ³ great gladness.

18 Also ⁴ day by day, from the first day unto the last day, he read in the book of the law of God. And they kept the feast seven days; and on the eighth day *was* ⁵ a solemn assembly, ⁶ according unto the manner.

¹ 2 Chron. xxx. 21. — ² Deut. xxxi. 10, &c. — ³ Heb. *a restrains*. — ⁴ Lev. xxiii. 36; Num. xxix. 35.

not be that this festival had never been observed since Joshua's time, because we are informed, (Ezra iii. 4,) that it was kept at their return from Babylon; but the joy, since that time, had never been so great as it was now, "for which the Jews themselves," says Dr. Dodd, "assign this reason; that in the days of Joshua they rejoiced, because they had gotten possession of the land of Canaan; and now they equally rejoiced, because they were restored and quietly settled in it, after they had been long cast out of it." Or, we should rather say, they not only had the same causes for rejoicing which they formerly had, but special causes to increase their joy. To this Poole adds, They never, since Joshua's time, kept this feast so solemnly and religiously: for whereas, at other times, only the first and last day of that feast were celebrated with a holy convocation, now there was a holy convocation, and the people assembled, and attended upon the reading of the law every day of this feast.

Verse 18. *Day by day he read in the book of the law of God*—The law was commanded to be read at this feast, Deut. xxxi. 10-12. But the reading of it was not enjoined to be continued every day, as was now done through their singular and very laudable zeal.

CHAPTER IX.

The people keep a solemn fast, 1-3. The Levites bless God for his goodness to them and their fathers, 4-8. In Egypt, and their journey out of it, 9-12. On mount Sinai, 13, 14. In their journey toward Canaan, 15-18. In the wilderness, 19-21. In driving out the Canaanites, 22-26. In hearing their prayer when in trouble, 27-31. They confess their sin, 32-37. And seal a covenant with God, 38.

A. M. 3559. B. C. 445. NOW in the twenty and fourth day of ¹ this month the children of Israel

¹ Chap. viii. 2.

NOTES ON CHAPTER IX.

Verse 1. *Now in the twenty and fourth day*—The feast of tabernacles began on the fourteenth day, and ended on the twenty-second, all which time mourning had been forbidden, as contrary to the nature of

were assembled with fasting, and with ¹ sackcloths, ² and earth upon them. A. M. 3559. B. C. 445.

¹ Josh. vii. 6; 1 Sam. iv. 12; 2 Sam. i. 2; Job ii. 12.

the feast, which was to be kept with joy. But now, on the twenty-fourth, the next day but one after the feast, their consciences having been fully awakened, and their hearts filled with grief for their sins, which they were not allowed to express in that time of

A. M. 3559. 2 And ° the seed of Israel separated
B. C. 445. themselves from all ¹strangers, and
stood and confessed their sins, and the iniquities
of their fathers.

3 And they stood up in their place, and ^d read
in the book of the law of the LORD their God
one fourth part of the day; and *another* fourth
part they confessed, and worshipped the LORD
their God.

4 ¶ Then stood up upon the ² stairs of the
Levites, Jeshua, and Bani, Kadmiel, Sheba-
niah, Bunni, Sherebiah, Bani, *and* Chenani,
and cried with a loud voice unto the LORD
their God.

5 Then the Levites, Jeshua, and Kadmiel,

^c Ezra x. 11; Chap. xiii. 3, 30. — ¹ Hebrew, *strange children*.
^d Chapter viii. 8. — ² Or, *scaffold*. — ¹ 1 Chronicles xxix. 13.
^f 2 Kings xix. 15, 19; Psa. lxxxvii. 10; Isa. xxxvii. 16, 20.

public joy, they resume their former thoughts, and,
recalling their sins to mind, set apart a day for so-
lemn fasting and humiliation.

Verse 2. *The seed of Israel separated themselves*
—From all unnecessary society with the heathen,
and particularly from those strange women whom
some of them had married. For although Ezra had
effected this separation formerly, as far as he had
knowledge of the faulty persons, and power to re-
form them; yet it seems there were some criminals
who either had escaped his knowledge, or were be-
yond the reach of his power; or there were some
new delinquents that since that time had fallen into
the same error, and now showed the truth of their
repentance by forsaking their beloved sins and dear-
est relations. *And the iniquities of their fathers*—
Which they confess, partly as one cause of their
present sufferings; and partly because they, by their
practices, had justified their father's sins, and made
them their own.

Verse 3. *They stood up and read in the book of the
law*—That is, the Levites stood up in a place built
for them, and read the law as they did before, inter-
preting the sense of what they read. *One fourth
part of the day*—To wit, for three hours; for there
were reckoned twelve hours in their day. Probably
they began to read after the morning sacrifice, at
which time divers religious people used to be pre-
sent, and continued reading till the sixth hour, that is,
till midday; and *another fourth part*—Namely, from
midday to the time of the evening sacrifice; *they
confessed*—Both God's mercies, as appears from
the following prayer, and their own sins, as is ex-
pressed verse 2, this day being chiefly set apart for
the work of confession and humiliation; and *worshipped
the Lord their God*—Partly by their ac-
knowledgment and adoration of his wonderful mercy,
in forgiving their sins, and saving them from the
judgments which they had deserved, and for giving
them his law, and the knowledge thereof; and partly,
by imploring his further grace and mercy to them.

Bani, Hashabniah, Sherebiah, Hodi- A. M. 3559.
jah, Shebaniah, and Pethahiah, said, B. C. 445.

Stand up *and* bless the LORD your God for ever
and ever: and blessed be ° thy glorious name,
which is exalted above all blessing and praise.

6 ^f Thou, *even* thou, *art* LORD alone; ^g thou
hast made heaven, ^h the heaven of heavens, with
ⁱ all their host, the earth, and all *things* that
are therein, the seas, and all that *is* therein,
and thou ^k preservest them all; and the host of
heaven worshippeth thee.

7 Thou *art* the LORD the God, who didst
choose ¹ Abram, and broughtest him forth out
of Ur of the Chaldees, and gavest him the name
of ^m Abraham;

^g Gen. i. 1; Exodus xx. 11; Rev. xiv. 7. — ^b Deut. x. 14;
¹ Kings viii. 27. — ¹ Gen. ii. 1. — ^k Psa. xxxvi. 6. — ¹ Gen.
xi. 31; xii. 1. — ^m Gen. xvii. 5.

The work of a fast-day is good work; and we should
endeavour to make a day's work, a good day's work,
of it.

Verse 4. *They stood upon the stairs*—Upon such
stairs or pulpits as the Levites usually stood upon
when they taught the people. But they stood upon
several pulpits, each of them teaching that part of
the congregation which was allotted him, or praying
or blessing God with them. *And cried with a loud
voice*—Thereby testifying their deep sense of their
sins and miseries, and their fervent and importunate
desire of God's mercy.

Verse 5. *Then the Levites, Jeshua, &c., said,
Stand up, and bless the Lord for ever and ever*—
Praise him and give him thanks,—as long as you have
any being; and *blessed be thy glorious name, which
is exalted above all blessing and praise*—The super-
excellent perfections of which, the noblest creatures
cannot worthily magnify. The Levites, it is likely,
praised him in these or such like words, in which all
the people joined, either with their lips, or in their
hearts.

Verse 6. *Thou, even thou, art Lord alone*—Jeho-
vah, the self-existent and independent being; there
is no God beside thee; *thou hast made heaven, &c.*
—They acknowledged the God they worshipped to
be the supreme Sovereign, the Lord over all, who
had created all things whatsoever, who preserved
them by his providence, and therefore had a sove-
reign dominion over all. *And the host of heaven
worshippeth thee*—The angels, archangels, cherubim,
and seraphim, and all the inhabitants of heaven, of
whatever order, acknowledge thee as the universal
King.

Verse 7. *Thou art the Lord who didst choose
Abraham*—Here follows a compendious history of
the affairs of the Hebrew nation, which, it is likely,
was composed by Ezra or Nehemiah in the form of
a prayer, and delivered to the Levites, that they
might pronounce it distinctly before the whole con-
gregation, from their several scaffolds, which were

A. M. 3559. B. C. 445. 8 And foundest his heart ^a faithful before thee, and madest a ^o covenant with him to give the land of the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Amorites, and the Perizzites, and the Jebusites, and the Girgashites, to give it, *I say*, to his seed, and ^p hast performed thy words; for thou *art* righteous:

9 ^a And didst see the affliction of our fathers in Egypt, and ^h hearest their cry by the Red sea;

10 And ^s showedst signs and wonders upon Pharaoh, and on all his servants, and on all the people of his land: for thou knewest that they ^d dealt proudly against them. So didst thou ^g get thee a name, as *it is* this day.

11 ^a And thou didst divide the sea before them, so that they went through the midst of the sea on the dry land; and their persecutors thou threwest into the deeps, ^y as a stone into the mighty waters.

12 Moreover, thou ^l leddest them in the day by a cloudy pillar; and in the night by a pillar of fire, to give them light in the way wherein they should go.

13 ^a Thou camest down also upon mount

^a Gen. xv. 6.—^o Gen. xii. 7; xv. 18; xvii. 7.—^p Joshua xxiii. 11.—^s Exod. ii. 25; iii. 7.—^h Exod. xiv. 10.—^d Exod. Chaps. vii.; viii.; x.; xii.; xiv.—^y Exod. xviii. 11.—^g Exod. ix. 16; Isa. lxiii. 12, 14; Jer. xxxii. 20; Dan. ix. 15.—^a Exod. xiv. 21, 28; Psa. lxxviii. 13.—^y Exod. xv. 5, 10.—^l Exod. xiii. 2.—^l Exod. xix. 20; xx. 1.—^b Psa. xix. 8; Rom. vii. 12. ^b Heb. *laws of truth*.

conveniently placed, in several parts of the assembly, for that purpose.

Verse 8. *And foundest his heart faithful before thee*—In many instances, especially in that great trial of his faith and obedience, when thou requiredst him to offer up his only son as a sacrifice. *And hast performed thy words; for thou art righteous*—True to thy word, faithfully fulfilling all thy promises.

Verses 9, 10. *And didst see the affliction of our fathers in Egypt*—God's providences over Isaac and Jacob are passed by, to come to his interpositions in their behalf, since they became a nation; that is, since he had made good his covenant with Abraham, in multiplying his seed as the stars of heaven; at the time of entering into which covenant he had foretold that his seed should suffer grievous affliction in Egypt; from which having rescued them, he completed their deliverance at the Red sea, when they cried to him, as is here mentioned. It was reasonable to remember this, now they were interceding for the perfecting of their deliverance out of Babylon. *And showedst signs and wonders upon Pharaoh*—Many and mighty, such as were unprecedented and unparalleled, thereby *getting honour* upon him, and upon his servants and people, the deliverance of thy people being the destruction of their

Sinai, and spakest with them from A. M. 3559. B. C. 445. heaven, and gavest them ^b right judgments, and ^s true laws, good statutes, and commandments:

14 And madest known unto them thy ^o holy sabbath, and commandedst them precepts, statutes, and laws, by the hand of Moses thy servant:

15 And ^d gavest them bread from heaven for their hunger, and ^o broughtest forth water for them out of the rock for their thirst, and promisedst them that they should ^f go in to possess the land ^h which thou hadst sworn to give them.

16 ^s But they and our fathers dealt proudly, and ^h hardened their necks, and hearkened not to thy commandments,

17 And refused to obey, ⁱ neither were mindful of thy wonders that thou didst among them; but hardened their necks, and in their rebellion appointed ^h a captain to return to their bondage: but thou *art* ^s a God ready to pardon, ⁱ gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, and forsookest them not.

^c Gen. ii. 3; Exod. xx. 8, 11.—^d Exod. xvi. 14; John vi. 31. ^e Exod. xvii. 6; Num. xx. 9, &c.—^f Deut. i. 8.—^h Heb. *which thou hadst lift up thine hand to give them*, Num. xiv. 30.—^s Verse 29; Psa. cvi. 6.—^b Deut. xxxi. 27; 2 Kings xvii. 14; 2 Chron. xxx. 8; Jer. xix. 15.—ⁱ Psa. lxxviii. 11, 42.—^h Num. xiv. 4. ^a Heb. *God of pardons*.—^l Exod. xxxiv. 6; Num. xiv. 18; Psa. lxxxvi. 5, 15; Joel ii. 13.

enemies. *For thou knewest that they dealt proudly against them*—Intending to make them their slaves for ever, as, for the present, they treated them with the utmost contempt and cruelty.

Verse 13. *And gavest them good statutes*—The moral and judicial precepts were all founded on natural equity. And even the ceremonial were tokens of God's goodness, being types of gospel grace.

Verse 14. *And madest known unto them thy holy sabbath*—That holy sabbath day which thou didst bless and sanctify to Adam, commanding him, and in him all his posterity, to observe it, which yet almost all nations have quite forgotten; that day thou didst graciously reveal unto thy people, reviving that ancient law by another particular law respecting it, given to us in the wilderness. The Holy Scriptures speak of the sabbath as a singular gift of God to the Jewish nation, Exod. xvi. 29; it being a sign between God and them, who *sanctified*, that is, separated them from all other nations to be his peculiar people, or to be the worshippers of him who created the world in six days and rested in the seventh, while the heathen nations worshipped the sun, moon, and stars, and other creatures.

Verses 16, 17. *But our fathers dealt proudly, &c.*—Notwithstanding all thy singular and wonderful mercies, they sinned presumptuously, and with a high

A. M. 3559. 18 Yea, ^m when they had made
B. C. 445. them a molten calf, and said, This is
thy God that brought thee up out of Egypt, and
had wrought great provocations ;

19 Yet thou in thy ⁿ manifold mercies for-
sookest them not in the wilderness : the ^o pillar
of the cloud departed not from them by day, to
lead them in the way ; neither the pillar of fire
by night, to show them light, and the way
wherein they should go.

20 Thou gavest also thy ^p good Spirit to
instruct them, and withheldst not thy ^q manna
from their mouth, and gavest them ^r water for
their thirst.

21 Yea, ^s forty years didst thou sustain them
in the wilderness, so that they lacked nothing ;
their ^t clothes waxed not old, and their feet
swelled not.

22 Moreover, thou gavest them kingdoms and
nations, and didst divide them into corners : so
they possessed the land of ^u Sihon, and the land
of the king of Heshbon, and the land of Og
king of Bashan.

^m Exod. xxxii. 4.—ⁿ Verse 27 ; Psa. cvi. 45.—^o Exod. xiii.
21 ; Num. xiv. 14 ; 1 Cor. x. 1.—^p Num. xi. 17 ; Isa. lxiii. 11.
^q Exod. xvi. 15 ; Josh. v. 12.—^r Exod. xvii. 6.—^s Deut. ii. 7.
^t Deut. viii. 4 ; xxix. 5.—^u Num. xxi. 21, &c.—^v Gen. xxii. 17.
^w Josh. i. 2, &c.—^x Psa. xlv. 2.—^y Heb. according to their
will.

hand, scorning to submit their wills to thine. Having
hitherto recounted God's mercies toward them, with
a view to aggravate their guilt, he now comes to
confess their sins, in order that he might lead them
to a sincere and ingenuous grief for them, not only
on account of the sufferings which they had brought
on themselves, but for the injury and indignity which
they had offered to God ; and refused to obey—Per-
sisted in disobedience after many admonitions and
invitations to repentance. And in their rebellion
appointed a captain—That is, designed, purposed,
and resolved to do so, (Num. xiv. 4,) and therefore
they are said to do it ; as Abraham is said to have
offered up Isaac, (Heb. xi. 17,) because he intended
and attempted to do it.

Verses 18, 19. Yea, they made them a molten
calf—This was a very high provocation, considering
how little a time before God had expressly com-
manded them not to make any graven image, and
how many cautions he had afterward given them
against doing any such thing. Yet thou forsookest
them not in the wilderness—Where, if thou hadst
left them without thy conduct and support, they
would have been utterly undone and lost. The pil-
lar of cloud departed not, &c.—Notwithstanding
their great provocations, thou didst still continue
thy gracious presence among them, of which the
pillar of the cloud was a glorious token.

Verse 20. Thou gavest also thy good Spirit to in-

23 ^z Their children also multipliedst A. M. 3559.
thou as the stars of heaven, and B. C. 445.
broughtest them into the land concerning which
thou hadst promised to their fathers, that they
should go in to possess it.

24 So ^{aa} the children went in and possessed the
land, and ^{ab} thou subduedst before them the in-
habitants of the land, the Canaanites, and gavest
them into their hands, with their kings, and the
people of the land, that they might do with
them ^{ac} as they would.

25 And they took strong cities, and a ^{ad} fat
land, and possessed ^{ae} houses full of all goods,
^{af} wells digged, vineyards and oliveyards, and
^{ag} fruit-trees in abundance : so they did eat, and
were filled, and ^{ah} became fat, and delighted
themselves in thy great ^{ai} goodness.

26 Nevertheless, they ^{aj} were disobedient, and
rebelled against thee, and ^{ak} cast thy law behind
their backs, and slew thy ^{al} prophets which tes-
tified against them to turn them to thee, and
they wrought great provocations.

27 ^{am} Therefore thou deliveredst them into the

^z Ver. 35 ; Num. xiii. 27 ; Deut. viii. 7 ; Ezek. xx. 6.—^{aa} Deut.
vi. 11.—^{ab} Or, cisterns.—^{ac} Heb. tree of food.—^{ad} Deut. xxxii.
15.—^{ae} Hos. iii. 5.—^{af} Judg. ii. 11 ; Ezek. xx. 21.—^{ag} 1 Kings
xiv. 9 ; Psa. l. 17.—^{ah} 1 Kings xviii. 4 ; xix. 10 ; 2 Chron. xxiv.
20 ; Matt. xxiii. 37 ; Acts vii. 52.—^{ai} Judg. ii. 14 ; iii. 8, &c. ;
Psa. cvi. 41.

struct them—Which thou didst graciously and plen-
tifully impart, first unto Moses, and then unto the
seventy elders, (Num. xi. 17–26,) to the end that they
might be able to direct and govern thy people wise-
ly, and in thy fear.

Verse 22. And didst divide them into corners—
That is, the heathen nations, whom God in a great
measure destroyed, and the remainders of them he
dispersed into corners ; that whereas, before the Is-
raelites came, they had large habitations, now they
were cooped up, some in one town, and some in an-
other, in the several corners of their land, while the
Israelites dwelt in a large place, and had the posses-
sion of their whole land, some few and small parcels
excepted.

Verses 25, 26. And delighted them in thy great
goodness—In all those comforts and blessings which,
by thy great goodness, they obtained and enjoyed.
Nevertheless they cast thy law behind their backs—
They neglected and despised thy laws, would not
regard nor observe them ; whereas they ought to
have had them continually before their eyes, to di-
rect and govern them in all their ways. The good
things they enjoyed in the land which God had
given them, made them wanton and forgetful of God
and his commandments. And slew thy prophets—Of
which see the margin.

Verse 27. When they cried unto thee, &c.—The
whole book of Judges verifies this, that God de-

A. M. 3559. hand of their enemies, who vexed
B. C. 445. them : and in the time of their trouble,
when they cried unto thee, thou ¹ heardest *them*
from heaven ; and according to thy manifold
mercies ² thou gavest them saviours, who saved
them out of the hand of their enemies.

28 But after they had rest, ³ they ¹ did evil
again before thee : therefore ledest thou them
in the hand of their enemies, so that they had
the dominion over them : yet when they return-
ed and cried unto thee, thou heardest *them* from
heaven ; and ⁴ many times didst thou deliver
them according to thy mercies ;

29 And testifiedst against them, that thou
mightest bring them again unto thy law : yet
they ⁵ dealt proudly, and hearkened not unto
thy commandments, but sinned against thy
judgments, (⁶ which if a man do, he shall
live in them ;) and ⁷ withdrew the shoulder,
and hardened their neck, and would not
hear.

30 Yet many years didst thou ⁸ forbear them,
and testifiedst ⁹ against them by thy Spirit ¹² in ¹⁰

thy prophets : yet would they not give
ear : ¹¹ therefore gavest thou them into
the hand of the people of the lands.

31 Nevertheless, for thy great mercies' sake
¹² thou didst not utterly consume them, nor for-
sake them ; for thou *art* ¹³ a gracious and merci-
ful God.

32 Now therefore, our God, the great, the
¹⁴ mighty, and the terrible God, who keepest
covenant and mercy, let not all the ¹⁵ trouble
seem little before thee, ¹⁶ that hath come upon
us, on our kings, on our princes, and on our
priests, and on our prophets, and on our fathers,
and on all thy people, ¹⁷ since the time of the
kings of Assyria unto this day.

33 Howbeit, ¹⁸ thou *art* just in all that is
brought upon us ; for thou hast done right, but
¹⁹ we have done wickedly :

34 Neither have our kings, our princes, our
priests, nor our fathers, kept thy law, nor
hearkened unto thy commandments and thy
testimonies, wherewith thou didst testify against
them.

¹ Psa. cvii. 44. — ² Judg. ii. 18 ; iii. 9. — ³ Heb. they returned to do evil. — ⁴ Judg. iii. 11, 30 ; iv. 1 ; v. 31 ; vi. 1. — ⁵ Psa. cvii. 43. — ⁶ Verse 16. — ⁷ Lev. xviii. 5 ; Ezek. xx. 11 ; Rom. x. 5 ; Gal. iii. 12. — ⁸ Heb. they gave a withdrawing shoulder, Zech. vii. 11. — ⁹ Hebrew, protract over them. — ¹⁰ 2 Kings xvii. 13 ; 2 Chron. xxxvii. 15 ; Jer. vii. 25 ; xxv. 4.

¹¹ Heb. in the hand of thy prophets. — ¹² Acts vii. 51 ; 1 Pet. i. 11 ; 2 Pet. i. 21. — ¹³ Isa. v. 5 ; xlii. 24. — ¹⁴ Jer. iv. 27 ; v. 10, 18. — ¹⁵ Verse 17. — ¹⁶ Exodus xxxiv. 6 ; Chapter i. 5. — ¹⁷ Heb. weariness. — ¹⁸ Heb. that hath found us. — ¹⁹ 2 Kings xvii. 3. — ²⁰ Dan. ix. 14 ; Psa. cxix. 137. — ²¹ Psa. cvii. 6 ; Dan. ix. 5, 8.

livered them for their sins unto the Moabites, the Canaanites, and divers other enemies, who grievously domineered over them ; but when they cried to God for help, he was so gracious as to send such men as Barak, Gideon, and others, to be their saviours, that is, deliverers, from tyranny.

Verses 28, 29. *Therefore ledest thou them in the hand of their enemies*—God so abandoned them once, that he permitted the Philistines to rule over them forty years, (Judges xiii. 1,) unto which, perhaps, this passage refers. *Many times didst thou deliver them according to thy mercies*—Nothing else could have moved God to do it, but his own essential goodness and mercy, they being, in all ages, inconstant in their obedience, and prone to backslide from him ; and *testifiedst against them*—By many remarkable punishments he testified how highly he was displeas'd with them, that he might reform them. *Yet they dealt proudly*—Against what one would have expected should have humbled them, God's judgments ; and, from time to time, they became more bold and obstinate in their sins. *And withdrew the shoulder*—A metaphor taken from refractory oxen, that draw back, and will not submit to the yoke.

Verse 30. *Many years didst thou forbear them*—Thou didst delay to bring upon them those judgments which thou hadst threatened, and they had deserved, and didst wait for their repentance. *And*

testifiedst against them by thy Spirit in thy prophets—Who spake to them by thy divine inspiration, whom therefore they ought to have obeyed. *Yet would they not give ear*—That is, would not obey them, or even vouchsafe so much as to hear them. *Therefore gavest thou them into the hand of the people of the lands*—At last God delivered them into the hands of the Chaldeans, who are called the people of the lands, because they got possession of all the neighbouring countries, which God put under their power, as he had other countries beyond the Euphrates.

Verse 31. *Nevertheless, thou didst not utterly consume them*—But didst leave a remnant of the poorer people in the land, and show favour to the captives in Babylon. *For thou art a gracious and merciful God*—To which alone they owed their preservation from utter destruction.

Verses 32, 33. *Who keepest covenant and mercy*—He adds *mercy*, because the *covenant* in itself was not a sufficient ground of hope, because they having so basely broken it, God was discharged from keeping it, and therefore they flee to his free and rich *mercy* for relief. *Howbeit, thou art just in all that is brought upon us*—We cannot complain of any of thy dispensations toward us, for the whole series of our history shows that thou art just in all thy ways toward the children of men. It becomes us, when we are under the rebukes of Providence,

A. M. 3559. B. C. 445. 35 For they have ^a not served thee in their kingdom, and in ^b thy great goodness that thou gavest them, and in the large and ^c fat land which thou gavest before them, neither turned they from their wicked works.

36 Behold, ^d we are servants this day, and for the land that thou gavest unto our fathers to eat the fruit thereof, and the good thereof, behold, we are servants in it :

^a Deut. xxviii. 47.—^b Verse 25.—^c Verse 25.—^d Deut. xxviii. 48; Ezra ix. 9.—^e Deut. xxviii. 33, 51.—^f Deut. xxviii. 48.

be they ever so sharp, or ever so long continued, still to justify God, and to own we are punished less than our iniquities deserve.

Verse 35. *For they served thee not in the land which thou gavest them*—That is, which thou didst lay open to their view and possession; removing their enemies, and all impediments, out of the way. *Neither turned they from their wicked works*—They not only all acted wickedly, from the highest to the lowest, but would not be reclaimed. Thus they acknowledge the justice of God in all the punishments he had inflicted on them, though heavy and of long continuance.

Verse 36. *Behold, we are servants in the land*—In that land wherein heretofore, under thee, and by thy favour, we were rightful lords and owners. God had, indeed, marvellously restored them to their own country; yet the marks of his displeasure for their sins still remained very visible: for they were tributary unto others, and not free owners and proprietors of the land which God had given to their fathers.

Verse 37. *And it yieldeth much increase unto the kings, &c.*—We plough, and sow, and labour, and thou givest thy blessing to our endeavours; and yet in a great measure this is not for ourselves, as formerly it was, but for our kings, to whom we pay heavy tributes. *Also they have dominion over our bodies*—Which are liable to be pressed, to serve in the king's wars, or in his works. *And over our cattle at their pleasure*—Our cattle are liable to be made use of, when there is occasion to employ them about the king's business. *And we are in great*

A. M. 3559. B. C. 445. 37 And ^e it yielded much increase unto the kings whom thou hast set over us because of our sins: also they have ^f dominion over our bodies, and over our cattle, at their pleasure, and we are in great distress.

38 And because of all this we ^g make a sure covenant and write it; and our princes, Levites, and priests, ^h seal unto it.

^g 2 Kings xxiii. 3; 2 Chronicles xxix. 10; xxxiv. 31; Chapter x. 29; Ezra x. 3.—^h Hebrew, are at the sealing, or, sealed. ⁱ Chap. x. 1.

distress—Though we are permitted to live by our own laws, which we account a great privilege, yet we lie under these public burdens, and are compelled to bear them. Thus, as Mr. Peters observes, this prayer contains a beautiful epitome of the history of the Jews, raised and animated by a spirit of devotion, which appears in all that moving eloquence so well suited to the great occasion; and, at the same time, with all that chasteness and correctness of thought and expression, which so eminently distinguish the sacred writings of this sort from all merely human compositions.

Verse 38. *Because of all this we make a sure covenant*—Considering all this, they resolved to renew their covenant with God for better obedience, which they promise as the only remedy to procure perfect deliverance. And to make it more effectual, they seem to have declared this in the presence of God, at the conclusion of the foregoing confession and prayer. *And write it*—It was but of little consequence what such a refractory people promised, even in writing; for what regard would they have to their own hand-writing, who regarded not the ten commandments, written on tables of stone by the finger of God? It was, however, very useful that there should be a public instrument to convince them of their impiety, that they might be publicly confounded if they proved perfidious deserters, by showing them their engagements, under their own hands, to future fidelity. *And our princes, Levites, and priests, seal unto it*—Thus they would become witnesses against themselves if they dealt deceitfully.

CHAPTER X.

The names of those who set their seal to the covenant, 1-27. An account of those who consented thereto, 28-31. They engage to adhere to the temple-service, 32-39.

A. M. 3559. B. C. 445. NOW ¹ those that sealed were, ^a Nehemiah ² the Tirshatha,

^b the son of Hachaliah, and Zidki- A. M. 3559. B. C. 445. jah,

¹ Heb. at the sealings, Chap. ix. 38.—^a Chap. viii. 9.

^b Or, the governor.—^b Chap. i. 1.

NOTES ON CHAPTER X.

Verse 1. *Now those that sealed*—Both in their own names, and in the name of all the rest. It may

seem strange that Ezra doth not appear among them. But that might be because he was prevented by some sickness, or other extraordinary impediment.

- A. M. 3559. 2 ° Seraiah, Azariah, Jeremiah,
B. C. 445. 3 Pashur, Amariah, Malchijah,
4 Hattush, Shebaniah, Malluch,
5 Harim, Meremoth, Obadiah,
6 Daniel, Ginnethon, Baruch,
7 Meshullam, Abijah, Mijamin,
8 Maaziah, Bilgai, Shemaiah; these were the
priests.
9 And the Levites: both Jeshua the son of
Azaniah, Binnui of the sons of Henadad,
Kadmiel;
10 And their brethren, Shebaniah, Hodijah,
Kelita, Pelaiah, Hanan,
11 Micha, Rehob, Hashabiah,
12 Zaccur, Sherebiah, Shebaniah,
13 Hodijah, Bani, Beninu.
14 The chief of the people: ° Parosh, Pahath-
moab, Elam, Zattu, Bani,
15 Bunni, Azgad, Bebai,
16 Adonijah, Bigvai, Adin,
17 Ater, Hizkijah, Azzur,
18 Hodijah, Hashum, Bezai,
19 Hariph, Anathoth, Nebai,
20 Magpiash, Meshullam, Hezir,
21 Meshezabeel, Zadok, Jaddua,

° Chap. xii. 1-21.—^d Ezra ii. 3, &c.; Chapter vii. 8, &c.
• Ezra ii. 36-43.—^f Ezra ix. 1; x. 11, 19; Chapter xiii. 3.
• Deut. xxix. 12, 14; Chap. v. 12; Psa. cxix. 106.

It is true we meet with Ezra after this, at the dedication of the wall of Jerusalem, (chap. xii. 36,) and therefore he was then freed from this impediment, whatsoever it was. It appears from hence, that the government of the Jews was an aristocracy, or a government in which the nobles were the rulers. This mode of administration continued till the time of the Asmodæan princes, and from thence, by a natural translation, passed into an absolute monarchy, or rather tyranny.

Verse 8. *These were the priests*—That is, the chief of them; for there are but twenty-one of them named here.

Verse 14. *The chief of the people*—It would have been tedious to make all the people subscribe and seal the writing, therefore the chiefs and princes of each family signed and sealed it in the name of the rest; and they seem to have subscribed in the name of him from whom the family was derived.

Verse 28. *And the rest of the people, &c.*—Those that did not subscribe and seal, because there were too many, yet gave their consent to what the fore-named persons did. And not only the men, but their wives and their children, who were arrived at years of discretion, engaged themselves to abide by what their brethren the nobles had done. *And all that had separated themselves*—All those of the heathen who had abjured idolatry and joined themselves to the worship of the Jews.

- A. M. 3559. 22 Pelatiah, Hanan, Anaiah,
B. C. 445. 23 Hoshea, Hananiah, Hashub,
24 Hallohesh, Pileha, Shobek,
25 Rehum, Hashabnah, Maaseiah,
26 And Ahijah, Hanan, Anan,
27 Malluch, Harim, Baanah.
28 ¶ ° And the rest of the people, the priests,
the Levites, the porters, the singers, the Ne-
thinims, ° and all they that had separated them-
selves from the people of the lands unto the law
of God, their wives, their sons, and their daugh-
ters, every one having knowledge, and having
understanding;
29 They clave to their brethren, their nobles,
° and entered into a curse, and into an oath,
° to walk in God's law, which was given ° by
Moses the servant of God, and to observe and
do all the commandments of the LORD our
Lord, and his judgments and his statutes;
30 And that we would not give ° our daugh-
ters unto the people of the land, nor take their
daughters for our sons:
31 ° And if the people of the land bring ware
or any victuals on the sabbath day to sell,
that we would not buy it of them on the sab-

^b 2 Kings xxiii. 3; 2 Chron. xxxiv. 31.—^c Heb. by the hand
of—^d Exod. xxiv. 16; Deuteronomy vii. 3; Ezra ix. 12, 14.
^e Exod. xx. 10; Lev. xxiii. 3; Deut. v. 12; Chap. xiii. 15, &c.

Verse 29. *They clave to their brethren, their nobles*—The commonalty owned and ratified what the nobles had done in their names, declaring their assent to it by their words, or by lifting up of their hands, as the manner was. Great men never look so great as when they encourage religion, and are examples of it: and they would by that, as much as any thing, make an interest in the most valuable of their inferiors, who would cleave to them closer than they can imagine. Observe, their nobles are called *their brethren*; for in the things of God, rich and poor, high and low, meet together. *And entered into a curse, and into an oath*—That is, an oath under an execration. They obliged themselves by an oath to walk in God's law, with an imprecation upon themselves, if they violated it; wishing, probably, that all the curses written in the law might fall upon them, if they did not observe it in all things.

Verse 30. *And that we would not give our daughters*—Namely, in marriage. Having sworn obedience to God's laws in the general, they now specify some particular instances, wherein they had lately transgressed, or were most prone to transgress. In our covenants with God, we should engage particularly against those sins that we have been most frequently overtaken in and injured by.

Verse 31. *And if the people of the land*—The heathen; *bring ware or victuals on the sabbath*

A. M. 3559. bath, or on the holy day: and that
B. C. 445. we would leave the ¹seventh year,
and the ²exaction of ⁴every debt.

32 Also we made ordinances for us, to charge ourselves yearly with the third part of a shekel for the service of the house of our God;

33 For ^athe show-bread, and for the ^ocontinual meat-offering, and for the continual burnt-offering, of the sabbaths, of the new-moons, for the set feasts, and for the holy things, and for the sin-offerings to make an atonement for Israel, and for all the work of the house of our God.

34 And we cast the lots among the priests, the Levites, and the people, ^pfor the wood-offering, to bring it into the house of our God, after the houses of our fathers, at times appointed year by year, to burn upon the altar

¹ Exod. xxiii. 10; Lev. xxv. 4.—² Deut. xv. 1; Chap. v. 12.
⁴ Hebrew, every hand.—³ Lev. xxiv. 5, &c.; 2 Chronicles ii. 4.
^o Num. xxviii.; xxix.—^p Chap. xiii. 31; Isa. xl. 16.—⁴ Lev. vi. 12.

day to sell, we would not buy it—They not only would not sell goods themselves for gain on that day, but they would not encourage the heathen to sell by buying of them, no, not victuals, under pretence of necessity, but would buy in their provisions for their families the day before. They that covenant to keep all the commandments of God, must particularly covenant to keep the sabbath holy. For the profanation of this is a sure inlet to all manner of profaneness. Or on the holy day—That is, on days of rest from labour, such as the passover, the first and seventh day of unleavened bread, Exod. xii. 16, the feast of trumpets, Lev. xxiii. 25, and others. And that we would leave the seventh year—Let the land rest from ploughing or tilling in that year, and leave the fruit of it, which grew of itself, for the poor, as the law required. See the margin. And the exaction of every debt—Would remit, in that year, the debts owed by the poor. The Hebrew כָּסָא כָּל יָד *masse cal jad*, is literally, the burden of every hand. Debts may be so called, because they are commonly contracted or confirmed by a bill, declaration, or promise, given under the debtor's hand. Or the meaning is, as in Isa. lviii. 6, that they engage to undo the heavy burdens, to let the oppressed go free, and to break off every yoke.

Verse 32. To charge ourselves—Every particular person among us; yearly with a third part of a shekel—About ten-pence of our money; for the service of the house of our God—To provide the show-bread for the table, two lambs for the daily offerings, four for the sabbaths, and more costly sacrifices for other festivals, occasional sin-offerings, and meat offerings, and drink-offerings for them all, the charge of which was great and constant. Formerly these things had been provided from the

of the LORD our God, ^aas it is written in the law: A. M. 3559.
B. C. 445.

35 And ^rto bring the first-fruits of our ground, and the first-fruits of all fruit of all trees, year by year, unto the house of the LORD:

36 Also the firstborn of our sons, and of our cattle, as it is written ^sin the law, and the firstlings of our herds and of our flocks, to bring to the house of our God, unto the priests that minister in the house of our God.

37 ^tAnd that we should bring the first-fruits of our dough, and our offerings, and the fruit of all manner of trees, of wine and of oil, unto the priests, to the chambers of the house of our God; and ^uthe tithes of our ground unto the Levites, that the same Levites might have the tithes in all the cities of our tillage.

38 And the priest the son of Aaron shall be

^r Exodus xxiii. 19; xxxiv. 26; Lev. xix. 23; Num. xviii. 12; Deut. xvi. 2.—^s Exod. xiii. 2, 12; Lev. xxvii. 26; Num. xviii. 15.—^t Lev. xxiii. 17; Num. xv. 19; xviii. 12, &c.; Deut. xviii. 4; xxvi. 2.—^u Lev. xxvii. 30; Num. xviii. 21, &c.

treasures of the temple, (1 Chron. xxvi. 20,) and when these failed, from the king's treasures: but now, both these failing, provision is here properly made for them another way.

Verse 34. And we cast lots among the priests, &c. They now determined, by casting lots, how much wood every one should bring in, for his share, to maintain the fire continually upon the altar to burn the sacrifices; and in what order it should be brought; and at what times of the year.

Verse 35. And to bring in the first-fruits—That is, they took an oath to do it; for this is to be understood, and not that they cast lots about it, as they did about the wood-offering mentioned in the foregoing verse. All the particulars of the first-fruits are exactly and distinctly mentioned, that none might pretend ignorance when they withheld any part of the priests' dues, which, at that time especially, the people were very prone to do, through poverty, or covetousness, or profaneness, and that the priests' rights might be firmly assured to them. Thus encouragement was given to the priests to mind their duty, and care was taken that they should be under no temptation to neglect it, in order to make the necessary provision for their families. Then the work of the house of God is likely to go on, when those who serve at the altar live comfortably upon the altar.

Verses 37, 38. That the Levites might have the tithes in all the cities of our tillage—That is, the tithes of all the fruits of the ground belonging to our several cities. And the priest, the son of Aaron, shall be with the Levites—As the people gave the tithe of their land to the Levites, so the Levites gave a tithe of their tithes to the priests. And it is here ordered, that when the people brought them to the Levites, one of the priests should be present to

A. M. 3559. with the Levites ^a when the Levites
B. C. 445. take tithes : and the Levites shall
bring up the tithe of the tithes unto the house of
our God, to ^v the chambers, into the treasure-
house.

39 For the children of Israel and the children

^a Numbers xviii. 26.—^v 1 Chronicles ix. 26 ; 2 Chronicles
xxi. 11.

inspect them, and to see that they tithed the tithes,
that is, set apart the tenth of the tithes they had re-
ceived for the priests, which were brought to the
chambers of the house of God, wherein they were
deposited for their use.

Verse 39. *The offering of the corn, of the new
wine, and the oil*—See the margin. *Unto the
chambers where are the vessels, &c.*—Where holy
things were kept, and where God's ministers at-
tended, for whose use they were designed, and they
were brought thither at the charge of those who
offered them. *And we will not forsake the house
of our God*—We do here solemnly declare and

of Levi ^z shall bring the offering of the A. M. 3559.
corn, of the new wine, and the oil, B. C. 445.
unto the chambers, where *are* the vessels of the
sanctuary, and the priests that minister, and
the porters, and the singers : ^a and we will not
forsake the house of our God.

^z Deut. xii. 6, 11 ; 2 Chron. xxxi. 12 ; Chap. xiii. 12.—^a Chap.
xiii. 10, 11.

engage ourselves, that we will take care, from time
to time, that the house and service of God be not
neglected or forsaken, for want of necessary pro-
visions to support it. Though they paid great
taxes to the kings of Persia, and had much hardship
put upon them, they would not make that an excuse
for not paying their tithes ; but would render to God
the things that were his, as well as to Cesar the
things that were his. We must do what we can in
works of piety and charity, notwithstanding the
taxes we pay to the government ; and cheerfully per-
form our duty to God amidst our burdens, which will
be the surest way to ease and liberty in God's due time.

CHAPTER XI.

*The rulers and men drawn by lot dwell at Jerusalem, 1, 2. Their names, numbers, and families, 3-19. The cities and
villages that were peopled by the rest, 20-36.*

A. M. 3559. **A**ND the rulers of the people dwell
B. C. 445. at Jerusalem : the rest of the peo-
ple also cast lots, to bring one of ten to dwell in

^a Verse 18 ; Matt.

Jerusalem ^a the holy city, and nine A. M. 3559.
parts to dwell in other cities. B. C. 445.

2 And the people blessed all the men that

iv. 5 ; xxvii. 53.

NOTES ON CHAPTER XI.

Verse 1. *The rulers of the people dwell at Jeru-
salem*—Where their very office, in some sort, obliged
them to dwell ; and where, it seems, Nehemiah had de-
sired the principal men of the nation, by way of ex-
ample, to fix their habitations. *The rest of the people
also cast lots, to bring one of ten to dwell in Jerusalem*
—That the building of the city might be completed,
and the honour and safety of it better provided for.
The bulk of the Jews, it appears, rather chose to live
in the country than at Jerusalem. One reason of
which might be, that they were generally shepherds,
and lovers of agriculture, and therefore the country
was more suited to their genius and manner of life
than the city. Add to this, that their enemies were
now so enraged to see the walls built again, and so
restless in their designs to keep Jerusalem from
rising to its former splendour, that many were ter-
rified from coming to dwell there, thinking themselves
more safe in the country, where their enemies had
no pretence to disturb them. In order, therefore, to
compel a certain proportion of them to remove to
the city, the expedient of casting lots is resorted to.
Though the casting of lots be certainly forbidden,
where the thing is done out of a spirit of superstition,

or with a design to tempt God ; yet on some occa-
sions it is enjoined by God himself, and the most
holy persons, both in the Old and New Testaments,
have practised it in particular cases. The wise man
acknowledges the usefulness of this custom when he
tells us that *the lot causeth contention to cease, and
parteth between the mighty*, Prov. xviii. 18 ; and
therefore it was no bad policy, as things now stood,
to take this method of division ; since the lot, which
all allowed was under the divine direction, falling
upon such a person rather than another, would be a
great means, no doubt, to make him remove more
contentedly into the city.

Verse 2. *The people blessed all the men that will-
ingly offered themselves*—Besides those who were
chosen by lot, it seems there were some that volun-
tarily chose to go and live there, whom the people
highly commended, beseeching God to bless and
prosper them : for indeed they were worthy to be
honoured, because they denied themselves, and their
own safety and profit, for the public good, and the
glory of God ; seeking the restoration of their na-
tion, the defence of their city, and the welfare of
their country, and having zeal for the divine service
performed there ; for, no doubt, more profit accrued

A. M. 3559. ^b willingly offered themselves to dwell
B. C. 445. at Jerusalem.

3 ¶ ^c Now these *are* the chief of the province that dwelt in Jerusalem: but in the cities of Judah dwelt every one in his possession in their cities, *to wit*, Israel, the priests, and the Levites, and ^d the Nethinims, and ^e the children of Solomon's servants.

4 And ^f at Jerusalem dwelt *certain* of the children of Judah, and of the children of Benjamin. Of the children of Judah; Athaiah the son of Uziah, the son of Zechariah, the son of Amariah, the son of Shephatiah, the son of Mahalaleel, of the children of ^g Perez;

5 And Maaseiah the son of Baruch, the son of Col-hozeh, the son of Hazaiah, the son of Adaiah, the son of Joiarib, the son of Zechariah, the son of Shiloni.

6 All the sons of Perez that dwelt at Jerusalem *were* four hundred threescore and eight valiant men.

7 And these *are* the sons of Benjamin; Sallu the son of Meshullam, the son of Joed, the son of Pedaiah, the son of Kolaiah, the son of Maaseiah, the son of Ithiel, the son of Jesaiah.

8 And after him Gabbai, Sallai, nine hundred twenty and eight.

9 And Joel the son of Zichri *was* their overseer: and Judah the son of Senuah *was* second over the city.

10 ^h Of the priests: Jedaiah the son of Joiarib, Jachin.

11 Seraiah the son of Hilkiah, the son of Meshullam, the son of Zadok, the son of Me-

^b Judg. v. 9.—^c 1 Chron. ix. 2, 3.—^d Ezra ii. 43.—^e Ezra ii. 55.—^f 1 Chron. ix. 3, &c.—^g Gen. xxxviii. 29, *Pharez*.
^h 1 Chron. ix. 10, &c.

to those who settled in the country where they chose, and had as much ground to cultivate as they wished, than to those who were confined to the city, and the small portion of land which lay about it.

Verse 3. *These are the chief of the province*—Of Judea, which was now made a province. *Israel*—The generality of the people of Israel, whether of Judah, or Benjamin, or any other tribe. These he calls Israel, rather than Judah, because there were many of the other tribes now incorporated with them; and because none of the tribes of Israel, except Judah and Benjamin, dwelt in Jerusalem.

Verse 6. *Four hundred threescore and eight valiant men*—Such were most proper for this place and time, because of its many enemies round about.

Verses 8, 9. *Nine hundred twenty and eight*—So there were more of Benjamin than of Judah, because the city did chiefly, and most properly, belong to

rarioth, the son of Ahitub, *was* the ruler of the house of God. A. M. 3559. B. C. 445.

12 And their brethren that did the work of the house *were* eight hundred twenty and two: and Adaiah the son of Jeroham, the son of Pelaiah, the son of Amzi, the son of Zechariah, the son of Pashur, the son of Malchiah,

13 And his brethren, chief of the fathers, two hundred forty and two: and Amashai the son of Azareel, the son of Ahasai, the son of Meshillemoth, the son of Immer,

14 And their brethren, mighty men of valour, a hundred twenty and eight: and their overseer *was* Zabdiel, ¹ the son of *one of* the great men.

15 Also of the Levites: Shemaiah the son of Hashub, the son of Azrikam, the son of Hashabiah, the son of Bunni;

16 And Shabbethai and Jozabad, of the chief of the Levites, ² *had* the oversight of ³ the outward business of the house of God.

17 And Mattaniah the son of Micha, the son of Zabdi, the son of Asaph, *was* the principal to begin the thanksgiving in prayer: and Bakkukiah the second among his brethren, and Abda the son of Shammua, the son of Galal, the son of Jeduthun.

18 All the Levites in ⁴ the holy city *were* two hundred fourscore and four.

19 Moreover the porters, Akkub, Talmon, and their brethren that kept ³ the gates, *were* a hundred seventy and two.

20 ¶ And the residue of Israel, of the priests, and the Levites, *were* in all the cities of Judah, every one in his inheritance.

21 ¹ But the Nethinims dwelt in ⁴ Ophel: and

¹ Or, the son of Haggadolim.—² Heb. were over.—³ 1 Chron. xxvii. 29.—⁴ Verse 1.—⁵ Heb. at the gates.—⁶ Chap. iii. 26.
⁷ Or, the tower.

that tribe, as hath been observed before. *Joel was their overseer*—The captain of their thousand.

Verse 11. *The ruler of the house of God*—One of the chief priests, who ruled with and under the high-priest.

Verse 16. *The outward business of the house of God*—For those things belonging to the temple and its service, which were to be done without it, or abroad in the country, as the gathering in of the voluntary contributions, or other necessary provisions, out of the several parts of the land.

Verse 17. *To begin the thanksgiving in prayer*—In the public and solemn prayers and praises, which were constantly joined with the morning and evening sacrifice, at which the singers were present, and praised God with a psalm or hymn, which this man began.

Verse 21. *The Nethinims dwelt in Ophel*—Which

A. M. 3559. Ziha and Gispa were over the Nethinims.
B. C. 445.

22 The overseer also of the Levites at Jerusalem was Uzzi the son of Bani, the son of Hashabiah, the son of Mattaniah, the son of Micha. Of the sons of Asaph, the singers were over the business of the house of God.

23 For ^a it was the king's commandment concerning them, that ^a a certain portion should be for the singers, due for every day.

24 And Pethahiah the son of Meshezabeel, of the children of ^a Zerah the son of Judah, was ^o at the king's hand in all matters concerning the people.

25 And for the villages, with their fields, some of the children of Judah dwelt at ^p Kirjath-arba, and in the villages thereof, and at Dibon, and in the villages thereof, and at Jekabzeel, and in the villages thereof,

26 And at Jeshua, and at Moladah, and at Beth-phetlet,

27 And at Hazar-shual, and at Beer-sheba, and in the villages thereof, A. M. 3559. B. C. 445.

28 And at Ziklag, and at Mekonah, and in the villages thereof,

29 And at En-rimmon, and at Zareah, and at Jarmuth,

30 Zanoah, Adullam, and in their villages, at Lachish, and the fields thereof, at Azekah, and in the villages thereof. And they dwelt from Beer-sheba unto the valley of Hinnom.

31 The children also of Benjamin ⁶ from Geba dwelt ⁷ at Michmash, and Aija, and Beth-el, and in their villages,

32 And at Anathoth, Nob, Ananiah,

33 Hazor, Ramah, Gittaim,

34 Hadid, Zeboim, Neballat,

35 Lod, and Ono, ^a the valley of craftsmen.

36 And of the Levites were divisions in Judah, and in Benjamin.

^a Ezra vi. 8; vii. 20, &c. — ^o Or, to a sure ordinance. — ^p Gen. xxxviii. 30, Zarah.

⁶ 1 Chron. xviii. 17; xxiii. 28. — ⁷ Joshua xiv. 15. — ⁸ Or, of Geba. — ⁹ Or, to Michmash. — ¹⁰ 1 Chron. iv. 13.

was upon the wall of Jerusalem, because they were to do the servile work of the temple; therefore they were to be posted near it, that they might be ready to attend.

Verse 22. *The sons of Asaph were over the business of the house of God*—Were to take care at Jerusalem for the supply of such things as were necessary for the temple and the service of God, from time to time, while others minded the outward business, verse 16. And this office was very proper for them, both as they were Levites, to whose care those things belonged; and as they were singers, who were not to come up to Jerusalem by turns, as other Levites, and as the priests did, but were constantly to reside there, and therefore were more capable of minding this business. Besides, their employment was not so frequent nor so great as some others were, and therefore they had more leisure for it.

Verse 23. *It was the king's commandment, &c.*—That is, as it is generally thought, the command-

ment of the king of Persia, who, out of his great munificence, gave it for their better support, it being common in all countries to have a particular regard for those who sung hymns in praise of their gods. Houbigant renders the words, *was at the king's hand*, in the next verse, *was the king's minister*.

Verse 24. *Pethahiah was at the king's hand*—Or on the king's part, to determine civil causes and controversies between man and man by the laws of that kingdom; between the king and people, as in matters of tribute or grievances.

Verse 36. *Of the Levites were divisions*—Or, for the Levites (those who were not settled in Jerusalem) there were divisions; places appointed for them and distributed among them. Thus were they settled free and easy, though few and poor. And they might have been happy but for that general lukewarmness with which they are charged by the Prophet Malachi, who prophesied about this time, and in whom prophecy ceased for some ages, till it revived in the great prophet.

CHAPTER XII.

The chief of the priests and Levites that came up with Zerubbabel, 1-9. The succession of the chief priests, 10-21. The eminent Levites, 22-26. The wall dedicated, 27-43. The offices of the priests and Levites settled, 44-47.

A. M. 3469. B. C. 536. **N**OW these are the ^apriests and the Levites that went up with Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, and Jeshua: ^bSeraiah, Jeremiah, Ezra, ² Amariah, ¹ Malluch, Hattush, ³ ² Shechaniah, ³ Rehum, ⁴ Meremoth, ⁴ Iddo, ⁵ Ginnetho, ⁶ Abijah, ⁵ ⁶ Miamin, ⁷ Maadiah, Bilgah, ⁶ Shemaiah, and Joiarib, Jedaiah, ⁷ ⁸ Sallu, Amok, Hilkiah, Jedaiah. These were the chief of the priests and of their brethren in the days of ^d Jeshua.

8 Moreover the Levites: Jeshua, Binnui, Kadmiel, Sherebiah, Judah, and Mattaniah, ^e which was over ⁹ the thanksgiving, he and his brethren.

9 Also Bakbukiah and Unni, their brethren, were over against them in the watches.

10 ¶ And Jeshua begat Joiakim, Joiakim also begat Eliashib, and Eliashib begat Joiada,

11 And Joiada begat Jonathan, and Jonathan begat Jaddua.

^a Ezra ii. 1.—^b Chap. x. 2-8.—¹ Or, Melicu, Verse 14. ² Or, Shrebaniah, Verse 14.—³ Or, Harim, Verse 15.—⁴ Or, Meraioth, Verse 15.—⁵ Or, Ginnethon, Verse 16.—^c Luke i. 5.

NOTES ON CHAPTER XII.

Verse 1. *Now these are the priests*—The chief of the priests; the heads of those twenty-four courses which David appointed by divine direction, 1 Chron. xxiv. And whereas there were twenty-four, and here but twenty-two, and verse 12, &c., only twenty, the reason of this difference may be because two of the twenty-four courses were extinct in Babylon, and two of the persons here named, (verse, 2-5.) Hattush and Maadiah, may be omitted in the account of the posterity of these, (verse 12, &c.,) because they had no posterity. *Ezra*—Either this was another Ezra, or, if it were the same mentioned Ezra vii., he lived to a great age; which may well be supposed, considering his great sobriety, and his great piety, to which God promised long life, and withal the special providence of God continuing him so long in such a season, wherein the church of God did greatly need his help and counsel.

Verse 2. *Malluch*—In the repetition of this and some other names hereafter, verse 14, &c., there are some small variations, which are very frequent in the Hebrew language.

Verse 7. *These were the chief of the priests*—The heads of the courses of the priests instituted by David, which were restored after their return from captivity, though as yet they were not so many as they had been before: see Ezra vi. 18. *And of their brethren*—That is, of the priests, who were their brethren; in the days of Jeshua—Who was the high-priest at the return from captivity.

Verses 8, 9. *Moreover the Levites, which were over the thanksgiving*—Appointed to see that the

12 And in the days of Joiakim were ^{A. M. 3468. B. C. 536.} priests, the chief of the fathers: of Seraiah, Meraiah; of Jeremiah, Hananiah;

13 Of Ezra, Meshullam; of Amariah, Jehohanan;

14 Of Melicu, Jonathan; of Shebaniah, Joseph;

15 Of Harim, Adna; of Meraioth, Helkai;

16 Of Iddo, Zechariah; of Ginnethon, Meshullam;

17 Of Abijah, Zichri; of Miniamin, of Moadiah, Piltai;

18 Of Bilgah, Shammua; of Shemaiah, Jehonathan;

19 And of Joiarib, Mattenai; of Jedaiah, Uzzi;

20 Of Sallai, Kallai; of Amok, Eber;

21 Of Hilkiah, Hashabiah; of Jedaiah, Nethaneel.

22 ¶ The Levites in the days of Eliashib, Joiada, and Johanan, and Jaddua, were recorded chief of the fathers: also the priests, to the reign of Darius the Persian.

⁴ Or, Miniamin, Verse 17.—⁷ Or, Moadiah, Verse 17.—⁸ Or, Sallai, Verse 20.—^d Ezra iii. 2; Haggai i. 1; Zech. iii. 1. ^e Chap. xi. 17.—⁹ That is, the psalms of thanksgiving.

psalms of thanksgiving were continually sung in the temple, in due time and manner. *Also, their brethren were over against them in the watches*—That is, in the places where they were appointed to stand, and wait, and perform their office, which was to keep the guard of the gates, while the others sung.

Verses 10, 11. *And Jeshua begat Joiakim*—In these two verses is an account of the succession of the high-priests, from the return of the captivity till the time when they began to bear the greatest sway in the Jewish nation. For the Jaddua mentioned at the end of verse 11, is commonly thought to be that Jaddus, the high-priest, who went to meet Alexander the Great in his pontifical habit, as he came from the conquest of Tyre and Gaza, and procured great privileges for the Jewish nation. This catalogue of their high-priests was the more necessary, because their times were now to be measured, not by the years of their kings, as formerly, but by their high-priests.

Verse 12. *In the days of Joiakim were priests*—As the writer had mentioned those who were the chief of the priests in the days of Jeshua, so now he mentions the sons of every one of them who officiated in the days of Joiakim the son of Jeshua, either as assistants to their fathers, or succeeding them when they were dead. He begins with the three named in this verse, and so proceeds in order to give an account of the rest, which reaches to verse 22.

Verse 22. *Also the priests, to the reign of Darius the Persian*—“This verse,” observes Dr. Dodd, after Le Clerc, “wherein mention is made of Darius Codomanus, and the high-priest Jaddua, affords us a

A. M. 3469. 23 The sons of Levi, the chief of
B. C. 536. the fathers, were written in the book
of the ¹Chronicles, even until the days of Joha-
nan the son of Eliashib.

24 And the chief of the Levites: Hashabiah,
Sherebiah, and Jeshua the son of Kadmiel,
with their brethren over against them, to praise
and to give thanks, ² according to the com-
mandment of David the man of God, ³ ward
over against ward.

25 Mattaniah, and Bakkukiah, Obadiah, Me-
shullam, Talmon, Akkub, were porters keep-
ing the ward at the ¹⁰ thresholds of the gates.

26 These were in the days of Joiakim the
son of Jeshua, the son of Jozadak, and in the
days of Nehemiah ¹ the governor, and of Ezra
the priest, ² the scribe.

B. C. 445. 27 ¶ And at ¹ the dedication of the
wall of Jerusalem, they sought the
Levites out of all their places, to bring them to
Jerusalem, to keep the dedication with glad-
ness, ² both with thanksgivings, and with
singing, with cymbals, psalteries, and with
harps.

¹ 1 Chron. ix. 14, &c.—² 1 Chronicles xxiii.; xxv.; xxvi.
³ Ezra iii. 11.—¹⁰ Or, *treasuries, or, assemblies*—¹ Chap.
viii. 9.—² Ezra vii. 6, 11.

proof that Nehemiah did not put the finishing hand to this book. For Nehemiah, to be able to speak of Darius, must have lived, according to Huet, at least one hundred and thirty-one years, and at that age have written or enlarged his book, which is not probable. We may therefore conclude, that the book of Nehemiah could not have been published, such as it is, till the reign of Darius Codomanus at least; and since one chapter of the book of Nehemiah has been put into that of Ezra, we may very probably suppose that it did not appear in its present form till about the same time. So that these two books have been collected from the memoirs of three different authors, to which have been added several things for the illustration of the history." Le Clerc, and Houbigant's note on the place.

Verses 23-25. *Written in the book of the Chronicles*—That is, in the public annals or registers, in which the genealogies of the several families were recorded by the Jews with great exactness, as all persons agree. *Ward over against ward*—Or, by turns, one coming in when another went out, to attend in their courses, which are called wards. *At the thresholds of the gates*—To wit, of the temple, where the holy things were laid up, their watching-place being close by the thresholds of the gates.

Verse 27. *At the dedication of the wall*—Of the city itself, which is here dedicated to God, and to his honour and service, not only upon a general account,

28 And the sons of the singers gathered themselves together, both out of the plain country round about Jerusalem, and from the villages of Netophathi;

29 Also from the house of Gilgal, and out of the fields of Geba and Azmaveth: for the singers had builded them villages round about Jerusalem.

30 And the priests and the Levites purified themselves, and purified the people, and the gates, and the wall.

31 Then I brought up the princes of Judah upon the wall, and appointed two great companies of them that gave thanks, whereof ² one went on the right hand upon the wall ³ toward the dung-gate:

32 And after them went Hoshaiah, and half of the princes of Judah,

33 And Azariah, Ezra, and Meshullam,

34 Judah, and Benjamin, and Shemaiah, and Jeremiah,

35 And certain of the priests' sons with trumpets; namely, Zechariah the son of Jonathan, the son of Shemaiah, the son of Mat-

¹ Deut. xx. 5; Psa. xxx. title.—² 1 Chron. xxv. 6; 2 Chron. v. 13; vii. 6.—³ Verse 38.—⁴ Chap. ii. 13; iii. 13.—⁵ Num. x. 2, 8.

by which we ought to devote ourselves, and all that is ours, to God; but upon a more special ground, because this was a place which God himself had chosen, and sanctified by his temple and gracious presence, and which therefore did of right belong to him, whence it is often called *the holy city*. And they restored it to God by this dedication, with imploring the presence, and favour, and blessing of God to this city, by solemn prayers, and praises, and sacrifices, wherewith this dedication was accompanied. *They sought the Levites out of their places*—To which they were now retired, after that great and general assembly, chap. viii. 9, 10.

Verses 29, 30. *The singers had built them villages, &c.*—That they might be near at hand for the service of God and of his house. *The priests and the Levites purified themselves*—By sprinkling the water of purification upon them, by which the tabernacle and sacred utensils were purified; (Num. viii. 7;) by solemn prayers and sacrifices; and especially by keeping themselves from all impurity. *And purified the people*—By sprinkling, it is probable, the same water upon them, and by prayers and sacrifices.

Verses 31-33. *Then I brought up the princes*—And half of the people with them, as it is expressed afterward, verse 38. *Upon the wall*—For the wall was broad and strong, and so built that men might conveniently walk upon it, as at this day it is in many cities. *Whereof one went on the right hand*—To-

A. M. 3559. taniah, the son of Michaiiah, the son of
B. C. 445. Zaccur, the son of Asaph :

36 And his brethren, Shemaiah, and Azarael, Milalai, Gilalai, Maai, Nethaneel, and Judah, Hanani, with ^a the musical instruments of David the man of God, and Ezra the scribe before them.

37 ^r And at the fountain-gate, which was over against them, they went up by ^s the stairs of the city of David, at the going up of the wall, above the house of David, even unto ^t the water-gate eastward.

38 ^u And the other *company of them that gave thanks* went over against *them*, and I after them, and the half of the people upon the wall, from beyond ^v the tower of the furnaces even unto ^w the broad wall ;

39 ^x And from above the gate of Ephraim, and above ^y the old gate, and above ^z the fish-gate, ^{aa} and the tower of Hananeel, and the tower of Meah, even unto ^{ab} the sheep-gate: and they stood still in ^{ac} the prison-gate.

40 So stood the two *companies of them that*

^a 1 Chron. xxiii. 5.—^r Chap. ii. 14 ; iii. 15.—^s Chap. iii. 15. ^t Chap. iii. 26 ; viii. 1, 3, 16.—^u Verse 31.—^v Chap. iii. 11. ^w Chap. iii. 8.—^x 2 Kings xiv. 13 ; Chap. viii. 16.—^y Chap. iii. 6.

ward the south and east. *Azariah and Ezra*—Not the scribe, as is evident from verse 36, but another Ezra.

Verses 37, 38. *By the stairs of the city of David*—By which they went up to the hill of Zion and the city of David. *The other company that gave thanks went over against them*—Namely, on the other side of the city, northward and eastward. *Even unto the broad wall*—Which they had made thicker and stronger than the rest of the wall, for some special reason.

Verses 39, 40. *They stood still in the prison-gate*—Waiting, as also their brethren did, that they might go together in due order into God's house, there to perfect the solemnity. *So stood the two companies, &c.*—That is, they met together at the temple, and gave thanks in the courts of it. *And I and the half of the rulers with me*—And Ezra and the other half with him, as appears by comparing this with verses 35, 36. The order wherein they marched in this pompous manner round about the city seems a little obscure ; but the sense of the whole description is this : that they being met together in the same place, half of the rulers went upon the wall on the right hand, accompanied with several priests and Levites, and Ezra the scribe at the head of them, verse 36 ; and the other half took the left hand, and walked upon the wall in the same order, accompanied with Nehemiah, who brought up the rear of them, verse 38. And, at length, both parts of this chorus met in the temple, and there they stood still and completed

gave thanks in the house of God, and A. M. 3559.
I, and the half of the rulers with me : B. C. 445.

41 And the priests ; Eliakim, Maaseiah, Miniamin, Michaiiah, Elioenai, Zechariah, and Hananiah, with trumpets ;

42 And Maaseiah, and Shemaiah, and Eleazar, and Uzzi, and Jehohanan, and Malchijah, and Elam, and Ezer. And the singers ¹¹ sang loud, with Jezrahiah *their* overseer.

43 Also that day they offered great sacrifices, and rejoiced : for God had made them rejoice with great joy : the wives also and the children rejoiced : so that the joy of Jerusalem was heard even afar off.

44 ¶ ^f And at that time were some appointed over the chambers for the treasures, for the offerings, for the first-fruits, and for the tithes, to gather into them out of the fields of the cities the portions ¹² of the law for the priests and Levites : ¹³ for Judah rejoiced for the priests and for the Levites ¹⁴ that waited.

45 And both the singers and the porters kept the ward of their God, and the ward of the pu-

^b Chap. iii. 3.—^c Chap. iii. 1.—^d Chap. iii. 32.—^e Jer. xxxii. 2.—^f Heb. made their voice to be heard.—^g 2 Chron. xiii. 11 ; Chapter xiii. 5, 12.—^h That is, appointed by the law. ⁱ Heb. for the joy of Judah.—^j Heb. that stood.

their praises and thanksgivings, and offered sacrifices, as mentioned verse 43.

Verse 43. *For God had made them rejoice with great joy*—By restoring the holy city to such a secure condition, that they could praise the Lord there without disturbance or fear. *And the children rejoiced*—And their hosannas were not despised, but are recorded to their praise. All that share in public mercies ought to join in public thanksgivings. *So that the joy of Jerusalem was heard even far off*—Either their loud voices and instruments were heard at a great distance, or the fame of it was spread far and near.

Verse 44. *For the offerings*—Such as they had lately engaged themselves to give, or other voluntary or prescribed offerings. *To gather out of the fields the portions of the law*—That is, the aforesaid first-fruits and tithes, and other things, which God, by his law, appointed for them. *For Judah rejoiced for the priests, &c.*—For the eminent gifts and graces which they observed in many of them ; for the great benefit which they had now received by their ministry ; and for the competent provision which hereby was made for them, that so they might wholly wait upon their office. The sure way for ministers to gain an interest in the affections of their people is, to wait on *their ministry*, to spend their whole time, and thought, and strength therein.

Verse 45. *Both the singers and the porters kept the ward of their God*—That ward or charge which God had prescribed them. And, in particular, the

A. M. 3559. rification, ^a according to the com-
B. C. 445. mandment of David, *and* of Solomon
his son.

46 For in the days of David ^b and Asaph of
old *there were* chief of the singers, and songs
of praise and thanksgiving unto God.

^a 1 Chron. xxv. ; xxvi.—^b 1 Chron. xxv. 1, &c. ; 2 Chron.
xxix. 30.

charge of purification, of taking care that no unclean person or thing should enter into the house or courts of the Lord. Or, the meaning may be, the singers sung orderly in their courses, as they were appointed, and thereby *kept the ward of their God*; and the porters kept the ward of the purification, that is, duly observed the orders about it, in preventing the temple from being defiled by any unclean person or thing. *According to the commandment of David and of Solomon his son*—Who had regulated all things belonging to the duty of these persons.

Verse 46. *For in the days of David, &c.*—This verse gives the reason why the Levites and the singers performed their duty so accurately; because,

47 And all Israel in the days of Ze- A. M. 3559.
rubbabel, and in the days of Nehemiah, B. C. 445.
gave the portions of the singers and the porters,
every day his portion : ¹ and they ¹⁵ sanctified
holy things unto the Levites ; ^k and the Levites
sanctified *them* unto the children of Aaron.

¹ Num. xviii. 21, 24.—¹⁵ That is, *set apart*.—^k Num.
xviii. 26.

from the time of David, who constituted their orders and offices, there were overseers appointed, who presided over them, and were careful both to instruct them in their duty, and keep them to it.

Verse 47. *They sanctified holy things unto the Levites*—They set apart the first-fruits and tithes from their own share, and devoted them to the use of the Levites. And so did the Levites by the tithes of tithes. Thus they all conscientiously paid their dues, and did not profane those things which God had sanctified, nor take them unto their own common use. When what is contributed for the support of religion is given with an eye to God, it is sanctified, and will *cause the blessing to rest upon the house*, and all that is therein

CHAPTER XIII.

The Israelites are separated from the mixed multitude, 1-3. Nehemiah cleanses the chambers of the temple, 4-9. He recovers and secures the portion of the priests and Levites, 10-14. Contends with the nobles concerning the sabbath, and takes care for the due observance of it, 15-22. Restrains them from marrying strange wives, 23-31.

A. M. 3559. ON that day ^a they ¹ read in the
B. C. 445. book of Moses in the ² audience
of the people ; and therein was found written,
^b that the Ammonite and the Moabite should
not come into the congregation of God for ever ;

^a Deut. xxxi. 11 ; 2 Kings xxiii. 2 ; Chap. viii. 3, 8 ; ix. 3 ; Isa.
xxxiv. 16.—¹ Heb. *there was read*.—² Heb. *ears*.

NOTES ON CHAPTER XIII.

Verse 1. *On that day they read in the book of Moses*—Not upon the day of the dedication of the wall and city, but upon a certain day, when Nehemiah was returned from the Persian court to Jerusalem, from which he had been absent for some considerable time, during which some errors and abuses had crept in. After his return, it seems, he continued the public reading of the law at stated times, probably on the great festivals, when all the people met together, (such as those mentioned chap. viii.,) upon some day of which that portion of Scripture was read (Deut. xxiii. 3) which forbids the admission of the Ammonites and Moabites *into the congregation of the Lord*. The meaning of which phrase is, not that they were prohibited from attending divine worship in the court of the Gentiles, and in their synagogues, but from being admitted to the privileges of Jews, and becoming one body with them by intermarriages.

2 Because they met not the children A. M. 3559.
of Israel with bread and with water, B. C. 445.
but ^c hired Balaam against them, that he should
curse them : ^d howbeit, our God turned the curse
into a blessing.

^b Deut. xxiii. 3.—^c Num. xxii. 5 ; Josh. xxiv. 9.—^d Num.
xxiii. 11 ; xxiv. 10 ; Deut. xxiii. 5.

“None of the house of Israel, of either sex, were to enter into marriage with any Gentile, of what nation soever, unless they were first converted to their religion ; and even in that case, some were debarred from it for ever, others only in part, and others again only for a limited time. Of the first sort, were all of the seven nations of the Canaanites. Of the second sort, were the Moabites and the Ammonites, whose males were excluded for ever, but not their females. And of the third sort, were the Edomites and Egyptians, with whom the Jews might not marry till the third generation. But with all others who were not of these three excepted sorts, they might freely make intermarriages, whenever they became thorough proselytes to their religion. At present, however, because, through the confusions which have since happened in all nations, it is not to be known who is an Ammonite, an Edomite, a Moabite, or an Egyptian, they hold this prohibition to have

A. M. 3559. 3 Now it came to pass, when they
B. C. 445. had heard the law, ° that they separated from Israel all the mixed multitude.

4 ¶ And before this, Eliashib the priest, ° having the oversight of the chamber of the house of our God, was allied unto Tobiah :

5 And he had prepared for him a great chamber, † where aforetime they laid the meat-offerings, the frankincense, and the vessels, and the tithes of the corn, the new wine, and the oil, (‡ which § was commanded to be given to the Levites, and the singers, and the porters,) and the offerings of the priests.

6 But in all this time was not I at Jerusalem :

° Chapter ix. 2 ; x. 28.—† Hebrew, being set over, Chapter xii. 44.—‡ Chapter xii. 44.—§ Hebrew, the commandment of the Levites.

been long out of date, and that now any Gentile, as soon as proselyted to their religion, may immediately be admitted to make intermarriages with them." See Dodd, and Prid. Con., Ann. 428.

Verse 3. *They separated from Israel all the mixed multitude*—All the Ammonites, Moabites, and other heathenish people, with whom they had contracted alliances. All these were cast out from the congregation of Israel, together with the children born of them ; that is, they would not look upon them as Israelites, or as entitled to the same privileges with themselves.

Verse 4. *And before this*—That is, before this separation was made ; *Eliashib the priest*—The high-priest, (chap. iii. 1,) or some other priest so called, there being divers persons of this name in or about this time, though the first seems most probable ; *having the oversight of the chamber*—Of the chambers, (verse 9,) the high-priest having the chief power over the house of God, and all the chambers belonging to it ; *was allied unto Tobiah*—The Ammonite, and a violent enemy to God's people. He had suffered his grandson to marry Sanballat's daughter, who was the fast friend of Tobiah, and the great enemy of the Jews. This is mentioned as a great blot on Eliashib's character, and the cause of his other miscarriages, noticed verse 5. We read also in Ezra x. 18, that several of the priests had married strange wives ; and, among the rest, some of the sons of the high-priest.

Verse 5. *He had prepared for him a great chamber*—By breaking down the partitions, it is probable, between several little chambers, where holy things were laid, and by removing the things which were in them, he had prepared one large room for Tobiah's reception, when he came to Jerusalem. This, no doubt, he had furnished for his use, and here Tobiah lodged, in order that he and the high-priest might have more free and secret communication with each other, this being a place where the people might not come.

h for in the two and thirtieth year of A. M. 3559. Artaxerxes king of Babylon came I B. C. 445. unto the king, and ° after certain days ° obtained I leave of the king :

7 And I came to Jerusalem, and understood of the evil that Eliashib did for Tobiah, in † preparing him a chamber in the courts of the house of God.

8 And it grieved me sore : therefore I cast forth all the household-stuff of Tobiah out of the chamber.

9 Then I commanded, and they † cleansed the chambers : and thither brought I again the vessels of the house of God, with the meat-offering and the frankincense.

h Num. xviii. 21, 24.—† Chap. v. 14.—° Heb. at the end of days.—° Or, I earnestly requested.—† Ver. 1, 5.—‡ 2 Chron. xxix. 5, 15, 18.

Verse 6. *But in all this time was I not at Jerusalem*—Which gave Eliashib the opportunity of doing these things ; for unless Nehemiah had been absent, he durst not have done them. *For in the two and thirtieth year of Artaxerxes, came I unto the king*—Namely, from Jerusalem, where he had been once and again ; *and after certain days obtained I leave of the king*—To return to Jerusalem. In the Hebrew it is, *At the end of days* ; that is, at the year's end : for so the word יָמִים, *jamim*, (days,) often signifies in Scripture.

Verse 7. *The evil Eliashib did in preparing him a chamber*—"Tobiah had insinuated himself into the good opinion of many of the people, and especially those of note, by his making two alliances with families of this sort : for Johanan his son had married the daughter of Meshullam, the son of Berechiah, (chap. vi. 18, and iii. 4,) who was one of the chief managers of the building of the wall of Jerusalem, and he himself had married the daughter of Shechaniah, another great man among the Jews. By these means he had formed an interest, and was looked upon as a worthy man, though, being an Ammonite, he could not but bear a national hatred to all that were of the race of Israel." See Prideaux, An. 425.

Verse 8. *It grieved me sore*—That so sacred a place should be polluted by one who, on many accounts, ought not to have come there, being no priest, a stranger, an Ammonite, and one of the worst of that people ; and that all this should be done by the permission and order of the high-priest.

Verse 9. *Then I commanded, and they cleansed the chambers*—Which had been thus profaned, and restored them to their former sanctity, by the water of purification, and such other means and rites as were then usual in such cases. *And thither brought I again the vessels of the house of God*—Which had been cast out to make room for Tobiah. Thus when sin is cast out of the heart by repentance, and faith in the blood of Christ, let it be furnished with the

A. M. 3559. 10 ¶ And I perceived that the portions of the Levites had ¹ not been given *them*: for the Levites and the singers, that did the work, were fled every one to ² his field.

11 Then ³ contended I with the rulers, and said, ⁴ Why is the house of God forsaken? And I gathered them together, and set them in their ⁵ place.

12 ¶ Then brought all Judah the tithe of the corn, and the new wine, and the oil, unto the ⁶ treasuries.

¹ Mal. iii. 8.—² Num. xxxv. 2.—³ Verses 17, 25; Prov. xxviii. 4.—⁴ Chap. x. 39.—⁵ Heb. *standing*.—⁶ Chap. x. 38, 39; xii. 44.—⁷ Or, *storehouses*.—⁸ Chapter xii. 44; 2 Chron.

graces of God's Spirit, and such holy gifts and blessings as will thoroughly fit it for every good work.

Verse 10. *The portion of the Levites had not been given them*—Which might be, either, 1st, Through this corrupt high-priest, Eliashib, who took their portions, as he did the sacred chambers, to his own use, or employed them for the entertainment of Tobiah, and his other great allies: or, 2d, Through the people, who either out of covetousness reserved them to themselves, contrary to their own solemn agreement, or were so offended at Eliashib's horrid abuse of sacred things, that they abhorred the offering and service of God, and therefore neglected to bring in their tithes, which they knew would be perverted to bad uses. *For the Levites, &c., were fled*—To their possessions in the country, being forced to do so for a livelihood.

Verse 11. *Then contended I with the rulers*—I sharply reproved those priests to whom the management of those things was committed, for the neglect of their duty, and breach of their late solemn promise. *Why is the house of God forsaken?*—So that there are few or no Levites or priests to attend there. You have not only injured men, in withholding their dues, but you have occasioned the neglect of God's house and service, inasmuch that little or no public worship is maintained. *And I gathered them together*—To Jerusalem, from their several country possessions. *And set them in their place*—Restored them to the exercise of their office. "A Levite in his field," says Henry, "is out of his station: God's house is his place, and there let him be found. *Say to Archippus, Take heed to thy ministry.*"

Verse 12. *Then brought all Judah the tithe, &c.*—Out of the respect which they had to Nehemiah, and because they saw these tithes would now be applied to their proper uses. The people (as Conradus Pellicanus here observes) readily obey, if the magistrates and the priests be not remiss in their duty. As soon as the people saw the Levites at their work, they could not, for shame, withhold their wages any longer, but honestly and cheerfully brought them in. "The better church-work is done, the better will church-dues be paid."—Henry.

Verse 13. *For they were counted faithful*—By the consent of those who knew them. They had ap-

13 ¶ And I made treasurers over the A. M. 3559. treasuries, Shelemiah the priest, and B. C. 445. Zadok the scribe; and of the Levites, Pedaijah: and ⁹ next to them was Hanan the son of Zaccur, the son of Mattaniah: for they were counted ¹⁰ faithful; and ¹¹ their office was to distribute unto their brethren.

14 ¶ Remember me, O my God, concerning this, and wipe not out my ¹² good deeds that I have done for the house of my God, and for the ¹³ offices thereof.

xxi. 12.—⁹ Heb. *at their hand*.—¹⁰ Chap. vii. 2; 1 Cor. iv. 2. ¹¹ Hebrew, it was *upon them*.—¹² Verses 22, 31; Chapter v. 19. ¹³ Heb. *kindnesses*.—¹⁴ Or, *observations*.

proved themselves faithful in other trusts committed to them, and so had *purchased to themselves this good degree*, 1 Tim. iii. 13. Men should be tried first, and then trusted; tried in the *less*, and then trusted with *more*. The office of these treasurers was to receive and pay; to distribute to their brethren in due season, and due proportions. And Nehemiah sought out for faithful men the more diligently, because he had had experience of the perfidiousness of the former trustees.

Verse 14. *Remember me, O my God, concerning this*—What I have done with an upright heart for thy house and service, be pleased graciously to accept, and remember for my good, according to thy promise. Nehemiah receiving no recompense, perhaps not even thanks, from those for whose benefit he did these things, he looks up to God as his paymaster, and refers himself and his actions to his consideration; not in pride, or as boasting of what he had done, much less depending upon it as his righteousness, or as if he thought he had made God his debtor, but in a humble appeal to him concerning his integrity and pure intention in all this service, and a believing expectation that God would *not be unrighteous to forget his work and labour of love*. *And wipe not out my good deeds that I have done for the house of my God, &c.*—Deeds done for the house of God, and the offices thereof, for the support of religion, and the encouragement of it, are good deeds; there is both righteousness and godliness in them; both mercy to men, and piety toward God; and God will certainly remember them, and not wipe them out. They shall in nowise lose their reward. Here again we find, (see chap. v. 19,) that Nehemiah was employed much in pious ejaculations; and on every occasion looked up to God, and committed himself and his affairs to him. He here reflects with comfort upon what he had done for the house and service of God, and it afforded him much satisfaction to think that he had been any way instrumental to revive and support religion in his country, and to reform what was amiss. In like manner the kindness which any show to God's ministers and people, and the care and labour they take to aid his cause, shall be returned into their own bosoms, in the secret joy they shall have there, not only through a conscio-

A. M. 3559. 15 ¶ In those days saw I in Judah
B. C. 445.

some treading wine-presses ' on the sabbath, and bringing in sheaves, and lading asses; as also wine, grapes, and figs, and all manner of burdens, " which they brought into Jerusalem on the sabbath day: and I testified against them in the day wherein they sold victuals.

16 There dwelt men of Tyre also therein, which brought fish, and all manner of ware, and sold on the sabbath unto the children of Judah, and in Jerusalem.

17 * Then I contended with the nobles of Judah, and said unto them, What evil thing is this that ye do, and profane the sabbath day?

18 † Did not your fathers thus, and did not our God bring all this evil upon us, and upon

* Exod. xx. 10.—† Jer. xvii. 21; Chap. x. 31.—‡ Verse 11.
‡ Jer. xvii. 21, 23.

ness of having done well, but of having glorified God, and done good of the best kind, spiritual good, to the souls of men.

Verses 15, 16. *I testified against them*—I protested against the action, and admonished them to forbear it. *Men of Tyre brought fish, and sold on the sabbath in Jerusalem*—The holy city, where God's house was; and where the great judicatories of the nation were. So this is added as an aggravation of their sin, that it was done with manifest contempt of God and men.

Verse 17. *Then I contended with the nobles*—Their chief men and rulers; whom he charges with this sin, because, though others committed it, it was done by their countenance or connivance, probably by their example: and if these nobles had exercised their authority, the people durst not have done as they did. If magistrates, nobles, and people in the higher ranks of life, allow themselves in recreations, in idle visits and idle talk on the sabbath day, men of business will profane it by their worldly employments, as the more justifiable practice of the two.

Verses 18, 19. *Did not your fathers thus?*—He bids them reflect, and consider that this was one of the crimes of which their fathers were guilty; and for which God had suffered them to be carried captive out of their land, and their city to be destroyed. *Did not God bring all this evil upon us?*—Which you so well and sadly remember, that I need not tell you the particulars. *When the gates began to be dark*—Which was about sun-setting, by reason of the mountains which were round about and near Jerusalem: at which time they who sat at the gates could no longer see to do any thing. *I commanded that the gates should be shut*—In order that none who came to sell goods might enter in, and that no burden might be brought in on the sabbath day, or late in the evening before it, or early in the morning

this city? yet ye bring more wrath upon Israel by profaning the sabbath. A. M. 3559.
B. C. 445.

19 And it came to pass, that, when the gates of Jerusalem * began to be dark before the sabbath, I commanded that the gates should be shut, and charged that they should not be opened till after the sabbath: † and some of my servants set I at the gates, that there should no burden be brought in on the sabbath day.

20 So the merchants and sellers of all kind of ware lodged without Jerusalem once or twice.

21 Then I testified against them, and said unto them, Why lodge ye † about the wall? if ye do so again, I will lay hands on you. From that time forth came they no more on the sabbath.

22 And I commanded the Levites, that

* Leviticus xxiii. 32.—† Jer. xvii. 21.—‡ Hebrew, before the wall?

after. *And some of my servants set I at the gates*—Out of a diffidence in those to whom the keeping of the gates had been committed.

Verses 20, 21. *The merchants, &c., lodged without Jerusalem*—In the open field, (as appears by the next verse,) where, perhaps, they pitched their tents, and opened their packs, hoping to sell their wares on the sabbath day to the country people, though they could not get admittance into Jerusalem. *Then I testified against them, and said, I will lay hands on you*—I will punish you and seize your goods. For this was a temptation to covetous or needy Jews, that lived in or near the city, to steal opportunities of buying their commodities, which then they might do with more advantage. *From that time forth came they no more on the sabbath*—Such power have good magistrates; especially when they are resolute. And it is very observable, that these traffickers, being men of other nations, were not bound by the law of the sabbath enjoined to the Jews, and did not transgress in breaking it; yet he would not permit them to make the Jews, who were under the obligation of it, to break it; and thereby trouble the commonwealth of Israel, by drawing the people into sin. It is also observable, that though buying and selling was not a servile work, yet he thought this to be comprehended in those words, *Thou shalt do no manner of work*.

Verse 22. *I commanded the Levites that they should cleanse themselves*—Because the work they now were set upon, though common in its nature, yet was holy in the design of it, and had respect unto the sabbath: and, because the day in which they were to do this was the sabbath day, for the observation whereof they were obliged to purify themselves; that they should come and keep the gates—The gates of the city: not daring to trust the common porters, and thinking that the Levites, by virtue of their character, would be more revered, and

A. M. 3559. ^b they should cleanse themselves, and
B. C. 445. *that* they should come *and* keep the
gates, to sanctify the sabbath day. ^c Remem-
ber me, O my God, *concerning* this also, and
spare me according to the ¹⁴ greatness of thy
mercy.

B. C. 434. 23 ¶ In those days also saw I Jews
that ¹⁵ had ^d married wives of Ashdod,
of Ammon, *and* of Moab :

24 And their children spake half in the
speech of Ashdod, and ¹⁶ could not speak in the
Jews' language, but according to the language
¹⁷ of each people.

^b Chapter xiii. 30.—^c Verses 14, 31.—¹⁴ Or, *multitude*.
¹⁵ Heb. *had made to dwell with them*.—^d Ezra ix. 2.—¹⁶ Heb.
they discerned not to speak.—¹⁷ Heb. *of people and people*.

meet with more deference and respect than his domestic servants, he therefore appointed them to this office of keeping the gates on the sabbath, that all traffic might be prevented, and the day not fail to be sanctified, as it ought to be. *O my God, spare me according to the greatness of thy mercy*—By this he intimates, that though he mentioned his good works as things wherewith God was well pleased, and which he had promised to reward, yet he neither did, nor durst, trust to their merit, or his own worthiness, but, when he had done all, he judged himself an unprofitable servant, and one that needed God's infinite mercy to pardon all his sins, and particularly those infirmities and corruptions which adhered to his good deeds.

Verse 23. *Also saw I Jews that had married wives of Ashdod*—A city of the Philistines; *of Ammon and of Moab*—They had married strangers, though not long before they had most solemnly promised not to do so, chap. x. 30. So hard a thing it is perfectly to root out tares, which will be continually springing up again.

Verse 24. *And their children spake half in the speech of Ashdod, &c.*—What the natural language of the Jews at this time was, whether Hebrew or Chaldee, is matter of some inquiry among the learned. Those who suppose it was Hebrew, produce the books of Nehemiah, Ezra, and Esther, besides the prophecies of Daniel, which, for the most part, were written in Hebrew, and which they suppose the authors of them would not have composed in that language, if at that time it had not been the vulgar language. But to this it is replied, that the Jewish authors might make use of the Hebrew language in what they wrote, not only because the things which they recorded concerned the Jewish nation only, among whom there were learned men enough to explain them; but, chiefly, because they were inclined to conceal what they wrote from the Chaldeans, who at that time were their lords and masters, and, considering all circumstances, might not, perhaps, have been so well pleased with them, had they understood the contents of their writings. Since it appears then,

25 And I ^e contended with them, A. M. 3570.
and ¹⁸ cursed them, and smote certain ^f
B. C. 434.
of them, and plucked off their hair, and made
them ^f swear by God, *saying*, Ye shall not
give your daughters unto their sons, nor
take their daughters unto your sons, or for
yourselves.

26 ^g Did not Solomon king of Israel sin by
these things? yet ^h among many nations was
there no king like him, ⁱ who was beloved of his
God, and God made him king over all Israel :
^k nevertheless even him did outlandish women
cause to sin.

^e Verse 11; Prov. xxviii. 4.—¹⁸ Or, *reviled them*.—^f Ezra
x. 5; Chap. x. 29, 30.—^g 1 Kings xi. 1, &c.—^h 1 Kings iii
13; 2 Chron. i. 12.—ⁱ 2 Sam. xii. 24.—^k 1 Kings xi. 4, &c.

say they, by several words recurring in the book of Maccabees, the New Testament, and Josephus, that the language which the Jews then spoke was Chaldee, that this language they learned in their captivity, and after their return never assumed their ancient Hebrew tongue so as to speak it vulgarly; it must hence follow, that what is here termed *the language of the Jews*, was at that time no other than the Chaldee, for the ancient Hebrew was only preserved among the learned. See Le Clerc and Dodd.

Verse 25. *And I contended with them, &c.*—These words, it must be acknowledged as proceeding from Nehemiah's own mouth, sound somewhat harshly in our translation; but the meaning of them seems to be only as follows: *I contended with them*—That is, I expostulated the matter with them; *I cursed them*—That is, excommunicated them, and cast them out of the society of God's people; in the doing of which, I denounced God's judgments against them; *I smote certain of them*—That is, I ordered the officers to beat some of the most notorious offenders with rods or scourges, according to the law, Deut. xxv. 2; *and I plucked off their hair*—That is, I commanded them to be shaved, thereby to put them to shame, and to make them look like vile slaves; for as the hair was esteemed a great ornament among the eastern nations, so baldness was accounted a great disgrace. And Nehemiah had a sufficient provocation to inflict these several punishments upon them, because, in their marrying with heathen nations, they had acted contrary, not only to the express law of God, but to their own late solemn covenant and promise. See Poole and Dodd.

Verse 26. *Did not Solomon sin by these things?*—He quotes a precedent to show the pernicious consequences of their conduct, which were such as rendered it necessary that their sin should be animadverted upon by the government. The falls of great and good men are therefore recorded, that we may take warning by them to shun the temptations by which they were overcome. Solomon was famous for wisdom; yet, when he married strange

A. M. 3570. 27 Shall we then hearken unto
B. C. 434.

you to do all this great evil, to
¹ transgress against our God in marrying strange
wives?

28 And *one* of the sons ^m of Joiada, the son
of Eliashib the high-priest, *was* son-in-law to
Sanballat the Horonite: therefore I chased him
from me.

29 ⁿ Remember them, O my God, ¹⁹ because

¹ Ezra x. 2.—^m Chap. xii. 10, 22.—ⁿ Chap. vi. 14.—¹⁹ Heb.
for the defilings.

wives, his wisdom could not secure him from the
snares of such connections: nay, it departed from
him, and he acted very foolishly as well as wickedly.
He was beloved of God, but his conduct, in that
particular, threw him out of God's favour, and went
near entirely to extinguish the grace of God in his
soul. He was king over Israel, but that lost his
house ten of the twelve tribes. You plead that you
can marry strange wives, and yet retain the purity
of Israelites; but Solomon himself could not; even
him did *outlandish women cause to sin*—Therefore
let him that *assuredly standeth, take heed lest he
fall*, when he runs upon such a precipice.

Verses 27, 28. *Shall we then hearken unto you to do
all this great evil?*—That is, would you have me to
connive at this wickedness, and so bring guilt upon
myself, and ruin upon you? *And one of the sons of
Joiada, the son of Eliashib, &c.*—It is supposed
Eliashib died before Nehemiah returned from Per-
sia, and that Joiada his son succeeded him as high-
priest, one of whose sons had offended in this matter.
Was son-in-law to Sanballat the Horonite—He is
said by Josephus to have been that Manasseh who,
by Sanballat's interest, procured liberty to build the
Samaritan temple on mount Gerizim; to which
those priests who had married strange wives, or
been otherwise criminal, betook themselves: and,
with or after them, others of the people in the same
or like circumstances. *Therefore I chased him
from me*—From my presence and court, from the
city and temple, and from the congregation and
church of Israel.

Verse 29. *Remember them, O my God*—Con-
vince them of sin, and bring them to repentance;
put them in mind of what they should be and do,

they have defiled the priesthood, and ^o the covenant of the priesthood, and ^p of the Levites.

30 ^r Thus cleansed I them from all strangers,
and ^s appointed the wards of the priests and the
Levites, every one in his business;

31 And for ^t the wood-offering, at times ap-
pointed, and for the first-fruits. ^u Remember me,
O my God, for good.

^o Malachi ii. 4, 11.—^p Chapter x. 30.—^q Chapter xii. 1, &c.
^r Chap. x. 34.—^s Verses 14, 22.

that they may come to themselves. Or, remember
them to reckon with them for it, and punish them
according to their deserts. If we consider the
words in this light, the prayer is a prediction that
God would remember it against them. *Because
they have defiled the priesthood*—God required
greater purity in the priests than in other Israelites,
and in the high-priest especially, who might marry
none but a virgin of his own people, Lev. xxi. 6-14;
*and the covenant of the priesthood, and of the Le-
vites*—There was a covenant with Phinehas (Num.
xxv.) of an everlasting priesthood, which they had
violated, because the covenant was mutual, binding
them to observe the laws of the priesthood, as God
engaged himself to preserve them in their office.
What covenant was made with the Levites does not
appear, but it is likely the meaning is, they dishon-
oured the whole tribe of Levi, who were set apart
for divine ministries.

Verse 30. *Thus cleansed I them from all stran-
gers*—That is, both priests and Levites were se-
parated from their strange wives: *and appointed
the wards of the priests, &c.*—To observe their
courses of attendance at the house of God, and
every one to perform there that business which was
proper to him.

Verse 31. *Remember me, O my God, for good*—
The best services done to the public, have sometimes
been forgotten by those for whom they were done,
Eccl. ix. 15; therefore Nehemiah refers himself to
God to be recompensed by him, and then doubts not
but he shall be well paid. This may well be the
summary of our petitions: we need no more to make
us happy but this, *Remember me, O my God, for
good.*

THE
BOOK OF ESTHER.

ARGUMENT.

It is uncertain (says Dr. Dodd) who was the author of this book. Some ascribe it to Ezra, others to Mordecai, (see chap. ix. 20, 23,) and others to the joint labours of the great synagogue; who, from the time of Ezra to Simon the Just, superintended the edition and canon of Scripture. That the book is genuine, whoever was the author, appears from the institution and continued observation of the annual festival of Purim, (see chap. ix.) since it is not to be conceived that a wise nation should at first appoint, and afterward continue the celebration of, this solemn time of feasting and rejoicing every year, merely because a certain man among them had once the good fortune to write an agreeable romance; much less can we conceive, from what motive a whole assembly of learned doctors should receive a writing of no better character into the canon of their Scriptures; or, to make it of more universal use, should honour it with a Greek translation. The book contains the narrative of a plot to cut off all the Jews; disappointed by a wonderful concurrence of providences: or, more particularly, it is the history of Esther, a Jewish captive, who, for her remarkable beauty, was espoused to Ahasuerus and raised to the throne of Persia, and, by her extraordinary interest with the king, rescued the Jewish nation from a general massacre, to which they were appointed by Haman, one of the king's favourites, in memory of which the feast of Purim was appointed. This sacred record, therefore, shows us the peculiar care of God over those Israelites who were still scattered abroad among the heathen; and, indeed, also manifests that the eye of a watchful providence is constantly superintending all nations, by which the aspirings of the greatest men are often curbed and broken, wicked designs blasted, piety and virtue protected, and God declared to be the Almighty Defender of good men, and of the true religion, in all ages and generations. It is remarkable that the name of God is not found in this book; but the finger of God is, directing so many minute events for the deliverance of his people; the particulars of which are calculated to give them very great encouragement in the most difficult and dangerous times. Here we are told how Esther came to be queen, and Mordecai to be great at court, chap. i., ii.; how Haman obtained an order for the destruction of the Jews, chap. iii.; the distress of the Jews thereupon, chap. iv.; the defeat of Haman's plot against Mordecai, chap. v.-vii.; the defeating of his plot against the Jews, chap. viii.; the care taken to perpetuate the memory of this, chap. ix., x. That this history fell out after the captivity of Babylon was ended, and after the time of Darius the Mede, is very evident: for Shushan was not the royal city of the Medes, but of the Persians. Nor had the Medes so large a dominion as from India to Ethiopia. But in what reign of the Persian kings these things were done is hard to determine.

CHAPTER I.

Ahasuerus feasts his great men, 1-9. Sends for his queen, who refuses to come, 10, 11. He divorces her, 12-22.

A. M. 3483. **N**OW it came to pass in the days of ^a Ahasuerus, (this is Ahasuerus which reigned ^b from India A. M. 3483. even unto Ethiopia, ^c over a hun- B. C. 521.

^a Ezra iv. 6; Dan. ix. 1.

^b Chap. viii. 9.—^c Dan. vi. 1.

NOTES ON CHAPTER I.

Verse 1. *In the days of Ahasuerus*—Many suppose this king to have been Darius Hystaspes, for his kingdom was thus vast, and he subdued India, as Herodotus reports: and one of his wives was called Atossa, differing little from Hadassah, which is

Esther's other name, chap. ii. 7. But the most likely opinion, and that which is approved by Josephus, the Septuagint, and the apocryphal additions to the book of Esther, is, that this Ahasuerus of the Scripture was Artaxerxes Longimanus, as he is called by the heathen writers. One thing is certain,

A. M. 3483. dred and seven and twenty provin-
B. C. 521. ces:)

2 *That* in those days, when the king Ahasuerus ^d sat on the throne of his kingdom, which *was* in ^e Shushan the palace,

B. C. 519. 3 In the third year of his reign, he ^f made a feast unto all his princes and his servants; the power of Persia and Media, the nobles and princes of the provinces, *being* before him:

4 When he showed the riches of his glorious kingdom and the honour of his excellent majesty many days, *even* a hundred and four-score days.

5 And when these days were expired, the king made a feast unto all the people that were ^g present in Shushan the palace, both unto great

^d 1 Kings i. 46.—^e Neh. i. 1.—^f Gen. xl. 20; Chap. ii. 18; Mark. vi. 21.—^g Heb. found.—^h Or, violet.—ⁱ Chap. vii. 8; Ezek. xxiii. 41; Amos ii. 8; vi. 4.

that he was one of the Persian kings, and a successor of Cyrus the Great, for there was no such large empire in those parts, under one king, before Cyrus's time.

Verse 2. *When Ahasuerus sat on the throne of his kingdom*—Was settled in the quiet possession of it, enjoying peace and tranquillity throughout his large dominions; *which was in Shushan the palace*—"Which, after the conquest of the Medes, was made by Cyrus, and the rest of the Persian kings, the royal seat, that they might not be too far from Babylon. It stood upon the river Ulai, and was a place of such renown, that Strabo calls it, "a city most worthy to be praised," informing us, that the whole country about it was amazingly fruitful, producing a hundred and sometimes two hundred fold. Darius Hystaspes enlarged and beautified it with a most magnificent palace, which Aristotle calls "a wonderful royal palace, shining with gold, amber, and ivory."—Dodd. See Prie-deaux, and Calmet's *Dict. on the word Shushan*.

Verse 3. *Made a feast unto all his princes and his servants*—By his servants are meant his subjects, who were called servants in the eastern countries. And it was the manner of the Roman emperors, sometimes to feast all the people of Rome, as well as the senate. *The power of Persia and Media*—The mighty men, the chief officers of state, and commanders of all his forces; whom, by this splendid entertainment, he endeavoured to oblige, and assure to himself. What the occasion of this feast was, is variously conjectured. Some think it was begun on his birth-day; but the next words seem to inform us, that it was to show his magnificent greatness to all his subjects; for in those countries they delighted much in making great feasts, as we read afterward that Alexander, when he was there, entertained four hundred captains, or great commanders, who all sat in silver chairs, &c.

and small, seven days in the court of ^{A. M. 3485.}
the garden of the king's palace; ^{B. C. 519.}

6 *Where were* white, green, and ² blue *hangings*, fastened with cords of fine linen and purple to silver rings and pillars of marble: ³ the beds *were* of gold and silver, upon a pavement ³ of red, and blue, and white, and black marble.

7 And they gave *them* drink in vessels of gold, (the vessels being diverse one from another,) and ⁴ royal wine in abundance, ⁵ according to the state of the king.

8 And the drinking *was* according to the law; none did compel: for so the king had appointed to all the officers of his house, that they should do according to every man's pleasure.

² Or, of porphyry, and marble, and alabaster, and stone of blue colour.—³ Heb. wine of the kingdom.—⁴ Heb. according to the hand of the king.

Verse 4. *Many days, even a hundred and four-score days*—Making every day a magnificent feast either for all his princes, or for some of them, who might come to the feast successively, as the king ordered them to do. The Persian feasts are much celebrated in authors for their length and luxury.

Verse 5. *Made a feast unto all the people in Shushan*—Not only to the inhabitants of Shushan, but to all that were then present in the city out of all parts of his dominions. *In the court of the garden of the king's palace*—In the entrance of the royal palace. The Persian gardens were exceedingly large and pleasant.

Verse 6. *Where were white, green, and blue hangings*—Set up like tents. *The beds were of gold and silver*—On which they sat, or rather lay, at their meat. The beds themselves, it is probable, were of the softest wool; but the bedsteads were of gold and silver, that is, studded with gold and silver, or overlaid with plates of them, as the fashion then was. *Upon a pavement of red, and blue, and white, and black marble*—The Hebrew words *babat* and *shesh*, and *dar*, and *sochereth*, signify several sorts of marble, as Bochart hath proved beyond contradiction.

Verse 8. *The drinking was according to the law*—The Persians were at first, before they came to have such a great dominion, sober and temperate; but afterward they fell into the manner and luxury of the Medes and Lydians, and excited one another at their feasts to drinking. But upon this occasion the king ordered that there should be nothing of this sort, but every one should drink what he chose, without being challenged to go further, which was agreeable to some ancient law of the Persians, that none should compel another to drink more than he pleased. How does this heathen prince shame many that are called Christians, who think they do not make their friends

A. M. 3495. 9 Also Vashti the queen made a
B. C. 519. feast for the women *in* the royal
house which *belonged* to King Ahasuerus.

10 ¶ On the seventh day, when ^b the heart
of the king was merry with wine, he com-
manded Mehuman, Biztha, ⁱ Harbona, Bigtha,
and Abagtha, Zethar, and Carcas, the seven
^e chamberlains that served in the presence of
Ahasuerus the king,

11 To bring Vashti the queen before the king
with the crown royal, to show the people and the
princes her beauty: for she *was* ⁷ fair to look on.

12 But the queen Vashti refused to come at
the king's commandment ⁸ by *his* chamberlains:
therefore was the king very wroth, and his
anger burned in him.

13 ¶ Then the king said to the ^k wise men,
^l which knew the times, (for so *was* the king's
manner toward all that knew law and judg-
ment :

14 And the next unto him *was* Carshena,
Shethar, Admatha, Tarshish, Meres, Marsena,
and Memucan, the ^m seven princes of Persia
and Media, ⁿ which saw the king's face, and
which sat the first in the kingdom ;)

15 ⁹ What shall we do unto the queen Vashti

according to law, because she hath ^{A. M. 3495.}
not performed the commandment of ^{B. C. 519.}
the king Ahasuerus by the chamberlains ?

16 And Memucan answered before the king
and the princes, Vashti the queen hath not done
wrong to the king only, but also to all the
princes, and to all the people that *are* in all the
provinces of the king Ahasuerus.

17 For *this* deed of the queen shall come
abroad unto all women, so that they shall
^o despise their husbands in their eyes, when it
shall be reported, The king Ahasuerus com-
manded Vashti the queen to be brought in be-
fore him, but she came not.

18 *Likewise* shall the ladies of Persia and
Media say this day unto all the king's princes,
which have heard of the deed of the queen.
Thus *shall there arise* too much contempt and
wrath.

19 ¹⁰ If it please the king, let there go a royal
commandment ¹¹ from him, and let it be writ-
ten among the laws of the Persians and the
Medes, ¹² that it be not altered, That Vashti
come no more before King Ahasuerus ; and let
the king give her royal estate ¹³ unto another
that is better than she.

^b 2 Sam. xiii. 29. — ⁱ Chap. vii. 9. — ^e Or. eunuchs. — ⁷ Heb. god of countenance. — ⁸ Heb. which was by the hand of his eunuchs. — ^k Jer. x. 7. — Dan. ii. 12 ; Matt. ii. 1. — ^l 1 Chron. xii. 32. — ^m Ezra vii. 14.

⁹ 2 Kings xxv. 19. — ^o Hebrew, What to do. — ¹⁰ Eph. v. 33. — ¹¹ Heb. If it be good with the king. — ¹² Heb. from before him. — ¹³ Heb. that it pass not away, Chap. viii. 8 ; Dan. vi. 8, 12, 15. — ¹⁴ Heb. unto her companion.

welcome, unless they make them drunk ; and, under
pretence of sending the health round, send the sin
round, and death with it !

Verse 9. *Also Vashti the queen made a feast for
the women*—While the king entertained the men.
For this was the common custom of the Persians,
that men and women did not feast together. *In the
royal house*—Not in the open air, as the men were,
but more privately, as was fit for women.

Verse 12. *The queen Vashti refused to come*—
Being favoured in this refusal by the law of Persia,
which was, to keep men's wives, and especially
queens, from the view of other men. *His anger
burned in him*—It was the more immoderate, be-
cause his blood was heated with wine, which made
his passion too strong for his reason. Otherwise
he would not have thought it decent for the queen,
nor safe for himself, to have her beauty, which was
very great, exposed in this unusual manner, and
would have thought she had acted prudently in re-
fusing.

Verse 13. *Which knew the times*—The histories
of former times, what princes had done in such cases
as this was, and were well skilful in the laws and
customs of their country, and were therefore able
to give the king counsel in all extraordinary and

perplexed cases. Inasmuch, however, as the Per-
sian kings did nothing without their magi, or wise
men, who were great pretenders to astrology, some
have supposed that men of this sort were now called
in, to know whether it was a proper time to do
what the king had in his mind.

Verse 14. *Which saw the king's face*—Who had
constant freedom of access to the king, and oppor-
tunities of familiar converse with him ; which is
thus expressed, because the Persian kings were very
seldom seen by their subjects. *Who sat the first in
the kingdom*—Who were his chief counsellors and
officers.

Verse 16. *Vashti the queen hath done wrong to all
the princes, &c.*—By giving their wives an example
and encouragement to contemn and disobey their
husbands. It is a crime of a high nature, and there-
fore deserves an exemplary punishment.

Verse 18. *Thus shall there arise too much con-
tempt and wrath*—Contempt in the wives, and there-
upon wrath in the husbands, and consequently strife
in families, which may produce great and general
mischiefs.

Verse 19. *If it please the king*—Which this cun-
ning politician knew it would do. *That it be not
altered*—Which caution was necessary for his own

A. M. 3485. 20 And when the king's decree
B. C. 519. which he shall make shall be published throughout all his empire, (for it is great,) all the wives shall give to their husbands honour, both to great and small.

21 And the saying¹⁴ pleased the king and the princes; and the king did according to the word of Memucan: A. M. 3485. B. C. 519.

^p Eph. v. 33; Col. iii. 18; 1 Pet. iii. 1. —¹⁴ Heb. was good in the eyes of the king. —^q Chap. viii. 9.

security, lest the king's anger should cool, and the queen should recover her former state, and the king's favour, in which case this lord would, most likely, have fallen under his displeasure: but the order being once registered as a law of the kingdom, the king could not alter his decree without disgracing himself.

Verses 20, 21. *All the wives shall give to their husbands honour, &c.*—None will dare to disobey, when they hear that the greatness of the queen could not preserve her from such a heavy punishment.

22 For he sent letters into all the king's provinces, into every province according to the writing thereof, and to every people after their language, that every man should bear rule in his own house; and that it should be published according to the language of every people.

^r Eph. v. 22, 24; 1 Tim. ii. 12. —¹⁵ Heb. that one should publish it according to the language of his people.

The saying pleased the king and the princes—Partly because their own authority and interest were concerned in it; and especially by the singular providence of God, who designed to bring about his own great work by this small occasion.

Verse 22. *That it should be published according to the language of every people*—That all sorts of persons, not men only, but women also, might understand it, and therefore be inexcusable if they did not comply with it.

CHAPTER II.

The virgins of the kingdom are gathered together, 1-4; and Esther with the rest, 5-8. She finds favour with the king's chamberlain, 9-11. The manner of preparing the virgins, and bringing them to the king, 12-14. Esther pleases him, who makes her queen, 15-20. Mordecai discovers a conspiracy against the king, 21-23.

A. M. 3486. B. C. 518. AFTER these things, when the wrath of King Ahasuerus was appeased, he remembered Vashti, and what she had done, and what was decreed against her.

2 Then said the king's servants that ministered unto him, Let there be fair young virgins sought for the king:

3 And let the king appoint officers in all the provinces of his kingdom, that they may gather together all the fair young virgins unto Shushan the palace, to the house of the women, unto the custody of Hege the king's chamberlain, keeper of the women; and let their things for purification be given them:

^a Chap. i. 19. —¹ Heb. unto the hand. —² Or, Hegai, Verse 8.

NOTES ON CHAPTER II.

Verse 1. *He remembered Vashti*—With grief and shame, that in his wine and rage he had so severely punished, and so irrevocably rejected, so beautiful and desirable a person, and that for so small a provocation, to which she was easily led by the modesty of her sex and by the laws and customs of Persia.

Verses 2, 3. *Then said the king's servants*—Who, for their own interests, were obliged to quiet the king's mind, and procure him another amiable consort. *To the house of the women*—Or rather, of the virgins; for the house of those who were wives or concubines was different from this, and under another governor. *Keeper of the women*—Of all the women, both vir-

gins and concubines: only the virgins he himself took care of, as requiring more care and caution, and the concubines he committed to Shaashgaz, (verse 14,) his deputy. *Things for purification*—That is, to cleanse them from all impurities, to perfume, and adorn, and every way prepare them for the king: for the legal purification of the Jews he never regarded.

4 And let the maiden which pleaseth the king be queen instead of Vashti. And the thing pleased the king; and he did so.

5 ¶ Now in Shushan the palace there was a certain Jew, whose name was Mordecai, the son of Jair, the son of Shimei, the son of Kish, a Benjamite;

6 Who had been carried away from Jerusalem with the captivity which had been carried

^b 2 Kings xxiv. 14; 2 Chron. xxxvi. 10, 20; Jer. xxiv. 1.

gins and concubines: only the virgins he himself took care of, as requiring more care and caution, and the concubines he committed to Shaashgaz, (verse 14,) his deputy. *Things for purification*—That is, to cleanse them from all impurities, to perfume, and adorn, and every way prepare them for the king: for the legal purification of the Jews he never regarded.

Verse 6. *Who had been carried away from Jerusalem*—This may refer either to Kish, Mordecai's grandfather, last mentioned, or to Mordecai himself, which, however, is not probable, as in that case he must have been a very old man, not less than a hundred and forty years of age.

A. M. 3186. away with ³ Jeconiah king of Judah, B. C. 518. whom Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon had carried away.

7 And he ⁴ brought up Hadassah, (that is, Esther,) ⁵ his uncle's daughter: for she had neither father nor mother, and the maid was ⁶ fair and beautiful; whom Mordecai, when her father and mother were dead, took for his own daughter.

8 ¶ So it came to pass, when the king's commandment and his decree was heard, and when many maidens were ⁷ gathered together unto Shushan the palace, to the custody of Hegai, that Esther was brought also unto the king's house, to the custody of Hegai, keeper of the women.

9 And the maiden pleased him, and she obtained kindness of him; and he speedily gave her her ⁸ things for purification, with ⁹ such things as belonged to her, and seven maidens which were meet to be given her, out of the king's house: and ¹⁰ he preferred her and her maids unto the best place of the house of the women.

10 ¹¹ Esther had not showed her people nor her

³ Or, Jehoiachin, 2 Kings xxiv. 6.—⁴ Heb. nourished, Eph. vi. 4.—⁵ Verse 15.—⁶ Heb. fair of form, and good of countenance.

Verses 7, 8. *And he brought up Hadassah, that is, Esther*—Hadassah was her Hebrew name, before her marriage; and she was called Esther by the king after it. *Esther was brought also unto the king's house*—Or taken, and that by force, as the word תִּלְכָּח, *tillakach*, often signifies: for so great was the power and tyranny of the Persian kings, that they could and did take what persons they liked to their own use.

Verse 9. *The maiden pleased him*—Because she was very beautiful, therefore he supposed she would be acceptable to the king; and by the divine power, which moveth the hearts of men which way he pleaseth.

Verse 10. *Mordecai had charged her that she should not show it*—Lest the knowledge hereof should either make her contemptible, or bring some inconvenience to the whole nation: but there was also a hand of God in causing this to be concealed, for the better accomplishment of that which he designed, though Mordecai was ignorant of it. If Mordecai sought or desired that his niece should become either the king's concubine or wife, he certainly acted contrary to the Jewish law, which forbid any marriage or communication of that sort with idolaters; but the circumstances of things, and perhaps the hopes he entertained of being able to do his nation great service thereby, may plead his excuse.

Verse 11. *Mordecai walked every day, &c.*—He might walk there without being suspected, because he belonged to the court, and was a man of some

kindred: for Mordecai had charged ¹² her that she should not show it. A. M. 3186. B. C. 518.

11 And Mordecai walked every day before the court of the women's house, ¹³ to know how Esther did, and what should become of her.

12 ¶ Now when every maid's turn ¹⁴ was come to go in to King Ahasuerus, B. C. 515. after that she had been twelve months, according to the manner of the women, (for so were the days of their purifications accomplished, *to wit*, six months with oil of myrrh, and six months with sweet odours, and with *other* things for the purifying of the women;)

13 Then thus came *every* maiden unto the king; whatsoever she desired was given her to go with her out of the house of the women unto the king's house.

14 In the evening she went, and on the morrow she returned into the second house of the women, to the custody of Shaashgaz, the king's chamberlain, which kept the concubines: she came in unto the king no more, except the king delighted in her, and that she were called by name.

15 ¶ Now when the turn of Esther, ¹⁵ the

¹² Verse 3.—¹³ Verses 3, 12.—¹⁴ Heb. her portions.—¹⁵ Heb. he changed her.—¹⁶ Verse 20.—¹⁷ Hebrew, to know the peace. ¹⁸ Verse 7.

rank; for those that were carried away in Jeconiah's captivity (as his ancestors were, verse 6) were of the better sort, 2 Kings xxiv. 14, &c.; Dan. i. 4. And Esther might find means, by some of those that attended her, to acquaint him with the state of her health and affairs.

Verse 12. *According to the manner of the women*—Who were kept so long, partly for their better purification, as it here follows; partly out of state, as that which became so great a king; and partly that, being so long in safe custody, the king might be sure he was not imposed upon by a child begotten by another man. *Six months with oil of myrrh, and six months with sweet odours*—It is observed by Pliny, lib. 13, cap. 1, that ointments were first invented by the Persians. Oil of myrrh was used, not only on account of its fragrancy, but to make the skin soft and smooth, and to clear it from all manner of scurf; and the sweet odours were necessary, in those hot countries, to take away all ill scents, and, as some think, to enliven and invigorate the constitution.

Verse 13. *Thus came every maiden unto the king*—Thus purified and prepared, and thus furnished and attended, as it follows. *Whatsoever she desired was given her*—For ornament, or by way of attendance. And it should be observed, that every one whom the king took to his bed was his wife of a lower rank, as Hagar was Abraham's; so that it would have been no sin or dishonour to Esther, though she had not been made queen.

Verse 15. *She required nothing*—Not being dest-

A. M. 3499. daughter of Abihail the uncle of Mor-
B. C. 514.

decai, who had taken her for his daughter, was come to go in unto the king, she required nothing but what Hegai the king's chamberlain, the keeper of the women, appointed. And Esther obtained favour in the sight of all them that looked upon her.

16 So Esther was taken unto King Ahasuerus into his house-royal in the tenth month, which is the month Tebeth, in the seventh year of his reign.

17 And the king loved Esther above all the women, and she obtained grace and ⁹ favour ¹⁰ in his sight more than all the virgins; so that he set the royal crown upon her head, and made her queen instead of Vashti.

B. C. 514. 18 Then the king ^b made a great feast unto all his princes and his servants, even Esther's feast; and he made a ¹¹ re-

⁹ Or, kindness. — ¹⁰ Heb. before him. — ^b Chap. i. 3. — ¹¹ Heb. rest. — ¹ Verse 21; Chap. iii. 2.

rous to set herself off with artificial beauty, nor, probably, to please the king; having been brought to the king's house without and against her own inclination and choice. *But what Hegai, the king's chamberlain, appointed*—Being covetous of nothing, she left it entirely to the king's chamberlain to give her what he pleased, which was a mark of a modest and generous temper in her. *And Esther obtained favour of all them that looked upon her*—All that beheld her admired her beauty, which needed no ornament; for the greatest ornaments of virgins are, modesty, silence, well-disciplined eyes, a serene countenance, without levity, and horror of all wantonness; which, all meeting in her, made her agreeable in the eyes of all that saw her.

Verse 16. *So Esther was taken into his house-royal*—She was not sent back unto the second house of the women, as the rest were, but the king kept her in his own house. *In the seventh year of his reign*—How it came to pass that it was so long before Esther was advanced to succeed Vashti, seems difficult to resolve. But we are to consider, that a great deal of time was spent in gathering the virgins together, and that it was a year after they were collected, before she was brought to the king; and besides, he took some time, it is likely, to try how he liked her wit, humour, and conversation.

Verse 18. *And he made a release to the provinces*—According to Herodotus, it was customary for the Persian kings, upon their accession to the throne, to remit the tribute which was due to them from all their cities; and Ahasuerus, on this occasion, out of his abundant joy, remitted some tax, or part of a tax, then due, which he did that every body might rejoice with him.

Verse 19. *When the virgins were gathered together the second time*—They in all probability were

lease to the provinces, and gave gifts, according to the state of the king. A. M. 3490.
B. C. 514.

19 And when the virgins were gathered together the second time, then Mordecai sat ⁱ in the king's gate.

20 ^k Esther had not yet showed her kindred, nor her people, as Mordecai had charged her: for Esther did the commandment of Mordecai, like as when she was brought up with him.

21 ¶ ¹ In those days, while Mordecai sat in the king's gate, two of the king's chamberlains, ¹² Bigthan and Teresh, of those which kept ¹³ the door, were wroth, and sought to lay hand on the king Ahasuerus.

22 And the thing was known to Mordecai, ^m who told it unto Esther the queen; and Esther certified the king *thereof* in Mordecai's name.

23 And when inquisition was made of the

^k Verse 10. — ¹ Esth. xii. 1. — ¹² Or, Bigthana, Chapter vi. 2. — ¹³ Heb. the threshold. — ^m Chap. vi. 2.

gathered together first in the provinces, and afterward in Susa, before they were taken into the house of the king's chamberlain. The writer now goes back to what happened before Esther's marriage. *Then Mordecai sat in the king's gate*—It was ordered by Cyrus, as Xenophon informs us, *Cyropæd.*, lib. 8, that all persons whatever, who had any employment at court, should attend at the palace gate, where there was doubtless a proper waiting-place for their reception, that they might be in readiness whenever they were wanted or called for; and that this custom was afterward continued, we may learn from Herodotus, lib. 3. cap. 120. See Le Clerc. Mordecai has been thought by some to have been one of the porters of the royal palace; but it is probable he was an officer of higher rank. Poole thinks he was one of the king's guard, or ministers, and that he had been advanced to this place by Esther's favour, though without any discovery of her relation to him.

Verse 20. *Esther did the commandment of Mordecai, &c.*—A rare example of virtue, that she should be so observant of him when she was a queen: for most persons forget what they were when they are unexpectedly advanced to great honour, dignity, or riches.

Verse 21. *Two of the king's chamberlains*—“These were two great men, who perhaps kept the door of the king's bed-chamber, and being either incensed at the divorce of Vashti, whose creatures they were, or at the advancement of Esther, who they thought would in all probability raise her kinsman Mordecai above them, took disgust thereat, and so resolved to avenge themselves on the king.”—Dodd. See Prideaux, and chap. vi. 2, 3.

Verse 23. *It was written in the book of the Chronicles*—A day-book, wherein all memorable things

A. M. 3490. matter, it was found out; therefore
B. C. 514. they were both hanged on a tree: and

it was written in ^a the book of the A. M. 3490.
Chronicles before the king. B. C. 514.

^a Chapter

vi. 1.

were recorded. *Before the king*—This may refer either, 1st, To the *writing* of it, signifying that it was written in the king's presence by scribes, who were continually with the king, to record all remarkable things which happened in the court from time to time: or, 2d, To the book, which was laid up before the king, that he might more easily and frequently

peruse it for his own direction or amusement. Here we see the danger and infelicity of the greatest men, the life of a most potent monarch depending upon the fidelity of one single person, whose service was neglected by the court, though a memorial was made of it. Thus all masters of families are obnoxious to the perfidiousness of those that wait upon them.

CHAPTER III.

Haman, offended at Mordecai, resolves to destroy all the Jews, 1-6. He obtains an order from the king to have them all slain on one day, 7-11. This order is sent throughout the kingdom, 12-15.

A. M. 3494. **A**FTER these things did King Ahasuerus promote ^a Haman the son of Hammedatha the ^b Agagite, and advanced him and set his seat above all the princes that were with him.

him. But Mordecai ^d bowed not, nor A. M. 3494.
did *him* reverence. B. C. 510.

2 And all the king's servants that were ^e in the king's gate bowed, and revered Haman; for the king had so commanded concerning

3 Then the king's servants, which were in the king's gate, said unto Mordecai, Why transgressest thou the ^e king's commandment?

4 Now it came to pass, when they spake daily unto him, and he hearkened not unto them, that they told Haman, to see whether

^a Esth. xvi. 10.—^b Num. xxiv. 7; 1 Sam. xv. 8.—^c Chap.

ii. 19.—^d Verse 5; Psa. xv. 4; Esth. xiii. 12.—^e Verse 2.

NOTES ON CHAPTER III.

Verse 1. *After these things*—About five years after, as appears from verse 7. *Did Ahasuerus promote Haman the Agagite*—An Amalekite, of the seed-royal of that nation, whose kings were successively called Agag. *And set his seat above all the princes*—Gave him the first place and seat which was next the king.

Verse 2. *For the king had so commanded concerning him*—To bow the knee, and give reverence to all great persons, was a common respect due to them, and there needed not a particular command from the king requiring it to be shown by all his servants to Haman; since, no doubt, they paid it to all princes, and would much more pay it to him who took place of them all, and was his sovereign's favourite. There was therefore, probably, more implied in the reverence commanded to be paid to him than what proceeded from a mere civil respect. The kings of Persia, we know, required a kind of divine adoration from all who approached them; and, as they arrogated this to themselves, so they sometimes imparted it to their chief friends and favourites, which seems to have been the case with regard to Haman at this time. And if so, we need not wonder that a righteous Jew should deny that honour, or the outward expressions of it, to any man; since the wise and sober Grecians positively refused to give it to their very kings themselves, the people of Athens once passing sentence of death on one Timocrates, a citizen of theirs, for prostrating himself before

Darius, though he was then one of the greatest monarchs upon earth. The author of the apocryphal additions to the book of Esther seems to imply that this was the case of Mordecai, whom he introduces praying thus, chap. xiii. 12, &c. "Thou knowest, O Lord, that it is not in contempt, or pride, nor for any desire of glory, that I did not bow down to proud Haman, for I would willingly kiss his feet for the salvation of Israel; but I did this, that I might not prefer the glory of man to the glory of God, nor adore any one but thee my Lord alone." See *Valer. Max.*, lib. 6, cap. 3. We may observe further here, that Mordecai should refuse to pay such obeisance, as all others paid to Haman at this time, will appear the less strange, if we consider that Haman being of that nation against which God pronounced a curse, (Exod. xvii. 14.) Mordecai might think himself, on this account, not obliged to pay him the reverence which he expected; and if the rest of the Jews had the like notion of him, this might be a reason sufficient for his extending his resentment against the whole nation. See Dodd.

Verse 4. *To see whether Mordecai's matters would stand*—Whether he would persist in his refusal, and what the event of it would be; *for he had told them that he was a Jew*—And therefore did not deny this reverence to Haman out of pride, or any personal grudge against him, much less from a rebellious mind, and contempt of the king's authority and command, but merely out of conscience, being obliged, as a Jew, to give such honour to God only.

A. M. 3494. Mordecai's matters would stand : for
B. C. 510. he had told them that he *was* a Jew.

5 And when Haman saw that Mordecai
f bowed not, nor did him reverence, then was
Haman g full of wrath.

6 And he thought scorn to lay hands on Mor-
decai alone ; for they had showed him the peo-
ple of Mordecai : wherefore Haman h sought to
destroy all the Jews that were throughout the
whole kingdom of Ahasuerus, even the people
of Mordecai.

B. C. 510. 7 In the first month, (that is, the
month Nisan,) in the twelfth year of
King Ahasuerus, i they cast Pur, that is, the lot,

f Verse 2 ; Chap. v. 9.—g Dsn. iii. 19.—h Psa. lxxxiii. 4.
i Chap. ix. 24.

Verse 5. *Then was Haman full of rage*—Josephus tells us, that Haman, taking notice of this singularity in Mordecai, asked him what countryman he was, and finding him to be a Jew, broke out into a violent exclamation at his insolence, and in his rage formed the desperate resolution, not only to be revenged on Mordecai, but to destroy the whole race of the Jews ; well remembering that his ancestors, the Amalekites, had been formerly driven out of their country, and almost exterminated by the Jews.

Verse 6. *And he thought scorn to lay hands on Mordecai alone*—He thought that particular vengeance was unsuitable to his quality, and to the greatness of the injury ; wherefore Haman sought to destroy all the Jews—Which he attempted from that implacable hatred which, as an Amalekite, he had against them ; from his rage against Mordecai ; and from Mordecai's reason of this contempt, because he was a Jew, which, as he truly judged, extended itself to all the Jews, and would equally engage them all in the same neglect. And doubtless Haman included those who were returned to their own land ; for that was now a province of his kingdom.

Verse 7. *They cast Pur, that is, the lot*—Haman, being determined to destroy Mordecai and the Jews, called together his diviners, to find out what day would be most lucky for his putting this design into execution. The way of divination, then in use among the eastern people, was by casting lots ; and therefore having tried in this manner, first each month, and then each day in every month, they came to a determination at last, that the thirteenth day of the twelfth month would be most fortunate for the bloody execution. It was in the first month of the year when Haman began to cast lots, and the time for the execution of the Jews was by these lots delayed till the last month of the year ; which plainly shows, that though the lot be cast into the lap, yet the whole disposing thereof is from the Lord, Prov. xvi. 33. For hereby almost a whole year intervened between the design and its execution, which gave time for Mordecai to acquaint Queen Esther with it, and for her to intercede with the king for the revoking or

before Haman from day to day, and A. M. 3494.
from month to month, to the twelfth B. C. 510.
month, that is, the month Adar.

8 ¶ And Haman said unto King Ahasuerus,
There is a certain people scattered abroad and
dispersed among the people in all the provinces of
thy kingdom ; and h their laws are diverse from all
people : neither keep they the king's laws : there-
fore it is not i for the king's profit to suffer them.

9 If it please the king, let it be written j that
they may be destroyed : and I will k pay ten
thousand talents of silver to the hands of those
that have the charge of the business, to bring it
into the king's treasuries.

h Ezra iv. 13 ; Acts xvi. 20.—i Heb. meet, or, equal.—j Heb.
to destroy them.—k Heb. weigh.

suspending the decree, and thereby preventing the conspiracy. The reader will find this decree in Joseph. *Antiq.*, lib. 11, cap. 6. Houbigant renders this verse, *The lot, which is called Pur, was drawn before Haman from day to day, from month to month, for the twelfth month.*" See Poole and Dodd.

Verse 8. *And Haman said unto King Ahasuerus*—After he had found which would be a lucky day for putting his design into execution ; *There is a certain people scattered abroad*—Mean and contemptible, not worthy to be named ; and dispersed among the people—Who therefore, if tolerated, may poison all thy subjects with their pernicious principles, and whom thou mayest easily crush, without any great noise or difficulty ; in all the provinces of thy kingdom—For though many of their brethren were returned to their own land, yet great numbers of them stayed behind, either because they preferred their ease and worldly advantages before their spiritual profit, or they wanted conveniences or opportunity for removing ; and their laws are diverse from all people—They have rites, and customs, and a religion peculiar to themselves ; and therefore are justly offensive to all thy subjects, and may either infect them with their notions, or occasion great dissensions and distractions among them ; neither keep they the king's laws—As is manifest by Mordecai's bold contempt of thy late edict concerning me, which contempt being shown by him as a Jew, the whole nation are involved in his crime, and are prepared to do the same when they have occasion ; therefore it is not for the king's profit to suffer them—To wit, to live in this kingdom. I do not seek herein so much my own revenge as thy service.

Verse 9. *Let it be written that they may be destroyed*—Let a written edict from the king be published for that purpose ; and I will pay ten thousand talents of silver—Whether these were Hebrew, or Babylonish, or Grecian talents, we cannot certainly know. But whichever they were, it was a vast sum to be paid by a private person, being probably above three millions sterling, and shows how outrageously he was bent on the destruction of the Jews.

A. M. 3194. 10 And the king ¹took ^mhis ring
B. C. 510. from his hand, and gave it unto Haman the son of Hammedatha the Agagite, the Jews' ⁴enemy.

11 And the king said unto Haman, The silver is given to thee, the people also, to do with them as it seemeth good to thee.

12 ⁿThen were the king's ⁵scribes called on the thirteenth day of the first month, and there was written according to all that Haman had commanded unto the king's lieutenants, and to the governors that *were* over every province, and to the rulers of every people of every province, ^oaccording to the writing thereof, and to every people after their language; ^pin the name of King Ahasuerus was it written, and sealed with the king's ring.

¹ Gen. xli. 42.—^m Chap. viii. 2, 8.—⁴ Or, *oppressor*, Chap. vii. 7.—ⁿ Chap. viii. 9.—⁵ Or, *secretaries*.—^o Chap. i. 22; viii. 9.

But undoubtedly Haman expected to get that sum, and much more, by seizing on all their effects. *To the hands of those that have the charge of the business*—Not of those who should have the charge to kill them, but of those that received the king's money, as appears by the next words, *to bring it into the king's treasuries*.

Verse 10. *And the king took his ring from his hand, &c.*—Without any examination into the condition of the people, he consented to their destruction. So loath are men that love their pleasure to take any pains to distinguish between truth and falsehood. *And gave it unto Haman*—That he might keep it as a badge of his supreme authority under the king, and that he might use it for the sealing of this decree which was now made, or of any other that might be made hereafter. *The Agagite, the Jews' enemy*—Such he was, both by inclination, as he was an Amalekite, and especially by this destructive design and resolution.

Verse 11. *The silver is given to thee*—Keep it for thy own use, I do not desire it. I accept thy offer for the deed. So that he gave him power to draw up what decree he pleased, and seal it with the king's ring; but as for the money, he assured him he would have none of it. What inhumanity was this! to give so many people unheard to death to please a favourite!

Verses 12, 13. *Then were the king's scribes called*—This he did so speedily, though it was a year before the intended execution, lest the king should change his mind, either through his own clemency, or the persuasion of others. It was, however, not wisely judged to let his design be known so long before it was to take effect; for the Jews might find some way to deliver themselves, or might steal out of the kingdom: but undoubtedly this was so ordered by the overruling providence of God. *And to take the spoil of them for a prey*—Which was to in-

13 And the letters were ⁴sent by A. M. 3194. posts into all the king's provinces, to B. C. 510. destroy, to kill, and to cause to perish, all Jews, both young and old, little children and women, ^rin one day, *even* upon the thirteenth day of the twelfth month, which *is* the month Adar, and ^tto take the spoil of them for a prey.

14 ^uThe copy of the writing for a commandment to be given in every province was published unto all people, that they should be ready against that day.

15 The posts went out, being hastened by the king's commandment, and the decree was given in Shushan the palace. And the king and Haman sat down to drink; but ^xthe city Shushan was perplexed.

¹ 1 Kings xxi. 8; Chapter viii. 8, 10.—⁴ Chapter viii. 10. ^r Chap. viii. 12, &c.—^t Chapter viii. 11.—^u Chap. viii. 13. ^x Chap. viii. 15; Prov. xxix. 2.

duce the people to use the greater severity and readiness to execute this edict for their own advantage.

Verses 14, 15. *The copy of the writing to be given in every province*—Copies of this original decree of the king were sent into every province, and there ordered to be published, requiring the people to be ready against the day appointed. *The posts went out, being hastened by the king's commandment*—Either by this decree made in the king's name, or by some particular and succeeding command which Haman obtained from the king. *And the king and Haman sat down to drink*—Haman was afraid, probably, lest the king's conscience should smite him for what he had done, and he should begin to wish it undone again; to prevent which he engrossed him to himself, and kept him drinking. This cursed method many take to drown their convictions, and harden their own hearts, and the hearts of others, in sin. *But the city Shushan was perplexed*—Not only the Jews, but a great number of the citizens, either because they were related to them, or engaged with them in worldly concerns; or out of humanity and compassion toward so vast a number of innocent people, appointed as sheep for the slaughter. They might apprehend likewise that, upon the execution of the decree, some sedition or tumult might ensue; that in so great a slaughter it was hard to tell who would escape without being killed or plundered, because those who were employed in this bloody work would be more mindful to enrich themselves than to observe their orders. They might also fear that a public judgment from God would come upon them all for so bloody a decree.

We see in the exaltation of Haman, recorded in this chapter, and in his subsequent fall, that God sometimes permits wicked men to arrive at the highest degree of honour and power, but that he soon brings them low, and exposes them to shame and

misery. And we learn by the sequel of this history, that he suffered things to proceed to extremities, only the more effectually to confound Haman; and convince the Jews, in a more surprising manner, of his care and protection. We see also the sin and folly of Ahasuerus, in giving credit too easily to Ha-

man's suggestion against the Jews, by which credulity he had well nigh occasioned many millions of innocent persons to perish. This shows how dangerous it is to listen to detractors, and that we ought never to credit evil reports till we have first inquired and ascertained the truth of them.

CHAPTER IV.

The Jews fast and mourn, 1-3. Esther is informed of the design, 4-9. Mordecai presses her to intercede with the king, 10-14. She desires all the Jews to keep a solemn fast, 15-19.

A. M. 3494.
B. C. 510.

WHEN Mordecai perceived all that was done, Mordecai ^arent his clothes, and put on sackcloth ^bwith ashes, and went out into the midst of the city, and ^ccried with a loud and bitter cry;

2 And came even before the king's gate: for none *might* enter into the king's gate clothed with sackcloth.

3 And in every province whithersoever the king's commandment and his decree came, *there was* great mourning among the Jews, and fasting, and weeping, and wailing; and ¹many lay in sackcloth and ashes.

4 ¶ So Esther's maids and her ²chamberlains came and told *it* her. Then was the queen exceedingly grieved; and she sent raiment to clothe Mordecai, and to take away his sackcloth from him: but he received *it* not.

^a 2 Samuel i. 11.—^b Josh. vii. 6; Ezra xxvii. 30.—^c Gen. xxvii. 34.—¹ Heb. *sackcloth and ashes were laid under many*, Isa.

NOTES ON CHAPTER IV.

Verse 1. *And put on sackcloth with ashes*—That is, he put on a garment of sackcloth or hair, and sprinkled ashes upon his head. *And cried with a loud and bitter cry*—To express his deep sense of the mischief coming upon his people. It was bravely done thus publicly to espouse what he knew to be a righteous cause, and the cause of God, even then when it seemed to be a sinking and desperate cause. The latter Targum upon the book of Esther gives us the following account of Mordecai's behaviour upon this sad occasion: "He made his complaints in the midst of the streets, saying, 'What a heavy decree is this, which the king and Haman have passed, not against a part of us, but against us all, to root us out of the earth!' Whereupon all the Jews flocked about him, and, having caused the book of the law to be brought to the gate of Shushan, he, being covered with sackcloth, read the words of Deut. iv. 30, 31, and then exhorted them to fasting, humiliation, and repentance, after the example of the Ninevites."

Verse 2. *And came even before the king's gate*—That his cry might come to the ears of Esther: *for none might enter into the king's gate clothed with sackcloth*—He durst not take his place in the gate,

5 Then called Esther for Hatach, ^{A. M. 3494.}
^{B. C. 510.} one of the king's chamberlains, ³whom he had appointed to attend upon her, and gave him a commandment to Mordecai, to know what it *was*, and why it *was*.

6 So Hatach went forth to Mordecai, unto the street of the city, which *was* before the king's gate.

7 And Mordecai told him of all that had happened unto him, and of ^dthe sum of the money that Haman had promised to pay to the king's treasuries for the Jews, to destroy them.

8 Also he gave him ^ethe copy of the writing of the decree that was given at Shushan to destroy them, to show *it* unto Esther, and to declare *it* unto her, and to charge her that she should go in unto the king, to make supplica-

lviii. 5; Dan. ix. 3.—² Heb. *eunuchs*.—³ Heb. *whom he had set before her*.—^d Chap. iii. 9.—^e Chap. iii. 14.

nor sit there as he had hitherto done, because none that were in mourning might come thither, lest it should give the king any occasion of grief and trouble. But what availed to keep out the badges of sorrow, unless they could have kept out the causes of sorrow too? To forbid sackcloth to enter, unless they could likewise forbid sickness, and trouble, and death?

Verse 3. *And many lay in sackcloth and ashes*—All day long they fasted, and wept, and lamented; and in the night many lay, not in their beds, but in sack or haircloth strewed with ashes.

Verse 4. *So Esther's maids came and told it her*—Namely, that Mordecai appeared before the king's gate in sackcloth. *Then was the queen exceedingly grieved*—Imagining some mischief had befallen him, and not yet knowing what it was; and *she sent raiment to clothe Mordecai*—That so he might be capable of returning to his former place, if not of coming to acquaint her with the cause of his sorrow. *But he received it not*—Which, no doubt, very much increased her grief and surprise.

Verses 7, 8. *And of the sum of money, &c.*—Namely, the ten thousand talents he had offered to procure the king's consent to their destruction. *And*

A. M. 3494. tion unto him, and to make request
B. C. 510. before him for her people.

9 And Hatach came and told Esther the words of Mordecai.

10 ¶ Again Esther spake unto Hatach, and gave him commandment unto Mordecai;

11 All the king's servants, and the people of the king's provinces, do know, that whosoever, whether man or woman, shall come unto the king into ^fthe inner court, who is not called, ^gthere is one law of his to put *him* to death, except such ^hto whom the king shall hold out the golden sceptre, that he may live: but I have not been called to come in unto the king these thirty days.

12 And they told to Mordecai Esther's words.

13 Then Mordecai commanded to answer Esther, Think not with thyself that thou shalt escape in the king's house, more than all the Jews.

^f Chap. v. 1.—^g Dan. ii. 9.—^h Chap. v. 2; viii. 4.—ⁱ Heb. respiration, Job ix. 18.

14 For if thou altogether holdest thy peace at this time, *then* shall there

A. M. 3494.
B. C. 510.

⁴enlargement and deliverance arise to the Jews from another place; but thou and thy father's house shall be destroyed: and who knoweth, whether thou art come to the kingdom for *such* a time as this?

15 ¶ Then Esther bade *them* return Mordecai *this answer*,

16 Go, gather together all the Jews *that are* ⁵present in Shushan, and fast ye for me, and neither eat nor drink ⁱthree days, night or day: I also and my maidens will fast likewise: and so will I go in unto the king, which is not according to the law; ^kand if I perish, I perish.

17 So Mordecai ⁶went his way, and did according to all that Esther had commanded him.

⁵ Heb. found.—ⁱ Chapter v. 1.—^k Gen. xliiii. 14.—⁶ Heb. passed.

to charge her, &c.—Not only in his own name, to whom she had manifested singular respect, but also in the name of the great God.

Verse 11. *Whosoever shall come into the inner court*—Within which the king's residence and throne were; *who is not called*—This was decreed to maintain both the majesty and the safety of the king's person; and by the contrivance of the greater officers of state, that few or none might have access to the king but themselves and their friends. *I have not been called, &c.*—Which gives me just cause to fear that the king's affections are alienated from me, and that neither my person nor petition will be acceptable to him.

Verses 13, 14. *Think not with thyself*—Flatter not thyself with a vain hope, that because thou art in the king's house, and an eminent member of his family, even the queen, that thou shalt be spared, or find any greater privilege in his house than the Jews do abroad. Thou art a Jew, and if the rest be cut off thou wilt not escape. *For if thou holdest thy peace at this time*—If, through fear, thou decline the service; *then shall deliverance arise to the Jews from another place*—From another hand, and by other means, which God can, and I am fully persuaded will, raise up. This was the language of strong faith, *against hope believing in hope; but thou and thy father's house shall be destroyed*—By the righteous judgment of God, punishing thy cowardice and self-seeking, and thy want of love to God, and to his and thy own people; *and who knoweth whether thou art not come to the kingdom for such a time as this?*—

It is probable God hath raised thee to this honour for this very season. We should every one of us consider for what end God has put us in the place where we are. And when an opportunity offers of serving God and our generation, we must take care not to let it slip.

Verse 16. *And fast ye for me*—And pray, which was the main business, to which fasting was only a help; *and neither eat nor drink three days*—Namely, in such a manner as you used to do. Abstain from all set meals, and all pleasant food, and, as much as possible, from all food, for that space of time, in token of humiliation for sin, and a sense of our unworthiness of God's mercies. *I also and my maidens will fast likewise*—They were, doubtless, either of the Jewish nation or proselytes, and pious persons, who, she knew, would sincerely join with her in these holy duties. *And so will I go in unto the king*—To intercede for my people. *Which is not according to the law*—Namely, the king's law, now mentioned, but it is according to God's law, and therefore whatever comes of it, I will venture, and not count my life dear to myself, so I may serve God and his church. *And if I perish, I perish*—Although my danger be great and evident, considering the expressness of that law, the uncertainty of the king's mind, and that severity which he showed to my predecessor Vashti; yet, rather than neglect my duty to God and to his people, I will go to the king, and cast myself cheerfully and resolutely upon God's providence for my safety and success. If I should be condemned to lose my life, I cannot lose it in a better cause.

CHAPTER V.

Esther, finding favour with the king, invites him and Haman to a banquet, 1-5. She invites them to a second, 6-8. Haman makes a gallows for Mordecai, 9-14.

A. M. 3494.
B. C. 510.

NOW it came to pass ^a on the third day, that Esther put on *her* royal apparel, and stood in ^b the inner court of the king's house, over against the king's house: and the king sat upon his royal throne in the royal house, over against the gate of the house.

2 And it was so, when the king saw Esther the queen standing in the court, *that* ^c she obtained favour in his sight: and ^d the king held out to Esther the golden sceptre that *was* in his hand. So Esther drew near, and touched the top of the sceptre.

3 Then said the king unto her, What wilt thou, Queen Esther? and what *is* thy request? ^e it shall be even given thee to the half of the kingdom.

4 And Esther answered, If *it seem good* unto the king, let the king and Haman come this

^a Chap. iv. 16.—^b Chapter iv. 11; Chap. vi. 4.—^c Esth. xv. 7, 8; Prov. xxi. 1.—^d Chap. iv. 11; viii. 4.

NOTES ON CHAPTER V.

Verses 1, 2. *It came to pass on the third day*—Of which see the notes on chap. iv. 16. *Esther put on her royal apparel*—That she might render herself as amiable in the king's eyes as she could, and so obtain her request. *The king sat upon his royal throne, over against the gate, &c.*—So that he could see every one that came into the court. *And the king held out to Esther the golden sceptre*—In testimony that he pardoned her presumption, and was ready to grant her request, and therefore inviting her to approach. *So Esther drew near and touched the top of the sceptre*—In token of her thankful acceptance of the king's favour, and of her reverence and submission: for, as the sceptre was the ensign of the highest and most absolute authority in the king, so the queen's touching it, or, as some say, kissing it, was a token of her subjection and thankfulness for his favour.

Verse 3. *What is thy request? &c.*—So far was the king from accounting her an offender, that he was glad to see her, and desirous to oblige her. Thus God, in his providence, often prevents the fears, and outdoes the hopes of his people. *It shall be given thee to the half of the kingdom*—A usual form of speech among kings, when their hearts are enlarged and overflow with affection to others, or when they give persons the freest liberty to ask what they please. The meaning is, Nothing in reason shall be denied thee.

Verse 4. *Let the king and Haman come this day unto the banquet*—She thought it prudent not to open her mind to him immediately, but first to try how he

day unto the banquet that I have prepared for him.

A. M. 3494.
B. C. 510.

5 Then the king said, Cause Haman to make haste, that he may do as Esther hath said. So the king and Haman came to the banquet that Esther had prepared.

6 ¶ ^f And the king said unto Esther at the banquet of wine, ^g What *is* thy petition? and it shall be granted thee: and what *is* thy request? even to the half of the kingdom it shall be performed.

7 Then answered Esther, and said, My petition and my request *is* :

8 If I have found favour in the sight of the king, and if it please the king to grant my petition, and ^h to perform my request, let the king and Haman come to the banquet that I shall prepare for them, and I will do to-morrow as the king hath said.

^e Mark vi. 23.—^f Chap. vii. 2.—^g Chapter ix. 12.—^h Heb. to do.

stood affected to her, and endeavour to endear herself more to him, that he might be the better disposed to grant her request. To accomplish which purpose still more effectually, she desired to entertain him at her banquet a second time, verse 8. And she, each time, invited Haman, that by showing such respect to the king's great favourite she might insinuate herself the more into the king's affection; and that, if she saw fit, she might then present her request to the king.

Verse 6. *The banquet of wine*—So called, because it consisted not of meats, which probably the king had plentifully eaten before, but of fruits and wines; which banquets were very frequent among the Persians, after they had done eating; for they did not drink wine, but water, with their victuals.

Verse 8. *I will do to-morrow as the king hath said*—I will acquaint thee with my humble request. She did not present her petition at this time, but delayed it till the next meeting; either, because she was a little daunted with the king's presence, and had not yet courage to propose it; or, because she would further engage the king's affection to her, by a second entertainment, and would also intimate to him, that her petition was of a more than ordinary nature: but principally by direction of the divine providence, which took away her courage of utterance for this time, that she might have a better opportunity to present her request the next time, by that great accident which happened before it. For the high honour which the king bestowed on Mordecai the next day made way for her petition, which came in very seasonably at the banquet of wine.

A. M. 3494. 9 ¶ Then went Haman forth that
B. C. 510.

day joyful and with a glad heart: but when Haman saw Mordecai in the king's gate, ^b that he stood not up, nor moved for him, he was full of indignation against Mordecai.

10 Nevertheless, Haman ⁱ refrained himself: and when he came home, he sent and ² called for his friends, and Zeresh his wife.

11 And Haman told them of the glory of his riches, and ^k the multitude of his children, and all *the things* wherein the king had promoted him, and how he had ¹ advanced him above the princes and servants of the king.

12 Haman said moreover, Yea, Esther the

¹ Chap. iii. 5.—² Sam. xiii. 22.—³ Hebrew, *caused to come*.
^k Chap. ix. 7, &c.

Verse 9. *That he stood not up, nor moved to him*—To show how little he feared him, and that he had a firm confidence in his God, that he would deliver him and his people in this great exigency.

Verse 10. *Nevertheless, Haman refrained himself*—From taking present vengeance upon Mordecai, which he might easily have effected, either by his own, or any of his servants' hands, without any fear of inconvenience to himself. But herein God's wise and powerful providence appeared in disposing Haman's heart, contrary to his own inclination, and making him, as it were, to put fetters upon his own hands.

Verses 11, 12. *Haman told them of the glory of his riches*—Partly to gratify his own vain-glorious humour, and partly to aggravate Mordecai's impudence in denying him reverence, and to alleviate his own vexation caused by it. *And to-morrow am I incited unto her also with the king*—Thus he makes that matter of glorying which was the occasion of his utter ruin. So ignorant are the wisest men, and subject to fatal mistakes, rejoicing when they have most cause of fear, and sorrowing for those things which tend to joy and comfort.

Verse 13. *Yet this availeth me nothing*—It gives me no content. Such torment did his envy and malice bring upon him. *So long as I see Mordecai sitting at the king's gate*—Enjoying that honour and privilege without disturbance, and denying me the worship due to me by the king's command. Thus though proud men have much to their mind, if they have not all, it is nothing. The thousandth part of what Haman had, would give a modest, humble man,

A. M. 3494. the king unto the banquet that she
B. C. 510. had prepared but myself; and to-morrow am I invited unto her also with the king.

13 Yet all this availeth me nothing, so long as I see Mordecai the Jew sitting at the king's gate.

14 ¶ Then said Zeresh his wife and all his friends unto him, Let a ³ gallows ^m be made of fifty cubits high, and to-morrow ⁿ speak thou unto the king that Mordecai may be hanged thereon: then go thou in merrily with the king unto the banquet. And the thing pleased Haman; and he caused ^o the gallows to be made.

¹ Chap. iii. 1.—³ Heb. *tree*.—^m Chap. vii. 9.—ⁿ Chap. vi. 4.
^o Chap. vii. 10.

as much happiness as he expects to receive from any thing under the sun. And Haman as passionately complains as if he was in the lowest depth of poverty.

Verse 14. *Then said Zeresh his wife and all his friends*—They saw how gladly he would dispense with his own resolution, of deferring the slaughter till the time determined by the lot, and therefore advise him to take an earnest of the satisfaction he then expected, in the speedy execution of Mordecai: *Let a gallows be made*—They advise him to have one made ready, that, as soon as he could get the warrant signed, there might be no delay of the execution, and to cause it to be made *fifty cubits high*, that it might be more conspicuous to all, and thereby be more disgraceful to Mordecai, and might strike all Haman's enemies with the greater dread of despising or opposing him. *And to-morrow speak thou unto the king*—They advise him to go early in the morning to get an order from the king for hanging Mordecai, which they doubted not would be readily granted to one that was so much the king's favourite, and who had so easily obtained an edict for the destruction of the whole nation of the Jews. *Then go thou in merrily with the king unto the banquet*—Having thus triumphed over thy implacable enemy, and got rid of all that vexes thee and imbiters thy prosperity and glory. *And the thing pleased Haman*—He approved of their advice, and caused the gallows to be erected accordingly. "And now," says Henry, "we leave Haman to go to bed, pleased with the thoughts of seeing Mordecai hanged the next day, and then going merrily to the banquet; and not dreaming of handselling his own gallows."

CHAPTER VI.

Providence recommends Mordecai to the king's favour, 1-3. Haman is constrained publicly to honour him through the city, 4-11. His friends foretel his doom, 12, 13. He goes to the banquet, 14.

A. M. 3494. B. C. 510. **O**N that night ¹ could not the king sleep, and he commanded to bring ^a the book of records of the Chronicles; and they were read before the king.

2 And it was found written, that Mordecai had told of ² Bigthana and Teresh, two of the king's chamberlains, the keepers of the ³ door, who sought to lay hand on the king Ahasuerus.

3 And the king said, What honour and dignity hath been done to Mordecai for this? Then said the king's servants that ministered unto him, There is nothing done for him.

4 ¶ And the king said, Who is in the court?

¹ Heb. *the king's sleep fled away.*—^a Chap. ii. 23.—^b Or, *Bigthan*, Chap. ii. 21.

NOTES ON CHAPTER VI.

Verse 1. *On that night could not the king sleep*—How vain are all the contrivances of foolish man against the wise and omnipotent God, who hath the hearts and hands of kings and all men perfectly at his disposal, and can by such trivial accidents (as they are accounted) change their minds, and produce such terrible effects. *He commanded to bring the book of records*—His mind being troubled, he knew not how, nor why, he chooses this for a diversion, God putting this thought into him, for otherwise he might have diverted himself, as he used to do, with his wives or concubines, or voices and instruments of music, which were far more agreeable to his temper. “In these records of the Chronicles, which we now call *journals*, (wherein was set down what passed every day,) the manner of the Persians was to record the names of those who had done the king any signal services. Accordingly, Josephus informs us, that upon the secretary's reading these journals, he took notice of such a person who had great honours and possessions given him as a reward for a glorious and remarkable action, and of such another who made his fortune by the bounties of his prince for his fidelity; but, that when he came to the particular story of the conspiracy of the two eunuchs against the person of the king, and of the discovery of this treason by Mordecai, the secretary read it over, and was passing forward to the next; when the king stopped him, and asked him if the person had had any reward given him for his service; which shows indeed a singular providence of God, that the secretary should read in that very part of the book wherein the service of Mordecai was recorded. Why Mordecai was not rewarded before, it is in vain to inquire. To account for the humour of princes, and their management of public affairs, is almost impossible. We see daily, even among us, that men are frequently unmindful of the highest services which are done them, and take no care to reward them, especially if the person be in himself obscure, and not supported by a proper recommendation; and therefore we are not to wonder, if a prince, who buried himself in indolence, and

(Now Haman was come into ^b the ^{A. M. 3494.} outward court of the king's house, ^{B. C. 510.} ^c to speak unto the king to hang Mordecai on the gallows that he had prepared for him.)

5 ¶ And the king's servants said unto him, Behold, Haman standeth in the court. And the king said, Let him come in.

6 So Haman came in. And the king said unto him, What shall be done unto the man ⁴ whom the king delighteth to honour? (Now Haman thought in his heart, To whom would the king delight to do honour more than to myself?)

² Heb. *threshold.*—^b Chap. v. 1.—^c Chapter v. 14.—⁴ Heb. *in whose honour the king delighteth.*

made it a part of his grandeur to live unacquainted and unconcerned with what passed in his dominions, (which was the custom of most of the eastern kings,) should overlook the service Mordecai had done him; or, if he ordered him a reward, that by the artifice of those at court, who were no well-wishers to the Jews, he should be disappointed of it. There seems, however, to have been a particular direction of Providence, in having his reward delayed till this time, when he and all his nation were appointed to destruction; when the remembrance of his services might be a means to recommend them to the king's mercy, and the honours conferred on him a poignant mortification to his proud adversary.”—Dodd.

Verses 3, 4. *There is nothing done for him*—He hath had no recompense for this great and good service. *The king said, Who is in the court*—It is likely it was now morning, when the courtiers used to be in waiting; and the king is so impatient to have Mordecai honoured, that he sends to know who was come, that was fit to be employed in the business. *Now Haman was come*—Early in the morning, because his malice would not suffer him to sleep; and he was impatient till he had executed his revenge; and was resolved to watch for the very first opportunity of speaking to the king, before he was engaged in other matters. *Into the outward court*—Where he waited; because it was dangerous to come into the inner court without special license, chap. iv. 11. So that the king and his minister were equally impatient about this poor Jew Mordecai, the former to have him honoured, and the latter to have him hanged!

Verses 5, 6. *The king said, Let him come in*—The king thought him the fittest man he had to be made use of, both in directing and in dispensing his favour, knowing nothing of any quarrel he had with Mordecai. *So Haman came in*—Proud of the honour done him, in being admitted into the king's bed-chamber, before he was up; for it is likely the king only wished to give orders for the honouring of Mordecai, and then he would be easy in his mind, and try to sleep. Haman, however, thinks of

A. M. 3494. 7 And Haman answered the king,
B. C. 510. For the man ⁵whom the king delighteth to honour,

8 ⁶Let the royal apparel be brought ⁷which the king useth to wear, and ^dthe horse that the king rideth upon, and the crown royal which is set upon his head :

9 And let this apparel and horse be delivered to the hand of one of the king's most noble princes, that they may array the man *withal* whom the king delighteth to honour, and ⁸bring him on horseback through the street of the city, ⁹and proclaim before him, Thus shall

⁶ Heb. in whose honour the king delighteth.—⁷ Heb. Let them bring the royal apparel.—^d Heb. wherewith the king clotheth him-

finding the king alone, and unengaged, and that this was the fairest opportunity he could wish for, to solicit for Mordecai's execution. *And the king*—Whose heart was as full as his, and who, as was fit, spoke first; *said unto him, What shall be done unto the man whom the king delighteth to honour?*—He names no one, because he would have the more impartial answer. It is a good property in kings and other superiors, to delight in bestowing rewards, and not to delight in punishing. *Now Haman thought in his heart*—As he had great reason to do, because of the favour which the king had showed to him above all others; *To whom would the king delight to do honour more than myself?*—No one deserves to be honoured so much as I, nor stands so fair for it. See how men's pride deceives them! The deceitfulness of our own hearts appears in nothing so much as in the good opinion we are wont to have of ourselves, and of our own performances, against which we should therefore constantly watch and pray. Haman thought the king loved and valued no one but himself, but he was deceived.

Verses 7, 8. *Haman answered, Let the royal apparel, &c.*—Concluding he himself was the favourite intended, he prescribes the highest instances of honour that could for once be bestowed upon a subject; nay, he names honours too great to be conferred on any subject. *Which the king useth to wear, &c.*—Namely, the king's outward garment, which was made of purple, interwoven with gold, as Justin and Curtius relate. To form a notion of that height of pride and arrogance at which Haman, who thought all the honours he specified were designed for himself, was arrived, we may observe, that for any one to put on the royal robe without the privacy and consent of the king was among the Persians accounted a capital crime. *And the horse that the king rideth upon*—Namely, usually; which was well known, both by his excellence, and especially by his peculiar trappings and ornaments. *And the crown royal which is set upon his head*—Upon the king's head. Thus he wished him to appear in all the pomp and grandeur of the king himself, only not to carry the sceptre, the emblem of power.

2

it be done to the man whom the king A. M. 3494.
delighteth to honour. B. C. 510.

10 Then the king said to Haman, Make haste, *and* take the apparel and the horse, as thou hast said, and do even so to Mordecai the Jew, that sitteth at the king's gate: ⁹let nothing fail of all that thou hast spoken.

11 Then took Haman the apparel and the horse, and arrayed Mordecai, and brought him on horseback through the street of the city, and proclaimed before him, Thus shall it be done unto the man whom the king delighteth to honour.

self.—^d 1 Kings i. 33.—⁹ Heb. cause him to ride.—⁹ Gen. xli. 43.—⁹ Heb. suffer not a whit to fall.

Verse 9. *And let this apparel, &c., be delivered to one of the king's most noble princes*—To be his attendant. *And bring him on horseback through the city*—That all the people may be made to take notice of him, and do him reverence. *And proclaim before him, Thus shall it be done, &c.*—For his honour, and the encouragement of all to seek the king's favour.

Verse 10. *The king said, Do even so to Mordecai the Jew*—If the king had but said as Haman expected, *Thou art the man*, what a fair opportunity would he have had to perform the errand he came on, and to have requested, that, to grace the solemnity of his triumph, Mordecai, his sworn enemy, might be hanged at the same time; but how is he thunderstruck when the king bids him, not to order all this to be done, but to do it himself to Mordecai the Jew, the very man he hated above all men, and whose ruin he was seeking, and now came to solicit! He saw it was now to no purpose to think of moving any thing to the king against Mordecai, since he is *the man whom the king delights to honour*.

Verses 11, 12. *Then Haman took the apparel*—The king's words undoubtedly produced great commotion in his breast, but he durst not dispute, nor so much as seem to dislike the king's order; but, though with the greatest regret and reluctance imaginable, brings the apparel, &c., to Mordecai, who, we may suppose, did no more cringe to Haman now than he did before, valuing his counterfeit respects no more than he had valued his concealed malice. *And arrayed Mordecai, and brought him on horseback, &c.*—It is hard to say which of the two put a greater force upon himself: proud Haman, in giving this honour to Mordecai, or humble Mordecai, in accepting it. Upon one account, no doubt, it was agreeable to Mordecai, as it was an indication of the king's favour, and gave ground to hope that Esther would prevail for the reversing of the edict against the Jews. *Mordecai came again to the king's gate*—To his former place, showing that, as he was not overwhelmed with Haman's threats, so he was not puffed up with this honour. Besides, he came thither to attend the issue of the business he had most

479

A. M. 3494. 12 ¶ And Mordecai came again to the king's gate. But Haman ^fhasted to his house mourning, ^gand having his head covered.

13 And Haman told Zeresh his wife and all his friends every *thing* that had befallen him. Then said his wise men and Zeresh his wife unto him, If Mordecai *be* of the seed of the

Jews, before whom thou hast begun to fall, thou shalt not prevail against him, but shalt surely fall before him.

14 And while they *were* yet talking with him, came the king's chamberlains, and hasted to bring Haman unto ^hthe banquet that Esther had prepared.

^f 2 Chron. xxvi. 20.—^g 2 Sam. xv. 30; Jer. xiv. 3, 4.

^h Chap. v. 8.

at heart, respecting the Jews; and to be at hand, if need were, to assist or encourage the queen, which he was now more capable of doing than heretofore he had been. *Haman hasted to his house mourning, and having his head covered*—In token of his shame and grief for his unexpected disappointment, and for the great honour done to his abhorred adversary, by his own hands, and with his own public disgrace.

Verse 13. *Then said his wise men*—The magicians, whom, after the Persian manner, he had called together, to consult upon this strange emergency. *If Mordecai be of the seed of the Jews*—Which they were told, and it was generally supposed he was, but of which they were not infallibly sure; *before whom thou hast begun to fall*—Though but in a point of honour; *thou shalt not prevail against him*—They had observed, it is probable, how the Jews had been wonderfully raised from under great oppressions, since the time of Cyrus, and in how many remarkable instances God had appeared for them, and against their enemies, in this very court and kingdom, and thence concluded there was a particular providence that took care of them. Or perhaps they

only formed their judgment from the omen, in Haman having been obliged to pay such honours himself to one of that nation which he had purposed, and even got the king's edict, entirely to destroy. *But shalt surely fall before him*—This they concluded, either, 1st, By rules of policy, because Haman's reputation and interest were sinking, and Mordecai, whom they understood to be a man of great wisdom and courage, had now got into the king's favour, and therefore was likely to gain an opportunity of moving him to a dislike, if not revocation, of his own bloody decree, and consequently to a detestation of that person who had procured it. Or, 2d, By an instinct or impression from God upon their minds, who might suggest this to them, as he did other things to other wicked men, for his own great glory, and the good of his people.

Verse 14. *The king's chamberlains hasted to bring Haman unto the banquet*—Who was now slack to go thither, by reason of the great dejection of his own mind, and the fear of a worse entertainment from the king and queen than he had formerly received.

CHAPTER VII.

Esther petitions for her life, and the lives of her people, 1-4. She tells the king that Haman is the man who designed her ruin, 5, 6. By the king's order he is hanged on the gallows he had prepared for Mordecai, 7-10.

A. M. 3494. SO the king and Haman came ¹to banquet with Esther the queen.

2 And the king said again unto Esther on the second day ^aat the banquet of wine, What is thy petition, Queen Esther? and it shall be

¹ Heb. to drink.

granted thee: and what is thy request? and it shall be performed, *even* to the half of the kingdom.

3 Then Esther the queen answered and said, If I have found favour in thy sight, O king,

^a Chap. v. 6.

NOTES ON CHAPTER VII.

Verse 2. *The king said again to Esther, What is thy petition, Queen Esther? &c.*—If the king had now forgot that Esther had an errand to him, and had not again asked what it was, she could scarce have known how to renew it herself; but he was mindful of it, and now was bound with the three-fold cord of a promise, thrice made, to favour her.

Verse 3. *Then Esther the queen answered and said, &c.*—Esther, at length, surprises the king with a petition, not for wealth, or honour, or the preferment of some of her friends to some high post, which

the king expected, but for the preservation of herself and her countrymen from death and destruction. *O king, let my life be given me at my petition*—It is my humble and only request, that thou wouldst not give me up to the malice of that man that designs to take away my life, and will certainly do it, if thou do not prevent it. *And my people*—That is, *the lives of my people, of the Jews, of whom I am descended.* Even a stranger, a criminal, shall be permitted to petition for his life. But that a friend, a wife, a queen, should have occasion to make such a request, was very affecting!

A. M. 3494. and if it please the king, let my life be
B. C. 510. given me at my petition, and my people at my request :

4 For we are ^b sold, I and my people, ² to be destroyed, to be slain, and to perish. But if we had been sold for bond-men and bond-women, I had held my tongue, although the enemy could not countervail the king's damage.

5 ¶ Then the king Ahasuerus answered and said unto Esther the queen, Who is he, and where is he, ³ that durst presume in his heart to do so ?

6 And Esther said, ⁴ The adversary and enemy *is* this wicked Haman. Then Haman was

^b Chapter iii. 9 ; iv. 7. — ³ Heb. *that they should destroy, and kill, and cause to perish.* — ⁴ Heb. *whose heart hath filled him.*

Verse 4. *For we are sold, I and my people, to be destroyed, &c.*—By the cruelty of that man, who offered a great sum to purchase our destruction. We have not forfeited our lives by any offence against the government, but are sold to gratify the pride and revenge of one man. *If we had been sold for bond-men and bond-women*—Sold merely into slavery ; *I had held my tongue*—I would not have complained, for in time we might have been ransomed and delivered. But it is not our liberty only, but our lives that are sold. *Although the enemy could not countervail the king's damage*—His ten thousand talents would not repair the king's loss in the customs and tributes, which the king receives from the Jews within his dominions, nor the injury his kingdom would sustain, by the loss of so many industrious hands out of it. To persecute good people is as impolitic as it is impious, and a manifest wrong to the interests of princes and states, which are weakened and empoverished by it.

Verse 5. *Then the king said, Who is he, and where is he, that durst presume in his heart to do so ?*—What ! contrive the murder of the queen and all her friends ? Is there such a man, or such a monster, rather, in nature ? The expressions are short and doubled, as proceeding from a discomposed and enraged mind. The Hebrew is, *Whose heart has filled him*, as in the margin ; or, *Who hath filled his heart, to do so ?* He wonders that any one should be so wicked as to conceive such a thing, or that any one should be so bold as to attempt to effect it ; that is, to circumvent him, and procure a decree, whereby not only his revenue should be so much injured, and so many of his innocent subjects destroyed, but his queen also involved in the same destruction. We sometimes startle at that evil which we ourselves are chargeable with. Ahasuerus is amazed at that wickedness which he himself was guilty of : for he had consented to the bloody edict ; so that Esther might have said, *Thou art the man !*

Verse 6. *Esther said, The enemy is this wicked Haman*—It is he that has designed our murder, and I charge him with it before his face : here he is ; and

afraid ⁵ before the king and the A. M. 3494.
queen. B. C. 510

7 ¶ And the king arising from the banquet of wine in his wrath *went* into the palace-garden : and Haman stood up to make request for his life to Esther the queen ; for he saw that there was evil determined against him by the king.

8 Then the king returned out of the palace-garden into the place of the banquet of wine ; and Haman was fallen upon ^c the bed whereon Esther *was*. Then said the king, Will he force the queen also ⁶ before me in the house ? As the word went out of the king's mouth, they ^d covered Haman's face.

⁵ Heb. *The man adversary.* — ⁶ Or, *at the presence of.* — ^c Chap. i. 6. — ^d Heb. *with me.* — ^d Job ix. 24.

him speak for himself, for therefore he was invited. *Then Haman was afraid before the king and the queen*—It was time for him to fear, when the queen was his prosecutor, the king his judge, and his own conscience a witness against him ; and the surprising operations of providence against him that same morning could not but increase his fear. Now he has little joy of his being invited to the banquet of wine, but finds himself in straits when he thought himself in the *fulness of his sufficiency*.

Verse 7. *And the king arising from the banquet in his wrath*—As disdaining the company and sight of so ungrateful and audacious a person ; *went into the palace-garden*—To cool and allay his troubled and inflamed spirits, being in a great commotion by a variety of passions boiling and struggling within him ; and to consider with himself the heinousness of Haman's crime, the mischief which himself had like to have done by his own rashness, and what punishment was fit to be inflicted on so vile a miscreant. *Haman stood up to make request for his life to Esther*—He first stood up, and then fell down at her feet, to beg she would save his life, and take all he had. They that are most haughty, insolent, and imperious, when they are in power and prosperity, are commonly the most abject and poor-spirited, on a reverse of condition and circumstances. Esther's sworn enemy now owns that he lies at her mercy, and begs his life at her hand. Thus did God regard the *low estate of his handmaiden*. *For he saw that there was evil determined against him*—This he discerned by the violent commotion of the king's mind, apparent in his countenance, and by his going out of the room in a great rage.

Verse 8. *Then the king returned out of the palace-garden*—Yet more exasperated than when he went into it. The more he thought of Haman's conduct, the more enraged he was against him. *Haman was fallen upon the bed whereon Esther was*—Or *by*, or *beside the bed*, on which the queen sat at meat, after the manner of those times and countries. For it was then a custom among the Persians, as well as many other nations, to sit, or rather lie, upon beds,

A. M. 3494. 9 And ° Harbonah, one of the cham-
B. C. 510. berlains, said before the king, Behold
also ' the ' gallows fifty cubits high, which Ha-
man had made for Mordecai, who had spoken
good for the king, standeth in the house of Ha-

man. Then the king said, Hang him thereon. A. M. 3494.
B. C. 510.

10 So ° they hanged Haman on the gallows
that he had prepared for Mordecai. Then was
the king's wrath pacified.

* Chap. i. 10.—† Chap. v. 14; Psa. vii. 16; Prov. xi. 5.

† Heb. tree.—‡ Dan. vi. 24; Psa. xxxvii. 35.

when they ate or drank. And Haman, it seems, fell down as a supplicant at the feet of Esther, laying his hands upon her knees, and beseeching her to take pity upon him: for it is not improbable that it was the custom among the Persians, as it was among the Greeks and Romans, to embrace the knees of those whom they petitioned to be favourable to them. *Then said the king*—Finding him in this posture; *Will he force the queen also before me in the house?*—Will he attempt my queen's chastity, as he hath already attempted her life, and that in my own presence and palace? His presumption and impudence, I see, will stick at nothing. He speaks not this out of real jealousy, for which there was no cause in those circumstances; but from an exasperated mind, which takes all occasions to vent itself against the person who gave the provocation, and puts the worst construction on all his words and actions. *They covered Haman's face*—That the king might not be offended or grieved at the sight of a person whom he now detested; and because they looked upon him as a condemned person, for the faces of such used to be covered.

Verse 9. *And Harbonah said*—The courtiers that adored Haman when he was rising, set themselves as much against him now he is falling, and are glad of an opportunity to sink him lower: so little sure can proud men be of the interest they think they have in others. *Behold also the gallows, &c., standeth in the house of Haman*—He had probably observed it, or been informed of it by some of his brethren, who were lately sent to Haman's house: and this he said, either out of a dislike he had taken to Haman, for his great insolence and barbarous cruelty, or in compliance with the king and queen's inclinations. *Which Haman had made for Mordecai, who had spoken good for the king*—And, therefore, deserved a better requital than this, even from Haman, if he had not basely preferred the satisfaction of his own revenge before the king's life. Now Mordecai is the favourite, and Haman being in disgrace, every thing is taken notice of that was to his disadvantage, or that might incense the king more against him. *Then the king said, Hang him thereon*—He takes no time to deliberate, but instantly passes sentence, without so much as asking Haman what he had to say in his own defence, or to offer why this judgment should not be passed upon him, and execution awarded.

Verse 10. *So they hanged Haman on the gallows that he had prepared for Mordecai*—As the sentence was short, so the execution was speedy, and he that

expected every one to do him reverence is now made an ignominious spectacle to the world on a gallows fifty cubits high: and himself is sacrificed to justice, who disdained that less than a whole nation should be sacrificed to his revenge. Thus does God resist the proud, and those whom he resists will find him irresistible! Thus did mischief return on the person that contrived it, and *the wicked was snared in the work of his own hands*. If he had not set up that gallows, the king probably would not have thought of ordering him to be hanged; but as he had unjustly prepared it for a good man, he was justly condemned to suffer on it himself. The enemies of God's church have often been thus *taken in their own craftiness*. In the morning, Haman designed himself for the robes, and Mordecai for the gallows: but the tables are now turned, and Mordecai has the crown and Haman the cross. *The Lord is known by the judgments which he executeth*. "I cannot pass over this wonderful harmony of providence," says Josephus, (*Antiq.*, l. 2, c. 6,) "without a remark upon the almighty power, and admirable justice of the wisdom of God; not only in bringing Haman to his deserved punishment, but in trapping him in the very snare which he had laid for another, and turning a malicious invention upon the head of the inventor." Bishop Patrick observes, on this wonderful deliverance of the Jewish nation, that "though, in the whole, there was no extraordinary manifestation of God's power; no particular cause, or agent, which was in its working advanced above the ordinary pitch of nature; yet the contrivance, and suiting these ordinary agents appointed by God, is in itself more admirable than if the same end had been effected by means which were truly miraculous. That a king should not sleep, is no unusual thing, nor that he should solace his waking thoughts by hearing the annals of his own kingdom, or the journals of his own reign, read to him: but that he should be awake at that time, especially when Haman was watching to destroy the Jews, and that, in the chronicles of the kingdom, they should light on that place where Mordecai's unrewarded services were recorded; that the king should resolve, thereupon, forthwith to do him honour; that Haman should come in at the very moment when he was so disposed; should ignorantly determine what honour should be done him, and be himself appointed to that ungrateful office: all this, no doubt, was from the Keeper of Israel, who neither slumbereth nor sleepeth, and was truly marvellous in his people's eyes."—See Dodd.

CHAPTER VIII.

The estate of Haman is given to Esther, 1, 2. Esther petitions the king to reverse the edict against the Jews, 3-6. They are authorized to defend themselves, 7-14. The Jews and their friends rejoice, 15-17.

A. M. 3494. B. C. 510. **O**N that day did the king Ahasuerus give the house of Haman, the Jews' enemy, unto Esther the queen. And Mordecai came before the king; for Esther had told ^a what he *was* unto her.

2 And the king took off ^b his ring which he had taken from Haman, and gave it unto Mordecai. And Esther set Mordecai over the house of Haman.

3 ¶ And Esther spake yet again before the king, and fell down at his feet, ¹ and besought him with tears to put away the mischief of Ha-

^a Chap. ii. 7. — ^b Chap. iii. 10. — ¹ Heb. *and she wept, and besought him.*

NOTES ON CHAPTER VIII.

Verse 1. *Did the king give the house of Haman unto Esther*—That is, he bestowed upon her the whole estate belonging to his family, his lands, his goods, his servants, his cattle, with all the money he had treasured up. All this is included here in his *house*, which, being justly forfeited to the king, is no less justly bestowed by him upon the queen, to compensate, in some degree, the danger to which Haman had exposed her. *And Mordecai came before the king*—Was by the queen's desire admitted into the king's presence and family, and probably made one of the seven princes. *For Esther had told what he was unto her*—How nearly he was related to her, which till this time she had wisely concealed.

Verse 2. *The king took off his ring*—That ring which he had formerly given to Haman, but had resumed, he now gives to Mordecai, in token of his favour, and with it that power whereof this ring was a sign, making him, as Haman had been, the keeper of his signet. *And Esther set Mordecai over the house of Haman*—Not over his family, for that was destroyed, but over his lands and goods, given her by the king: of which she made Mordecai her steward, to manage that great estate for her, as he thought fit. With what little pleasure, nay, with what constant vexation, would Haman have looked upon his estate, if he could have foreseen that Mordecai, the man he hated above all men in the world, should have *rule over all that wherein he had laboured*, and thought he showed himself so wise! See, then, the vanity of laying up treasure on earth; *he that heapeth up riches knoweth not who shall gather them*, Psalm xxxix. 6; not only *whether he shall be a wise man or a fool*, (Eccles. ii. 19,) but whether he shall be a friend or an enemy. It is our interest, therefore, to make sure of those riches which will not be left behind, but will go with us to another world. Reader, attend to this, and *lay not up* for thy posterity, any more than *for thyself*, treasures on earth.

Verse 3. *Esther spake yet again before the king*—Haman, the chief enemy of the Jews, was hanged,

man the Agagite, and his device that he had devised against the Jews. A. M. 3494. B. C. 510.

4 Then ^c the king held out the golden sceptre toward Esther. So Esther arose, and stood before the king,

5 And said, If it please the king, and if I have found favour in his sight, and the thing *seem* right before the king, and I *be* pleasing in his eyes, let it be written to reverse ² the letters devised by Haman the son of Hammedatha the Agagite, ³ which he wrote to destroy the Jews which *are* in all the king's provinces:

^c Chapter iv. 11; v. 2. — ² Hebrew, *the device.* — ³ Or, *who wrote.*

Esther and Mordecai, their chief friends, were sufficiently protected; but many others there were in the king's dominions that hated the Jews, and desire ¹ their ruin, and to their rage and malice all the rest of that people lay exposed. For the edict against them was still in force, in pursuance of which their enemies, at the day appointed, would fall upon them, and they would be deemed rebels against the king and his government, if they should offer to resist, and take up arms in their own defence. To prevent this, the queen makes intercession with much affection and importunity. *And fell down at his feet, and besought him with many tears*—It was time to be earnest, when the church of God lay at stake. Let none be so great as to be unwilling to stoop, none so joyful as to be unwilling to weep, when thereby they may do any service to God's church and people. Esther, though safe herself, here falls down and begs with tears for the deliverance of her people. *To put away the mischief of Haman*—To repeal that cruel and bloody decree which he had obtained from the king.

Verses 4-6. *Then the king held out the golden sceptre*—Esther had presumed to come a second time into the king's presence without being called: which he did not take ill, but by this token graciously invited her to approach him, indicating that he accepted her person. *So Esther arose*—Having before fallen at his feet; *and stood before the king*—As a petitioner for her people; *and said, If it please the king, &c.*—She uses various expressions, that she might confirm the king's favour by such a full submission to his good pleasure. Even then, when we have ever so much reason and justice on our side, and have ever so clear a cause to plead, yet it becomes us to speak to our superiors with humility and modesty, and all possible expressions of respect. There is nothing lost by decency and good breeding. *Let it be written to reverse the letters devised by Haman*—She prudently takes off the hatefulness of the action from the king, and lays it upon Haman, who had for his own ends contrived the whole bu-

A. M. 3494. 6 For how can I^d endure to see^d the
B. C. 510. evil that shall come unto my people?
or how can I endure to see the destruction of my
kindred?

7 ¶ Then the king Ahasuerus said unto
Esther the queen and to Mordecai the Jew,
Behold, °I have given Esther the house of
Haman, and him they have hanged upon the
gallows, because he laid his hand upon the
Jews.

8 Write ye also for the Jews, as it liketh you,
in the king's name, and seal *it* with the king's
ring: for the writing which is written in the
king's name, and sealed with the king's ring,
f may no man reverse.

9 ¶ Then were the king's scribes called at

^dHebrew, *be able that I may see.*—^dChapter vii. 4; Neh. ii. 3.
• Verse 1; Prov. xiii. 22.—^fChap. i. 19; Dan. vi. 8, 12, 15.

business, and circumvented the king in it. *For how
can I endure to see the destruction of my kindred?*
—My heart will sink under it, and I shall never be
able to survive it. She does not urge the innocence
of the Jews, but only pleads their affinity to her:
probably she knew that this plea would have more
weight with the king, even than one grounded on
their innocence.

Verse 7. *Him they have hanged, because he laid
his hand upon the Jews*—That is, intended to de-
stroy them all. By what the king had done to show
his resentment against Haman, they might easily be-
lieve he would deny them nothing for their preserva-
tion: as if he had said, You see how ready I have
been to grant your requests, and I do not repent of
my favour to you, and am ready to grant your fur-
ther desires, as far as the law will permit.

Verse 8. *Write ye also for the Jews*—On their
behalf, to the governors and commanders of the
king's forces, or to whom you please. *In the king's
name, and seal it with the king's ring*—I offer you
my authority and seal, to confirm whatsoever you
shall think fit to write. *The writing which is writ-
ten in the king's name, &c., may no man reverse*—
This reason may belong, either, 1st, To the writing
of these present letters; and then the sense is, These
letters will be most effectual, being no less irrevoca-
ble than the former, and, coming last, will repeal the
former. Or, 2d, To the former letters, as a reason
why he could not grant their desires in recalling
them, because they were irrevocable by the laws of
the Medes and Persians. And this sense, though
rejected by many, seems to be the truest, because
here is no mention of reversing Haman's letters,
which Esther had desired, verse 5, and the king de-
nied, for the reason here alleged; and because the
following letter doth not contain one word about the
reversing of the former, nor doth it take away that
power which was given to all rulers to destroy all
the Jews, chap. iii. 12, 13; but only gives the Jews
power and authority to stand up in their own de-

that time in the third month, that is, A. M. 3494.
the month Sivan, on the three and B. C. 510.
twentieth *day* thereof; and it was written, ac-
cording to all that Mordecai commanded, unto
the Jews, and to the lieutenants, and the deputies
and rulers of the provinces which *are*^h from In-
dia unto Ethiopia, a hundred twenty and seven
provinces, unto every provinceⁱ according to
the writing thereof, and unto every people
after their language, and to the Jews accord-
ing to their writing, and according to their
language.

10 ^kAnd he wrote in the king Ahasuerus's
name, and sealed *it* with the king's ring, and
sent letters by posts on horseback, *and* riders on
mules, camels, *and* young dromedaries:

^f Chapter iii. 12.—^h Chapter i. 1.—ⁱ Chapter i. 22; iii. 12.
^k 1 Kings xxi. 8; Chap. iii. 12.

fence, verse 11, which, all circumstances considered,
was sufficient for their preservation. How much
more prudent is our constitution than that of the
Persians, that no law whatever can be so established
as to be unrepealable. It is God's prerogative not
to repent, and to say what can never be altered.

Verse 9. *On the three and twentieth day thereof*—
Which was above two months after the former de-
cree. All which time God suffered the Jews to lie
under the terror of this dreadful day, that they might
be more thoroughly humbled for, and purged from,
those many and great sins under which they lay;
that they might be convinced of their great sin and
folly, in neglecting the many offers and opportuni-
ties they had had of returning to their native coun-
try, and to the free and public exercise of the true
religion, which could be had nowhere but in Jerusa-
lem, by which means they, being now dispersed in
the several parts of this vast dominion, must be a
very easy prey to their enemies, whereas their breth-
ren in Judea were in a better capacity to preserve
themselves; that their most malicious and inveterate
enemies might have an opportunity of discovering
themselves to their ruin, as the event showed; and
for the greater illustration of God's glorious power,
and wisdom, and goodness, in giving his people such
an admirable and unexpected deliverance. And
God so ordered things, that this letter should be sent
in due time, before it was too late; for there were
yet near nine months to come before that appointed
day. *And it was written unto the Jews*—That they
might understand their liberty, and be encouraged
to use it for their own defence. *And to the rulers
of the provinces*—That they should publish and dis-
perse it into all parts, that both themselves and oth-
ers might take notice of the king's pleasure, and
kindness to the Jews.

Verse 10. *And he wrote in King Ahasuerus's name*
—Josephus has given us a true copy, as he says, of
this decree; or, as he terms it, of the letters which
Artaxerxes sent to all nations which lie between In-

A. M. 3194. 11 Wherein the king granted the
B. C. 510. Jews which *were* in every city to gather
themselves together, and to stand for their life,
to destroy, to slay, and to cause to perish, all the
power of the people and province that would assault
them, *both* little ones and women, and ¹to
take the spoil of them for a prey,

12 ² Upon one day in all the provinces of
King Ahasuerus, *namely*, upon the thirteenth
day of the twelfth month, which *is* the month
Adar.

13 ³ The copy of the writing for a command-
ment to be given in every province *was* ⁴ pub-
lished unto all people, and that the Jews should
be ready against that day to avenge themselves
on their enemies.

14 *So* the posts that rode upon mules *and*

¹ Chap. ix. 10, 15.—² Chap. iii. 13, &c.; ix. 1.—³ Chap.
iii. 14.—⁴ Heb. *revealed*.—⁵ Or, *violet*.—⁶ Chap. iii. 15;
Prov. xxix. 2.

dia and Ethiopia; wherein he represents the abuse
which favourites are wont to make of their power
and credit with their prince, by insulting their infe-
riors, by flying in the face of those who raised them,
and, to gratify their resentments, calumniating the
innocent, and putting honest men in danger of their
lives, &c. *And sent letters by posts, and riders on
mules, &c.*—Which were not employed in the send-
ing of the former letters; but these, coming later,
required more care and speed, that the Jews might
be eased from their present fears, and have time to
provide for their own defence.

Verse 11. *To stand for their life*—To fight for
the defence of their lives, against all that should seek
to destroy them. *To cause to perish the power of
the people, &c.*—Either governors or governed,
without any exception either of age, dignity, or sex.
Both little ones and women—Which is here added,
to strike the greater terror into their enemies; and
according to the laws and customs of that kingdom,
whereby children were punished for their parents'
offences: yet we read nothing, in the execution of
this decree, of the slaughter of women or children;
nor is it probable they would kill their innocent chil-
dren, who were so indulgent to their families as not
to meddle with the spoil.

Verses 12–14. *Upon one day, &c.*—Which day
was chosen and appointed by Haman for their destruc-
tion. *That the Jews should be ready against
that day*—Should be furnished with arms, and all
things necessary for their defence. *Being hastened
by the king's commandment*—By his particular and
express command to that purpose.

Verse 15. *With a great crown of gold*—Which
the chief of the Persian princes were permitted to
wear, but with sufficient distinction from the king's
crown. For it must be observed, that the word *royal*
is not added here, as in chap. vi. 8, nor is the horse
mentioned, as there, because no extraordinary ho-

camels went out, being hastened and
pressed on by the king's command-
ment. And the decree was given at Shushan
the palace.

15 ¶ And Mordecai went out from the pre-
sence of the king in royal apparel of ⁶ blue
and white, and with a great crown of gold,
and with a garment of fine linen and purple:
and ⁷ the city of Shushan rejoiced, and was glad:

16 The Jews had ⁸ light, and gladness, and
joy, and honour.

17 And in every province, and in every city,
whithersoever the king's commandment and
his decree came, the Jews had joy and gladness,
a feast ⁹ and a good day. And many of the
people of the land ¹⁰ became Jews; for ¹¹ the fear
of the Jews fell upon them.

⁶ Psalm cxvii. 11.—⁷ 1 Samuel xxv. 8; Chapter ix. 19, 22.
⁸ Psa. xviii. 43.—⁹ Gen. xxxv. 5; Exod. xv. 16; Deut. ii. 25;
xi. 25; Chap. ix. 2.

nours are here spoken of, but only that honour, and
that habit, which immediately belonged to the keeper
of the royal signet.—Houb. *The city of Shushan
rejoiced*—Not only Jews, but the greatest number
of the citizens, who by the law of nature abhorred
bloody counsels, and had a complacency in acts of
mercy.

Verse 16. *The Jews had light*—Light is often put
for gladness, as 2 Sam. xxii. 29, and Job xviii. 5, 6, be-
cause it is pleasant, and disposeth a man to joy. *And
gladness, and joy*—Here the sacred writer explains
the former metaphor, by two words signifying the
same thing, to denote the greatness of the joy. *And
honour*—Instead of that contempt under which they
had lain.

Verse 17. *A feast and a good day*—That is, a
time of feasting, rejoicing, and thanksgiving. Not
only in Shushan, but in all other places where they
resided, they entertained one another at their houses,
and feasted together, being full of joy at this unex-
pected alteration of their affairs. For they doubted
not that this new decree of the king would be ob-
served by his people; and they were resolved to de-
fend themselves against those that did not observe it,
but attempted to destroy them. *And many of the
people of the land became Jews*—Many of the Per-
sians became proselytes to the Jewish religion, but
that they were circumcised is not probable. It is
likely, however, that they renounced idolatry, and
became worshippers of the true God. Such prose-
lytes there were in all times, especially in the days
of David and Solomon, when the affairs of the Jews
were very prosperous. Haman thought to extirpate
the Jews: it proves, in the issue, that their numbers
are greatly increased, and many added to their
church. Observe, reader, when the Jews *had joy
and gladness*, then many of the people of the land
became Jews. The holy cheerfulness of those that
profess religion is a great ornament to their profes-

sion, and will invite and encourage others to be religious. Another reason, however, is here given why so many became Jews at this time; for it is said, *the fear of the Jews fell upon them*. When they observed how wonderfully the divine providence had owned them, and wrought for them, in this critical juncture, they thought them great, and those happy that were among them, as was foretold Zech. viii. 23, *We will go with you; for we have*

heard, we have seen, that *God is with you*. And they thought them formidable, and those miserable that were against them. They plainly saw, in Haman's fate, that if any offered an injury to the Jews, it was at their peril; and, therefore, for their own security, they joined themselves to them. It is folly to think of contending with the God of Israel, and therefore it is wisdom to think of submitting to him.

CHAPTER IX.

The Jews slay their enemies, 1-11. A second day is granted them, 12-19. A yearly feast is instituted, in memory of this great deliverance, 20-32.

A. M. 3495. B. C. 509. **N**OW ^a in the twelfth month, that is, the month Adar, on the thirteenth day of the same, ^b when the king's commandment and his decree drew near to be put in execution, in the day that the enemies of the Jews hoped to have power over them, (though it was turned to the contrary, that the Jews ^c had rule over them that hated them;)
 2 The Jews ^d gathered themselves together in their cities throughout all the provinces of

the king Ahasuerus, to lay hand on ^e such as ^f sought their hurt: and no ^g man could withstand them; for ^h the fear of them fell upon all people.
 3 And all the rulers of the provinces, and the lieutenants, and the deputies, and ⁱ officers of the king helped the Jews; because the fear of Mordecai fell upon them.
 4 For Mordecai *was* great in the king's house, and his fame went out throughout all the pro-

^a Chapter viii. 12.—^b Chapter iii. 13.—^c 2 Samuel xxii. 41. ^d Chap. viii. 11; Verse 16.—^e Psa. lxxi. 13, 24.

^f Chapter viii. 17.—^g Hebrew, *those which did the business that belonged to the king*.

NOTES ON CHAPTER IX.

Verse 1. *The king's commandment and his decree drew near to be put in execution*—At the close of the last chapter we left two royal edicts in force, both given at the court at Shushan, one bearing date the thirteenth day of the first month, appointing, that on the thirteenth day of the twelfth month, then next ensuing, all the Jews should be killed; and another bearing date the twenty-third day of the third month, empowering the Jews, on the day appointed for their slaughter, to draw the sword in their own defence, and make their part good against their enemies, as well as they could. Great expectation there was, no doubt, of this day, and the issue of it. The Jews' cause was to be tried by battle, and the day fixed for the combat by authority. Their enemies resolved not to lose the advantages given them by the first edict, in hope to overpower them by numbers. The Jews relied on the goodness of their God, and justice of their cause, and resolved to make their utmost efforts against their enemies. The day comes, at length, and here we learn that it was a day of victory and triumph to the Jews, both in the city of Shushan, and in all the rest of the king's provinces. *In the day that the enemies of the Jews hoped to have power over them*—That day which was selected by Haman, with great industry and art, as the most lucky day, and which their enemies had undoubtedly often thought of, and threatened them with; when, notwithstand-

ing the later edict, they expected to have power over them by virtue of the former, they made assaults upon them accordingly, forming themselves into bodies, and joining in confederacy against them.
 Verse 2. *The Jews gathered themselves together in their cities*—Imbodied and stood upon their defence, offering violence to none, but bidding defiance to all. If they had not had an edict to warrant them, they durst not have done this; but, being so supported, they strove lawfully. If they had acted separately, each family apart, they would have been an easy prey to their enemies; but acting in concert, and gathering together in their cities, they strengthened one another, and were able to face their enemies. *And no man could withstand them*—Their enemies, though they took up arms against them, yet were easily conquered and destroyed by them. *For the fear of them fell upon all people*—Because they had such potent friends at court, and so great a God on their side, who, by such unusual and astonishing methods, (of which, doubtless, they had been particularly informed,) had brought about such a mighty and unexpected deliverance for them.
 Verses 3, 4. *All the rulers of the provinces, &c., and officers of the king*—Heb. *and those that did the king's business*; that is, not only the chief persons, signified by the foregoing words, but all the king's other ministers or officers, of what quality soever; *helped the Jews; because the fear of Mor-*

A. M. 3495. B. C. 509. vinces: for this man Mordecai ^a waxed greater and greater.

5 Thus the Jews smote all their enemies with the stroke of the sword, and slaughter, and destruction, and did ² what they would unto those that hated them.

6 And in Shushan the palace the Jews slew and destroyed five hundred men.

7 And Parshandatha, and Dalphon, and Aspatha,

8 And Poratha, and Adalia, and Aridatha,

9 And Parmashta, and Arisai, and Aridai, and Vajezatha,

10 ^b The ten sons of Haman the son of Hammedatha, the enemy of the Jews, slew

¹ 2 Sam. iii. 1; 1 Chronicles xi. 9; Prov. iv. 18.—² Hebrew, according to their will.

decai fell upon them—He having manifestly the countenance both of God and the king. *For Mordecai was great*—The greatest in place, and power, and favour with the king, both for his near relation to the queen, and for the good service he had done for the king himself, in preserving his life, and managing his affairs; and for those excellent abilities and virtues which the king discovered in him. *And his fame went throughout all the provinces*—He was not only great in the king's house, and caressed by the courtiers, as many are who have no intrinsic worth to support their reputation; but his fame for wisdom and virtue went out from thence throughout all the king's dominions, and in all places he was extolled as a great man, and as one that was waxing greater and greater. Hence all, even the king's officers, saw it to be their interest to help his friends.

Verse 5. *Thus the Jews smote all their enemies with the stroke of the sword*—The second decree "allowed the Jews to defend themselves, and therefore may account, in some measure, for the slaughter which they made of their enemies: and, no doubt, the great sum which Haman had offered to gratify his revenge against the Jewish nation, was an additional provocation to them to slay every one that came to annoy them. But still it should be remembered, that in this they acted by virtue of a royal edict, which authorized them to stand upon their own defence: that they were not the first aggressors, but only opposed those who openly assaulted them, and were for putting in execution an unjust and cruel decree against them. And as the Amalekites, who might be dispersed through the Persian empire, were the known and inveterate enemies of the Jews, and, following the fortune of Haman, might probably be forward enough to execute the decree which he had procured against them; it is, therefore, reasonably presumed, that most of those whom the Jews destroyed, in their necessary defence, both at Shushan, and in the provinces, were of that devoted nation, and that by this their slaughter, the prophecies against Amalek were

they; ¹ but on the spoil laid they not ^a their hand. A. M. 3495. B. C. 509.

11 On that day the number of those that were slain in Shushan the palace ³ was brought before the king.

12 ¶ And the king said unto Esther the queen, The Jews have slain and destroyed five hundred men in Shushan the palace, and the ten sons of Haman; what have they done in the rest of the king's provinces? now ^k what is thy petition? and it shall be granted thee: or what is thy request further? and it shall be done.

13 Then said Esther, If it please the king, let it be granted to the Jews which *are* in Shu-

¹ Chapter v. 11; Job xviii. 19; xxvii. 13, 15; Psalm xxi. 10. ² Chap. viii. 11.—³ Heb. came.—^k Chap. v. 6; vii. 2.

remarkably accomplished."—Bishop Patrick and Dodd. *And did what they would with those that hated them*—It seems that the people in general perceived, by the second edict, that it would not be agreeable to the king for them to rise against the Jews, though he did not repeal the first edict, because it was not customary to repeal any thing that had been signed by the king's seal; and therefore, it is probable, that but a very inconsiderable number, in respect of the whole, rose up against the Jews, otherwise it is hardly credible that they could have been superior to them in every place.

Verse 6. *In Shushan the palace*—That is, in the city where the palace was; it not being probable, either that they would make such a slaughter in the palace itself, or that they would be permitted so to do; *the Jews slew and destroyed five hundred men*—These, and the rest killed in other places, either were men who did not conceal their wicked inclinations, but openly assaulted the Jews, and whom therefore the king's edict gave them power to destroy; or, they were persons whom the Jews knew to be their avowed enemies, and such as would watch all opportunities to assault and destroy them.

Verse 10. *But on the spoil laid they not their hand*—The king had granted them leave to take it, chap. viii. 11, but they declined to do it; that it might appear what they did was not done out of malice or covetousness, but out of mere necessity, and according to the great law of self-preservation; that they might not so much as seem to desire any thing but their own safety; and that the king might have the greater kindness for them, in whose exchequer these goods were to come, if he pleased so to appoint, or to go to the children of such as were slain.

Verse 12. *What have they done in the rest of the king's provinces?*—In which, doubtless, many more were slain. So that I have fully granted thy petition: and yet, if thou hast any thing further to ask, I am ready to grant it.

Verse 13. *Let it be granted to the Jews to do to-*

A. M. 3495. shan to do to-morrow also ¹ according
B. C. 509.

unto this day's decree, and ⁴ let Haman's ten sons ^m be hanged upon the gallows.

14 And the king commanded it so to be done: and the decree was given at Shushan; and they hanged Haman's ten sons.

15 For the Jews that *were* in Shushan ^a gathered themselves together on the fourteenth day also of the month Adar, and slew three hundred men at Shushan; ^o but on the prey they laid not their hand.

16 But the other Jews that *were* in the king's provinces ^p gathered themselves together, and stood for their lives, and had rest from their enemies, and slew of their foes seventy and five thousand, ^q but they laid not their hands on the prey,

¹ Chap. viii. 11.—⁴ Heb. *let men hang*.—^m 2 Sam. xxi. 6.
^a Verse 2; Chap. viii. 11.—^o Verse 10.—^p Verse 2; Chap. viii. 11.

morrow also according to this day's decree—To kill their implacable enemies. For it is probable that the greatest and worst of them had hidden themselves for that day; after which, the commission granted to the Jews being expired, they confidently returned to their houses, where they were taken and slain, by virtue of this private and unexpected order. *And let Haman's ten sons be hanged upon the gallows*—They were slain before; now let their bodies be hanged on their father's gallows, for their greater infamy, and the terror of all others who shall presume to abuse the king in like manner, or to persuade him to execute such cruelties upon his subjects. "It is not unlikely," says Dr. Dodd, "that many might be enraged at Haman's death, and his sons, in particular, might set themselves at the head of those who were bold enough to attempt the destruction of the Jews at Shushan, being resolved to revenge their father's death, though in so doing they were sure to meet with their own. This seems to suggest one reason why Esther was so solicitous to have their dead bodies hung on the gallows, because they had shown more malice and indignation against the Jews, and, on the day when the cruel edict came to take place, had made more desperate attacks upon them, than any others; though the reason of state, in this severity, might be to expose the family to greater infamy, and to deter other counsellors at any time from abusing the king with false representations. For though the Jews suffered none to hang on the tree, as they called the gallows, longer than till the evening of the day whereon they were executed, yet other nations let them hang till they were consumed, (as appears from the story of the Gibeonites, 2 Sam. xxi. 9,) or devoured by crows, vultures, or other ravenous creatures." See Patrick.

Verse 16. *And had rest from their enemies*—Who could not stand before them, and therefore ceased

17 On the thirteenth day of the A. M. 3495.
month Adar; and on the fourteenth B. C. 509.
day ⁵ of the same rested they, and made it a day of feasting and gladness.

18 But the Jews that *were* at Shushan assembled together ^r on the thirteenth *day* thereof, and on the fourteenth thereof, and on the fifteenth *day* of the same they rested, and made it a day of feasting and gladness.

19 Therefore the Jews of the villages, that dwelt in the unwall'd towns, made the fourteenth day of the month Adar ^s a day of gladness and feasting, ^t and a good day, and of ^u sending portions one to another.

20 ¶ And Mordecai wrote these things, and sent letters unto all the Jews that *were* in all the provinces of the king Ahasuerus, *both* nigh and far,

⁵ Chap. viii. 11.—^r Heb. *in it*.—^s Verses 11, 15.—^t Deut. xvi. 11, 14.—^u Chap. viii. 17.—^v Verse 22; Nehemiah viii. 10, 12.

to molest them. *But they laid not their hands on the prey*—It is probable Mordecai, in his letters, had charged them not to make use of the liberty the king had given them to take the spoil, inasmuch as it appears they universally avoided it.

Verses 17, 18. *On the thirteenth day of the month Adar*—This is to be referred to the foregoing words, and the meaning is, the slaughter was made in the provinces on the thirteenth day of this month, when they had reason to expect they should have been destroyed themselves. *On the fifteenth day of the same they rested*—That is, the Jews in the city of Shushan made the fifteenth day a festival, because they had liberty to avenge themselves of their enemies, not only on the thirteenth, but also on the fourteenth day, which were both days of slaughter, and therefore they rested not till the fifteenth day.

Verse 19. *The Jews of the villages, that dwelt in the unwall'd towns*—Hebrew, *in the cities of the villages*; that is, in the lesser cities and villages, which are here opposed to the great city Shushan, and those who dwelt in it. *Made the fourteenth day a day of gladness, &c.*—Namely, because they did their whole work upon the thirteenth day, as was observed verse 17, to which this manifestly relates, the 18th verse coming in by way of parenthesis. *And a good day, and of sending portions one to another*—A day of thanksgiving and praise to God, as well as of feasting one with another, and of sending meat from their tables to their neighbours, that the meaner sort might feast and rejoice also. Hence the Jews have a rule, that they should make a collection of money, at this time of the year, to send to the poor, to enable them to provide for themselves things necessary to make a feast; which money they judge it unlawful to apply to any other use.

Verse 20. *Mordecai wrote these things, &c.*—

A. M. 3495. 21 To establish *this* among them, B. C. 509. that they should keep the fourteenth day of the month Adar, and the fifteenth day of the same, yearly,

22 As the days wherein the Jews rested from their enemies, and the month which was ⁷ turned unto them from sorrow to joy, and from mourning into a good day: that they should make them days of feasting and joy, and of ⁸ sending portions one to another, and gifts to the poor.

23 And the Jews undertook to do as they had begun, and as Mordecai had written unto them;

24 Because Haman the son of Hammedatha,

⁷ Psa. xxx. 11.—⁸ Verse 19; Neh. viii. 11.—⁹ Chap. iii. 6, 7.
⁶ Heb. *crush*.—⁷ Heb. *when she came*.

That is, the history of these things, which was the ground of the feast here spoken of. Mordecai knew very well these things ought to be had in remembrance, and to be told to their children and posterity through all ages, according to the many commands of God to that purpose, and the constant practice of the holy men of God in such cases. *And sent letters unto all the Jews that were in all the provinces*—Signifying what a mighty deliverance God had vouchsafed them, and appointing, in commemoration thereof, an annual festival to be observed.

Verse 21. *To establish this—to keep the fourteenth day, and the fifteenth day of the month Adar*—The twelfth month; just a month before the passover. Thus the first and the last month of the year were kept in remembrance of the days when God preserved them. They were enjoined to keep two days together, because both those days had been set apart this year, the latter at Shushan, and the former in other parts; and because that victory over their enemies, which was to be the ground of this festival, had been achieved on both the thirteenth and fourteenth days. Let us not be niggardly in our returns of praise to him, who bestows his favours so liberally upon us.

Verse 22. *As the days wherein the Jews rested*—They did not keep the days on which they fought, but those on which they rested. On the fourteenth day the country Jews rested, and on the nineteenth those in Shushan, and these days they kept. The sabbath was appointed, not on the day when God finished his work, but on the day he rested from it. *The month which was turned unto them—from mourning into a good day*—A day of cheerfulness, praise, and thanksgiving. *And of sending portions one to another*—In token of mutual respect, and their being knit by this, and other public common dangers and deliverances, so much the closer to each other in love. *And gifts to the poor*—Which they were wont to give also on other days of thanksgiving, of which see Neh. viii.

the Agagite, the enemy of all the Jews, ^a had devised against the Jews to destroy them, and had cast Pur, that is, the lot, to ^b consume them, and to destroy them;

25 But ⁷ when ^b Esther came before the king, he commanded by letters that his wicked device, which he devised against the Jews, should ^c return upon his own head, and that he and his sons should be hanged on the gallows.

26 Wherefore they called these days Purim, after the name of ^d Pur. Therefore for all the words of ^d this letter, and of *that* which they had seen concerning this matter, and which had come unto them,

^b Verses 13, 14; Chap. vii. 5, &c.; viii. 3, &c.—^c Chap. vii. 10; Psa. vii. 16.—^d That is, *lot*.—^e Verse 20.

10. It is not to our kinsmen and rich neighbours only that we ought to send tokens of our love and friendship at such times, but also and especially to the poor and the maimed, Luke xiv. 12, 13. Thus they that have received mercy, must, in token of their gratitude, show mercy; and there never wants occasion, for the poor we have always with us. Thanksgiving and almsgiving should go together, that, when we are rejoicing and blessing God, the hearts of the poor may rejoice with us, and their loins may bless us.

Verse 23. *The Jews undertook to do as they had begun*—That is, to keep these days as festivals everywhere. Having by this means an opportunity of gathering themselves together, on any occasion, the chief of them assembled, and freely and unanimously consented to Mordecai's desire in this matter, and bound it upon themselves and posterity.

Verse 24. *Because Haman had devised against the Jews to destroy them, and had cast Pur, that is, the lot*—Haman had, by lot, determined this to be the time of the Jews' destruction; but the Lord, at whose disposal the lot is, had determined it to be the time of their triumph. The name of this festival, therefore, would remind them of the sovereign dominion of the God of Israel, who served his own purposes by the foolish superstitions of the heathen, and outwitted the *monthly prognosticators* in their craft, Isa. xlvii. 14, *frustrating the tokens of the liars, and making the diviners mad*, Isa. xlv. 26.

Verse 26. *They called these days Purim*—Namely, these two festival days; *after the name Pur*—A Persian word signifying a lot. *For all the words of this letter, and of that which they had seen, and which had come unto them*—Because of what was contained in the letter of Mordecai, and the respect which they justly bore to it; and because of what they themselves had seen, when these things happened, and God so wonderfully delivered them; and of what they heard reported concerning these matters, in the places where they could not see them, they unanimously

A. M. 3195. 27 The Jews ordained, and took
B. C. 509.

upon them, and upon their seed, and upon all such as ^a joined themselves unto them, so as it should not ⁹ fail, that they would keep these two days according to their writing, and according to their *appointed* time every year;

28 And *that* these days *should be* remembered and kept throughout every generation, every family, every province, and every city; and *that* these days of Purim should not ¹⁰ fail from among the Jews, nor the memorial of them ¹¹ perish from their seed.

29 Then Esther the queen, ^f the daughter of Abihail, and Mordecai the Jew, wrote with

^a Chap. viii. 17; Isa. lvi. 3, 6; Zech. ii. 11. — ⁹ Hebrew, *pass.*
¹⁰ Heb. *pass.* — ¹¹ Heb. *be ended.* — ^f Chap. ii. 15.

consented to keep a yearly festival in commemoration of them, as it follows in the next verse.

Verse 27. *The Jews took upon them and upon their seed*—To the latest generations; and upon all such as joined themselves unto them—That is, the Gentile proselytes, who were obliged to submit to other of the Jewish laws, and therefore to this also; the rather, because they enjoyed the benefit of this day's deliverance, without which the Jewish nation and religion had been in a great measure, if not wholly, extinct in the world. *That they would keep these two days according to their writing*—According to that writing which was drawn up by Mordecai with Esther's consent, (verses 23, 29,) and afterward confirmed by the consent of all the Jews in the several places. So that the observation of this feast was to be both universal and perpetual: even the proselytes were to observe it, in token of their sincere affection to the Jewish nation, and their having interests twisted with theirs. A concurrence in joys and praises is one branch of the communion of saints.

Verse 28. *That these days should be remembered and kept*—That the memorial of these great things, which God had done for his church, might never perish. For if God work wonders for a day, it is that they may be had in everlasting remembrance. *Every family, every province, every city*—Accordingly, even the women and little children, nay, such as were base-born and servants, were bound to keep this feast.

Verse 29. *Then Esther and Mordecai wrote with all authority*—As well they might, Esther being queen, and Mordecai prime minister of state. The former letter (verse 20) did only recommend, but this enjoins the observance of this solemnity. And it was not only the act of the queen and Mordecai, but also the act of all the Jews, binding themselves and their posterity to it.

Verse 30. *With words of peace and truth*—Though they wrote with authority, they wrote also with *peace*, that is, with friendship, tenderness, and kindness, not in imperious and imposing language, but in an affectionate and conciliating style: and with *truth*,

¹² all authority, to confirm this ^a second letter of Purim. A. M. 3195.
B. C. 509.

30 And he sent the letters unto all the Jews, to ^b the hundred and twenty and seven provinces of the kingdom of Ahasuerus, *with* words of peace and truth,

31 To confirm these days of Purim in their times *appointed*, according as Mordecai the Jew and Esther the queen had enjoined them, and as they had decreed ¹³ for themselves and for their seed, the matters of ⁱ the fastings and their cry.

32 And the decree of Esther confirmed these matters of Purim; and it was written in the book.

¹² Heb. *all strength.* — ^a Chap. viii. 10; Verse 20. — ^b Chap. i. 1. — ¹³ Heb. *for their souls.* — ⁱ Chap. iv. 3, 16.

or sincerity, which is the rather observed, because it was, as it still is, not very usual with great courtiers, such as Mordecai now was, to write so. Or the meaning may be, that he saluted them with hearty wishes for the continuance of those two great blessings of God, *truth* and *peace*, among them, namely, the true religion, and peace among themselves, and with all men; or, that they might peaceably and quietly enjoy and profess the truth. Or if the *matter*, rather than the *manner*, or *form* of his writing be intended, the sense is, that he directed and endeavoured to persuade them to keep both peace and truth, that is, both to live peaceably and lovingly one with another, and with all their neighbours, not insulting over them upon a confidence in Mordecai's great power, or upon this their late and great success, nor giving them any fresh provocation; and yet holding fast the true religion, in spite of all the artifices or hostilities of the Gentiles, among whom they lived.

Verse 31. *The matters of their fasting, and of their cry*—For and concerning those great and overwhelming calamities which had been decreed to befall all the Jews, and for the removing of which, not only Esther and the Jews of Shushan, but all other Jews, in all places, as soon as they heard of those dismal tidings, did doubtless, according to the precepts of Scripture, and the constant practice of their godly predecessors in all ages, flee to that last and only refuge, of seeking to God by fasting and earnest prayers, and strong cries, which God was pleased graciously to hear, and in answer thereunto to give them this amazing deliverance. And this was that which they were now to remember, namely, the greatness of their danger, and of their rescue from it. And, accordingly, the Jews used to observe the first of those days with fasting, and crying, and other expressions of vehement grief, imitating here in the example of Esther and Mordecai, who had fasted and prayed in their distress, and the latter of the days with feasting, and thanksgiving, and all demonstrations of joy and triumph.

Verse 32. *And the decree of Esther*—Who had received authority and commission from the king to

impose this upon all the Jews; *confirmed these things*—She commanded the forementioned decree, which confirmed or established the observance of the days of Purim, to be recorded and made a public act; *and it was written in the book*—Either in the records of the kingdom, or in those which the Jews kept of the most memorable passages of their own history. This feast of Purim, the reader will observe, is celebrated among the Jews to this very day, and that with several peculiar ceremonies, most of which, however, says Dr. Dodd, are “reducible to these three things, *reading, resting, and fasting*. Before the reading, which is performed in the synagogue, and begins in the evening as soon as the stars appear, they make use of three forms of prayer. In the first of these they praise God for counting them worthy to attend this divine service; in the second they thank him for the miraculous preservation of their ancestors; and in the third they bless his holy name for having continued their lives for the celebration of another festival in commemoration of it. Then they read over the whole history of Haman, from the beginning to the end; not out of any printed book, for that is not lawful, but out of a Hebrew manuscript, written on parchment. There are five places in the text wherein the reader raises his voice with all his might: when he comes to the place that mentions the names of the ten sons of Haman, he repeats them very quick, to show that they were all destroyed in a moment; and every time that the name of Haman is pronounced, the children, with great fury, strike against the benches of the synagogue with mallets brought for that purpose. After the reading is finished, they return home, and have

a supper, not of flesh, but of spoon-meat. Next morning they arise early, and return to the synagogue, where, after they have read that passage in Exodus which mentions the war of Amalek, they begin again to read the book of Esther, with the same ceremonies as before, and so conclude the services of the day, with curses against Haman and his wife, with blessings upon Mordecai and Esther and with praises to God for having preserved his people. Their resting on this day is observed so religiously that they will not so much as set or sow any thing in their gardens, being fully persuaded that it would not come up if they did; and therefore they either play at chess, or such like games, or spend their time in music or dancing, till it be proper to begin their *feasting*, wherein they indulge themselves to such an immoderate degree, that their feast of *Purim* has, with great justice, been called *the Bacchanals of the Jews*. They allow themselves to drink wine to excess; nay, even to such a pitch as not to be able to distinguish between the blessing of Mordecai and the curse of Haman, as they themselves speak. Among the other sports and diversions of the day, they used formerly to erect a gibbet, and burn upon it a man of straw, whom they called *Haman*; but it being surmised that they might have a design herein to insult the Christians, Theodosius the Second forbade them to use this ceremony, under the penalty of forfeiting all their privileges. See Calmet's *Dictionary*, under the word *Purim*. The most laudable particular in the feast of *Purim*, is the abundant charities, in money and food, which the rich bestow upon the poor, in order to put them in a capacity to celebrate the festival.”

CHAPTER X.

The greatness of Ahasuerus and of Mordecai, 1-3.

A. M. 3509. **AND** the king Ahasuerus laid a tribute upon the land, and upon ^a the isles of the sea.

2 And all the acts of his power and of his might, and the declaration of the greatness of

^a Gen. x. 5; Psa. lxxii. 10; Isa. xxiv. 15. — ^b Chap. viii. 15; ix. 4.

NOTES ON CHAPTER X.

Verse 1. *King Ahasuerus laid a tribute upon the land*—That is, he laid a tax upon every part of his dominions, both on the continent, and on the islands over which his power extended. By the isles here mentioned are meant those in the *Ægean sea*, conquered by Darius Hystaspes.

Verse 2. *All the acts of his power, and of his might, and of the greatness of Mordecai*—These words signify, that as this king did great things, so they were to be ascribed very much to the management of Mordecai after he was advanced to the highest authority in the kingdom. But it was not the design of the author of this history to relate such

Mordecai, ^b whereunto the king ¹ advanced him, ^a are they not written in the book of the Chronicles of the kings of Media and Persia?

3 For Mordecai the Jew *was* ^c next unto King

^a Heb. *made him great*. — ^c Gen. xli. 40; 2 Chron. xxviii. 7.

things, for which he refers to the public records of the kingdom, which were kept in some part of the king's house, as appears from chapter vi. 1, and were extant in those days, when this book was written. But they are lost long since, and buried in oblivion, while the sacred writings remain throughout the world. When the kingdoms of men, monarchs and their monarchies, are destroyed, *and their memorial is perished with them*, the kingdom of God among men, and the records of that kingdom, shall remain *as the days of heaven*.

Verse 3. *Mordecai the Jew was next unto King Ahasuerus*—Long had he sat contentedly at the king's gate, but now at length he is arrived at the

A. M. 3509. Ahasuerus, and great among the Jews,
B. C. 495. and accepted of the multitude of his bre-

thren, ^dseeking the wealth of his people, A. M. 3509
and speaking peace to all his seed. B. C. 495.

^d Neh. ii. 10 ;

Psa. cxvii. 8.

presidency of the king's council. Men of merit may, for a time, seem buried alive; but often, by some means or other, they are discovered and preferred at last. *And great among the Jews*—Not only great above them, and more honourable than any of them, but great with them, and dear to them, which they manifested by giving him a commanding interest among them, and submitting all their affairs to his direction; *and accepted of his brethren*—His greatness did not make him forget or disown his brethren, nor was he ashamed of his relation to them, though they were strangers and captives, dispersed and despised. And they did not envy his greatness, according to the disposition very prevalent among mankind in such cases, but rejoiced in it, and blessed God for it, and commended and loved him for the right and proper exercise of his great power. *Seeking the wealth of his people*—He did not seek his own wealth, and the raising of an estate for himself and his family, which is the chief thing most men aim at when they get into great places at court; but he consulted the welfare of his people, and made it his business to advance that. His power, his wealth, and all his interest with the king and queen, he improved for the public good. *And speaking peace to all his seed*—He was easy of access, courteous and affable, condescending and kind in his carriage, and ready, to the

utmost of his power, to assist all that made application to him. Doing good works is the best and chief thing expected from those that have wealth and power, but giving *good words* is also commendable, and makes the good deeds the more acceptable. It is said, *to all his seed*, probably to signify that he did not side with any one party of his people against another, nor make some of them his favourites, while the rest were neglected and crushed; but whatever differences there were among them, he was a common father to them all, and *spoke peace* to them all without distinction. Thus making himself acceptable by humility and beneficence, he was universally accepted, and gained the good-will of all his brethren.

Thus have we gone through all the historical books of the Old Testament. If our readers have received any edification from our endeavours to illustrate the Divine Oracles, and have been thereby assisted to read them with more pleasure and profit than formerly, we beseech them to give all the praise to the Father of lights, from whom every good and perfect gift cometh, and especially all true understanding, and knowledge of his word: and to entreat him to afford us the continuance and increase of his gracious assistance in the further prosecution of our work, especially as we are to enter next on the more sublime and spiritual parts of the sacred writings.

THE
B O O K O F J O B.*

ARGUMENT.

THE preceding books of Scripture are, for the most part, plain and easy narratives, which he that runs may read and understand; but in the five poetical books, on which we are now entering, *Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and Solomon's Song*, are many things hard to be understood. These, therefore, require a more close application of mind, which yet the treasures they contain will abundantly recompense. The former books were mostly historical; these are doctrinal and devotional. And they are written in verse, according to the ancient rules of versifying, though not in rhyme, nor according to the rules of latter tongues. But though they are poetical, yet they are serious, and full of majesty. They have a poetic force and flame, without poetic fury; move the affections, without corrupting the imagination; and, while they gratify the ear, improve the mind, and profit the more by pleasing. In them we have much of God, his infinite perfections, and his government both of the world and of the church. And we have much of Christ, who is the spring, and soul, and centre of revealed religion. Here is what may enlighten our understandings, and acquaint us with the deep things of God. And this divine light may bring into our souls a divine fire, which will kindle and inflame devout affections; on which wings we may soar upward, until we enter into the holiest.

In the book of Job, in particular, which comes first under our consideration, we find the most sublime disquisitions on God's moral government, his wonderful and unlimited greatness, his indisputable sovereignty over all beings, and his incomprehensible wisdom; together with a most illustrious pattern of solid and fixed piety, and entire resignation to the divine will. So that, whether we consider the importance and dignity of the subjects, the magnificent and profound sentiments, the beauty of the language, or the amiable picture of virtuous manners which it sets forth, we shall find it worthy of our most attentive study, and greatest veneration for its high excellence. It is thought by many learned men to be the most ancient book of the Scriptures, and it really bears all the genuine marks of the most remote antiquity, both in the composition and style; and this may account for its being so difficult to be understood.

Although most of the accounts which have been given of the author of this book, and the exact time when it was written, are but conjectures, unsupported by any authority; yet there seems very sufficient ground to determine, that the foundation of it is laid in matters of fact; namely, That, in very ancient times, there was a rich and powerful person named Job; that he was remarkable for his integrity, piety, and unshaken confidence in God; that he was, by very great, unexpected, and sudden calamities, reduced to a state of great distress; that this circumstance gave occasion to a discussion and contest between him and some of his friends, men of great wisdom and piety, whether severe afflictions ever happen to truly good men? and, if they do, whether they do not come by way of punishment, and as a mark of God's displeasure?—that Job bore his afflictions with uncommon patience and resignation to the will of God; and, lastly, that he was afterward advanced to a greater degree of prosperity than he had enjoyed in the former part of his life. These, we say, appear undoubtedly to have been facts, and on them the whole book is built. That there was such a man as Job, is evident from his being mentioned by Ezekiel, chap. xiv. 14, and ranked with Noah and Daniel, as a man famous for piety above most others. And the Apostle James, chap. v. 10, says, *Take the prophets for an example of suffering affliction and of patience. Ye have heard of the patience of Job.* And, unquestionably, the narrative which we here have of his prosperity and piety, of his strange affliction and exemplary patience, with the substance of his conferences with his friends, God's discourse with him out of the whirlwind, and his return to a prosperous condition, are all exactly true.

We are sure, also, that this book is very ancient, probably of equal date with the book of Genesis itself. It is likely Job was of the posterity of Nahor, Abraham's brother, whose firstborn was Uz, and in whose family religion was kept up, as appears Gen. xxxi. 53, where God is called, not only the God of Abraham, but the God of Nahor. He evidently lived before sacrifices were confined

* Moses is thought to have written the book of Job, while among the Midianites, before Christ, cir. 1520.

to one altar, before the general apostacy of the nations, and while God was known by the name of אֱלֹהֵי שָׁדַי, *Eel Shaddai, God Almighty*, more than by the name of יהוה, *Jehovah*; for he is called *Shaddai, the Almighty*, above thirty times in this book. And that he lived before the deliverance of the children of Israel out of Egypt, we may gather from hence, that there is no allusion at all to that grand event in any part of the book; as well as from his great longevity; there being no instance, after that time, of any person's living, as it appears he did, to near the age of two hundred years.

We have said that this book is *poetical*. We may call it a kind of *dramatic* or *heroic* poem, though by no means a complete drama. The first two chapters are a kind of prologue, containing the argument, which is not in verse, but in a narrative or historical style, as being a relation of matters of fact; but the interlocutory parts of the work are evidently in metre, in the original Hebrew, as is agreed by most learned men. In this noble poem we have, 1. A monument of primitive theology, teaching us that, considering the corruption, ignorance, and weakness of human nature, on the one hand, and the infinite wisdom, the unspeakable greatness, and unspotted holiness of God, on the other, mankind should renounce all confidence in their own righteousness and strength, and put their whole trust in the mercy and grace of God, and submit themselves to him with the greatest humility and reverence. This is evidently the principal design of the poem. It contains, however, 2. A specimen of Gentile piety, for Job was not of the promised seed, not an Israelite, nor a proselyte to the religion of the Israelites. 3. We have here an exposition of the book of Providence, and a clear solution of many difficult passages therein. 4. A great example of close adherence to God in the deepest calamities; and, 5. An illustrious type of Christ, emptied and humbled, in order to his exaltation and greater glory.

But "the principal benefit," says Bishop Patrick, "which I hope pious souls, especially the *afflicted*, will reap by this book, is, to be persuaded thereby that all things are ordered and disposed by Almighty God; without whose command or permission neither good angels, nor the devil, nor men, nor any other creature, can do any thing. And that, as his power is infinite, so is his wisdom and goodness, which is able to bring good out of evil. And, therefore, we ought not to complain of him in any condition, as if he neglected us, or dealt hardly with us; but rather cheerfully submit ourselves to his blessed will; which never doth any thing without reason, though we cannot always comprehend it. To that issue, God himself, at last, brings all the dispute between Job and his friends; representing his works, throughout the world, to be so wonderful and unaccountable, that it is fit for us to acknowledge our ignorance, but never to accuse his providence. If we cannot see the cause why he sends any affliction, or continues it long upon us; instead of murmuring and complaining in such a case, this book effectually teaches us to resign ourselves absolutely to him; silently to adore and reverence the unsearchable depth of his wise counsels; contentedly to bear what he inflicts upon us; still to assert his righteousness in the midst of the calamities which befall the good, and in the most prosperous successes of the wicked; and steadfastly to believe, that all, at last, shall turn to our advantage, if, like his servant Job, we persevere in faith, and hope, and patience." Taking a general view of the chapters of this book, we observe, An account of Job's sufferings, chap. i., ii.; not without a mixture of human frailty, chap. iii.; a dispute between him and his three friends, chap. iv.—xxx. i.; the interposal of Elihu, and of God himself, chap. xxxii.—xli.; the end of all, in Job's posterity, chap. xlii.

CHAPTER I.

Job's piety, children, substance, 1-5. Satan obtains leave to try him, 6-12. His oxen, sheep, camels, and servants destroyed, 13-17. His sons and daughters killed, 18, 19. His patience and piety, 20-22.

A. M. 2484.
B. C. 1520. **T**HERE was a man ^a in the land of Uz, whose name was ^b Job; and that

man was ^c perfect and upright, and one ^d feared God, and eschewed evil. A. M. 2484.
B. C. 1520.

^a Gen. xxii. 20.—^b Ezek. xiv. 14; James v. 11.

^c Gen. vi. 9; xvii. 1; Chap. ii. 3.—^d Prov. viii. 13; xvi. 6.

NOTES ON CHAPTER I.

Verse 1. *There was a man in the land of Uz, whose name was Job*—We have observed in the argument, that the firstborn son of Nahor, Abraham's brother, was called *Uz*. It appears also from Gen. x. 23, that a grandson of Shem bore the same name, but it does not appear whether any country was named from either of these. But we find in Lam. iv. 21, that Edom was called *Uz*, probably from a

grandson of Seir, the Horite, of that name. See Gen. xxxvi. 20, 28; 1 Chron. i. 38, 42. This person, as the reader will recollect, inhabited the mountainous country, called *Seir* from him, before the time of Abraham; but his posterity being driven out, the Edomites seized that country, Gen. xiv. 6; Deut. ii. 12, whence it afterward bore the name of *Edom*. It is part of Arabia Petræa, bordering upon the tribe of Judah to the south. Hence the land of *Uz* is pro-

A. M. 2484. 2 And there were born unto him
B. C. 1520. seven sons and three daughters.

3 His ¹substance also was seven thousand sheep, and three thousand camels, and five hundred yoke of oxen, and five hundred she-asses, and a very great ²household; so that

¹ Or, cattle.—² Or, husbandry.

perly placed between Egypt and the Philistines in Jer. xxv. 20. See Bishop Lowth and Dodd. This, therefore, was probably the country of Job, "whose name," Dr. Dodd says, "in the Chaldee, Syriac, and Arabic, may, with the greatest probability, be derived from a root which signifies to love or desire; and might be rendered, the beloved or desirable one." We have observed, that it is likely he was of the posterity of Uz, the son of Nahor, the brother of Abraham; but how far removed from him can only be conjectured from the age of his friends; the eldest of whom, Eliphaz the Temanite, could not be nearer than great-grand-son to Esau; for Esau begat Eliphaz, and the son of Eliphaz was Teman: so that, supposing this Eliphaz to be the son of Teman, (and higher it will be impossible to place him,) he will then be five generations from Abraham; but as Eliphaz was very much older than Job, nay, older than his father, as appears from chap. xv. 10; and, considering that Abraham was very old before he had a son by Sarah, and that Rebecca, grand-daughter to Nahor, by Bethuel, perhaps his youngest son, was of an age proper to be wife to Isaac; we shall, probably, not be wide of the mark, if we allow Job to be at least six, if not seven generations removed from Nahor. The age therefore in which he lived must have coincided with the latter years of the life of Jacob, with those of Joseph, and the descent into, and sojourning in Egypt: his afflictions must have happened during the sojourning, about ten years before the death of Joseph, and his life must have been prolonged to within fourteen years before the departure of the Israelites from Egypt, that is, the year of the world 2499. The number of the years of the life of Job, according to this calculation, will be about two hundred; which, for that age of the world, and especially considering that Job was blessed with a remarkably long life, as a reward for his sufferings and integrity, will not appear very extraordinary; for Jacob lived one hundred and forty-seven years; Levi, his son, one hundred and thirty-seven; Koath, his grand-son, one hundred and thirty-three; and Amram, his great-grand-son, and father of Moses, one hundred and thirty-seven; Moses also lived one hundred and twenty years. All these, it seems, were his cotemporaries, some older, some younger than Job: so that this appears to agree extremely well with that circumstance of his history. See Heath and Dodd.

That man was perfect—Not exactly, or according to the law of innocence, but as to his sincere intentions, hearty affections, and diligent endeavours to perform his whole duty to God and men. And upright—Hebrew, *רַשָׁאִי*, *vejashar*, right, exact, and

this man was the greatest of all the A. M. 2484.
³ men of the East. B. C. 1220.

4 And his sons went and feasted in their houses, every one his day; and sent and called for their three sisters to eat and to drink with them.

³ Heb. sons of the east.

regular in all his dealings with men; one of an unblameable conversation. And one that feared God—One truly pious and devoted to God. And eschewed evil—Carefully avoiding all sin against God or men.

Verse 3. *His substance also was seven thousand sheep*—Namely, seven thousand small cattle, whether sheep or goats, in opposition to the larger cattle next mentioned. And *three thousand camels*—Camels in these parts were very numerous, as is manifest from Judges vii. 12; 1 Chron. v. 21, and the testimonies of Aristotle and Pliny; and very useful, both for carrying burdens in those hot and dry countries, being able to endure thirst much better than other creatures, and for service in war. And *five hundred she-asses*—Which were preferred before he-asses, as serving for the same uses of carrying burdens, riding on, and different kinds of labour; and likewise for breeding and giving milk: but he-asses also may perhaps be included in the expression, the denomination being, as usual, taken from the greater part, which were she-asses. *This man was the greatest of all the men of the East*—Hebrew, *magnus præ omnibus filiis Orientis, great in comparison, in respect, or before all the children of the East*. Grotius and others have observed, that the phraseology here used is an argument that the book must have been written by some Israelite, or inhabitant of the land of Canaan, Job's country lying eastward from thence, and it being usual with the Hebrews to call Arabia *the East*. The expression probably only means that he was the greatest, or one of the greatest, that lived in those parts; such general expressions being commonly understood with such limitations. The account of his piety and prosperity comes before the account of his afflictions, to show that neither of these will secure us from the common, no, nor from the uncommon calamities of human life.

Verse 4. *His sons went and feasted in their houses*—Or made a family feast, to testify and maintain their brotherly love. *Every one his day*—Not every day of the week and of the year, which would have been burdensome to them all, and gross luxury, and which certainly such a holy man as Job would not have permitted; but each his appointed day, perhaps his birth-day, or the first day of the month. It is certain the same expression, *יוֹמֵוֹ*, *jomo*, *his day*, means *his birth-day*, chap. iii. 1. "The verse," says Dr. Dodd, "might be rendered, *And his sons had a constant custom to make a family feast, every one on his birth-day; and they sent and invited their three sisters,*" &c. According to Herodotus, the inhabitants of the East in general, and especially the

A. M. 2484. 5 And it was so, when the days
B. C. 1520. of their feasting were gone about, that
Job sent and sanctified them, and rose up early
in the morning, and offered burnt-offerings
according to the number of them all: for Job
said, It may be that my sons have sinned, and

f cursed God in their hearts. Thus did A. M. 2484.
Job continually. B. C. 1520

6 ¶ Now there was a day when the sons
of God came to present themselves before
the LORD, and Satan came also among
them.

* Gen. viii. 20; Chap. xlii. 8.—† 1 Kings xxi. 10, 13.—‡ Heb. all the days.—§ Chap. ii. 1.

† 1 Kings xxii. 19; Chapter xxxviii. 7.—‡ Heb. the adversary, 1 Chron. xxi. 1; Rev. xii. 9.—§ Heb. in the midst of them.

Persians, were remarkable for celebrating their birth-days with great festivity and luxury.

Verse 5. *When the days of their feasting were gone about*—When each of them had had his turn, and there was some considerable interval before their next feasting-time; or, as the Hebrew *כִּי הִקְיִפוּ יָמֵי*, *chi hikkipu jemej*, may be rendered, *As the days went about, Job sent and sanctified them*—Exhorted and commanded them to sanctify themselves, not merely by changing or washing their clothes, (Gen. xxxv. 2; Exod. xix. 14.) and performing other ablations, and acts of ceremonial purification then in use; but by examining their own consciences, repenting of every thing that had been amiss in their feasting, and composing their minds for employments of a more solemn nature. *And rose up early in the morning*—Thereby showing his ardent zeal in God's service. *And offered burnt-offerings according to the number of them all*—Well knowing himself, and hereby teaching them, that all sin, even secret unbelief, ingratitude, and vanity of mind, merited condemnation from God, and could only be expiated by the shedding of blood, and offering of sacrifice, in a spirit of true penitence, and humble, lively faith. *It may be my sons have sinned*—His zeal for God's glory, and his love to his children, made him jealous; for which he had sufficient cause, from the corruption of human nature, the frailty and folly of youth, the many temptations which attend feasting, and men's proneness to slide from lawful to forbidden delights. *And cursed God*—Not in a gross manner, which it was not probable either that they should do, or that Job should suspect concerning them, but despised or dishonoured God; for both the Hebrew and Greek words which signify *cursing*, are sometimes used to denote only *reviling*, or setting light by a person. Thus, what is called cursing one's father or mother, Exodus xxi. 17, is elsewhere called setting light by them, as Deut. xxvii. 16; Ezek. xxii. 7. *In their hearts*—By slight and low thoughts of God, or by neglecting to give him the praise of the mercies which they enjoyed. It may be proper to observe, that the word *בָּרַךְ*, *barack*, here rendered to *curse*, usually signifies to *bless*; but it is evident it is here to be understood in a bad sense, as it is 1 Kings xxi. 10, where Naboth is accused of *cursing* or *blaspheming* God and the king, as it is also chap. ii. 5, 9, of this book. It has been thought by some, that it was substituted instead of the word *אָרַר*, *arar*; *קָבַב*, *kabab*; or *קָלַל*, *kalal*, (one or other of which is usually put for *cursing*, or *vilifying*,) out of reverence for God, when he is spoken of. But, "It is most certain," says Selden, as quoted by Leigh, "that the

verb *barak* signifies to *execrate* or to *curse*, as well as to *bless*; and this, as I think, not by *antiphrasis*, as some will have it; but almost from the very idiom of the sacred language it may signify either way, according to the connection in which it is used, as among the Latins *sacrare* and *imprecari*. For as the first signifies sometimes to devote any one by curses to destruction, and at others, to consecrate any thing to God; and as we call for either good or evil upon others; so *barak* denotes what a man wishes or calls for, with an ardent mind, whether it be salvation or perdition. And when applied to the Deity, it either signifies addressing him by praises and thanksgivings, (which is more common,) or with revilings and reproaches; and the difference is to be collected from the nature of the case and from the context." What Dr. Dodd observes here is also worth attention. "The Hebrew word," says he, "signifies to *bless*; but it here implies to *renounce* or *bid adieu*, or take our leave of those things which we abandon or renounce. It is therefore used with great elegance in this sense, to signify, *they renounced God*; and this signification is still softened and rendered more elegant by the addition of the words, *in their hearts*." Thus did Job continually—It was his constant course, at the end of every feasting-time, to offer a sacrifice for each of his children. Parents should be particular in their addresses to God, for the several branches of their family; praying for each child, according to his particular temper, genius, and disposition.

Verse 6. *Now there was a day*—A certain time appointed by God; *when the sons of God came*—The Targum says, *Troops of angels*, the LXX., *Angels of God*; the holy angels are called sons of God, (chap. xxxviii. 7, and Dan. iii. 25, 28,) because of their creation by God, their resemblance of him in power, dignity, and holiness, and their filial affection and obedience to him. *To present themselves before the Lord*—Before his throne, to receive his commands, and to give him an account of their ministrations. The verb *לְהִיחַתֵּב*, *lehithjatseb*, here rendered to *present themselves*, expresses the attendance and assiduity of ministers appearing before their king to receive his instructions, or give an account of their negotiations. This must be understood as a parabolical representation, similar to that in 1 Kings xxii. 19. The Scripture speaks of God after the manner of men, condescending to our capacities, and suiting the revelation to our apprehensions. As kings, therefore, transact their most important affairs in a solemn council or assembly, so God is pleased to represent himself as having his council likewise.

A. M. 2484. 7 And the LORD said unto Satan, B. C. 1520. Whence comest thou? Then Satan answered the LORD, and said, From 'going to and fro in the earth, and from walking up and down in it.

¹ Chap. ii. 2; Matt. xii. 43; 1 Pet. v. 8.—⁷ Heb. *Hast*

and as passing the decrees of his providence in an assembly of his holy angels. We have here, in the case of Job, the same grand assembly held as was before in that of Ahab, 1 Kings xxii.: the same host of heaven, called here the *sons of God*, presenting themselves before Jehovah, as in the vision of Micaiah they are said to stand on *his right hand and on his left*: a wicked spirit appearing among them, here called *Satan, or the adversary*, and there a *lying spirit*, both bent on mischief, and ready to do all the hurt that they were able, as far as God would give them leave; but, nevertheless, both under the control of his power, and suffered to go as far as might best serve the wise ends of his justice and his providence, and no further. The imagery, in short, is just the same; and the only difference is in the manner of the relation. Micaiah, as a prophet, and in the actual exercise of his prophetic office, delivers it as he received it, that is, in a *vision: I saw the Lord sitting on his throne, &c.* The other, as an historian, interweaves it with the history, and tells us, in the plain narrative style, *There was a day, &c.* And this parabolical or prophetic way of representing what is a great and most important truth, namely, that God, by his wise and holy providence, governs all the actions of men and devils, is used that it may make a more lively and lasting impression on our minds. At the same time it must not be forgotten that representations of this kind are founded in a well-known and established truth, namely, that there are angels, both good and bad, that they are interested in the affairs of men; a point revealed, no doubt, from the beginning. And that the affairs of earth are much the subject of the counsels of the unseen world, to which we lie open, though that world is in a great measure concealed from us. And such representations may also be intended to discover to us, in part, at least, the causes of many of those things which happen on earth, and which appear to us unaccountable, namely, that they arise from our having some connection with, or relation to, other orders of beings through the universe, on whose account, and through whose ministry, many things may happen to us, which otherwise would not. Thus the dreadful calamities and afflictions which befell Job, in such quick succession, are utterly unaccountable according to the ordinary course of human things, and seem almost without reason, if he were considered merely as a human being, having no connection with, relation to, or influence upon, any world but this, or any order of beings but those among whom he lived; but are easily accounted for if brought on him by invisible agents, through divine permission, and certainly answered a most wise and grand purpose, if intended to show to superior beings, whether good or evil, to

8 And the LORD said unto Satan, A. M. 2484. Hast^k thou considered my servant B. C. 1520. Job, that *there is* none like him in the earth, ^la perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God, and escheweth evil?

thou set thy heart on.—^k Chap. ii. 3.—^l Verse 1.

what a degree of steady and invincible piety and fidelity to God his grace can raise creatures formed out of the clay, and dwelling in flesh. It is but just to observe here, that some commentators adopt a different interpretation of this verse, understanding by the *sons of God presenting themselves before the Lord*, the people of God meeting together for religious worship on earth. Dr. Lightfoot's comment is, "On a sabbath day, when the professors of the true religion were met together, in the public assembly, Satan was invisibly there among them;" namely, to distract and disturb them in their worship, and observe their infirmities and defects, that he might have matter of accusation against them. But what we have stated above seems to be the most probable sense of the passage.

Verse 7. *The Lord said unto Satan, &c.*—As we are not to suppose from the preceding verse that Satan entered into heaven among the angels of God, uncalled; so, neither are we so to understand what is here said, as if the Great and Holy One really entered into a conversation with that apostate spirit. But, as we have stated above, the whole is parabolical and emblematical. *Whence comest thou?*—God, being here represented as Judge, begins with an *inquiry* as the ground of his further proceedings, as he did with our first parents, Genesis iii. 9, and with Cain, Gen. iv. 9. *Satan answered the Lord, From going to and fro in the earth*—Where, by thy permission, I range about, observing, with great diligence, all the dispositions and actions of men, and working in them and among them, as far as I have liberty and opportunity. The Targum, after the words, *from going to and fro in the earth*, very significantly adds, *to try the works of the children of men*. From which it appears, that the ancient Jews understood this account of the temptation of Job in a literal sense. This representation teaches us, that Satan, the great apostate spirit, is entirely under the dominion of the sovereign Lord of all things, and not suffered to act without control; and that he is chiefly confined to the limits of this earth; agreeably to which he is called, in the New Testament, the *Prince of this world*, John xii. 31. And from this and many other passages in Scripture, we may learn that it is his employment to seek for all opportunities to delude the human race. The New Testament frequently mentions the temptations, wiles, and snares of the devil. And St. Peter describes him as doing the same thing which he is here said to do, namely, *walking about as an adversary to man, seeking whom he may devour*; roving to and fro with an evil intention, and a determined resolution of doing mischief.

Verse 8. *Hast thou considered my servant Job?*—Hast thou taken notice of him, and of his spirit and

A. M. 2484. 9 Then Satan answered the LORD,
B. C. 1520. and said, Doth Job fear God for
naught?

10 ^m Hast not thou made a hedge about him,
and about his house, and about all that he hath
on every side? ⁿ thou hast blessed the work of his
hands, and his ^o substance is increased in the land.

^m Psa. xxxiv. 7; Isa. v. 2.—ⁿ Psa. cxviii. 1, 2; Prov. x. 22.
^o Or, cattle.—^p Chap. ii. 5; xix. 21.

conduct? *That there is none like him in all the earth*—The Targum saith, “None like him in the land of the Gentiles;” intimating, probably, that notwithstanding he was of the Gentiles, he was yet so distinguished an example of virtue and goodness, that his equal was not to be found among them. Dr. Lightfoot speaks of Job as being, without the least doubt, a heathen, observing, “In these times, when it went thus sadly with Israel in Egypt, there shone forth the glorious piety of Job in the land of Uz,” vol. i. p. 23; and again, p. 1028, “About (the time of) Israel’s being in Egypt, Job lives in Arabia, a heathen man, and yet so good.” And thus St. Gregory: “His country is purposely named, that the goodness of the man may be the more illustrated.”

Verse 9. *Doth Job serve God for naught?*—That is, sincerely and freely, and out of pure love and respect to thee? No: it is policy, not piety, that makes him good: he doth not serve thee, but serves himself of thee; and is a mere mercenary creature, serving thee for his own ends.

Verse 10. *Hast thou not made a hedge about him?*—Protected him with a thorny and inaccessible defence, or secured him, by thy special care and providence, from all harm and inconveniences? which is sufficient to oblige and win persons of the worst tempers; *and about his house*—His children and servants; *about all that he hath on every side*—His whole property, which is all under thy protection. *Thou hast blessed the work of his hands*—Hast caused whatever he does to prosper. Observe, reader, without the divine blessing, be the hands ever so strong, ever so skilful, their work will not prosper. *And his substance is increased in the land*—The original word פקנהו, *mickneehu*, chiefly means his cattle; and the word פרוץ, *parets*, here rendered *increased*, is a metaphor taken from waters which have burst their bounds, and spread themselves on all sides round; so Job’s substance had largely increased, and spread itself like a flowing torrent over the adjacent land.—Schultens.

Verse 11. *But put forth thy hand now*—In a way of justice and severity, as the phrase of putting or stretching forth God’s hand is used, Isa. v. 25, and Ezek. xxv. 7, 13, 16: *and touch all that he hath*—That is, afflict or destroy his children and substance; *and he will curse thee to thy face*—He who is now so forward to serve and bless thee, will then openly and boldly blaspheme thy name, and reproach thy providence as unjust and unmerciful to him. Or, as Schultens paraphrases the words, “He will, with the highest degree of insolence and contumacy, entirely

11 ^o But put forth thy hand now, A. M. 2484.
and touch all that he hath, ^q and he B. C. 1520.
will ^p curse thee to thy face.

12 And the LORD said unto Satan, Behold, all that he hath *is* in thy ¹⁰ power; only upon himself put not forth thy hand. So Satan went forth from the presence of the LORD.

^q Heb. *if he curse thee not to thy face.*—^p Isa. viii. 21; Mal. iii. 13.—¹⁰ Heb. *hand*, Gen. xvi. 6.

renounce thee and religion.” Thus, when Satan could not accuse Job of any thing really ill, he charges him with having merely selfish and sinister ends in view in doing good, which was, in effect, charging him with being a hypocrite. Let us not think it strange if those who are approved and accepted of God, be unjustly censured by the devil and his instruments; and if they be otherwise perfectly unexceptionable, it is easy to charge them with hypocrisy, as Satan charged Job, and they have no way to clear themselves, but patiently to wait for the judgment of God. As there is nothing we should dread more than being hypocrites, so there is nothing we should dread less than being called and accounted so without cause. It was a great truth that Job did not fear God for naught; he got much by it: for *godliness is great gain*. But it was a false lie that he would not have feared God if he had not got this by it, as the event proved. Job’s friends charged him with hypocrisy because he was greatly afflicted, Satan because he greatly prospered. It is no hard matter for those to calumniate that seek occasion. Let us remember it is not mercenary to look at the eternal recompense in our obedience; but to aim merely or chiefly at temporal advantages in our religion, and to make it subservient to them, is spiritual idolatry, worshipping the creature more than the Creator, and is likely to end in a fatal apostacy. Men cannot long *serve God and Mammon*.

Verse 12. *The Lord said, Behold, all that he hath is in thy power*—I give thee full power to do with his property, his servants, his children, and his wife, whatsoever thy craft or malice shall prompt thee to do; *only upon himself put not forth thy hand*—Meddle not with his own person, with his body or soul. It seems strange that God should give Satan such a permission as this. But he did it for his own glory, for the honour of Job, for the explanation of providence, and the encouragement of his afflicted people in all ages. *So Satan went forth from the presence of the Lord*—From the place where God is represented as having been especially present, glad of the permission he had obtained to do mischief to a good man; and resolved to lose no time, but immediately to put his project in execution. Schultens observes, that נסך, *jatza*, *to go forth*, is used here in a judicial way; comprehending the office of an executer of justice; as Isaiah xxxvii. 36, the angel of the Lord נסך, *jatza*, *went forth*, and smote in the camp of the Assyrians. Thus did Satan *go forth* to execute the judgments wherewith he was permitted to afflict and try Job.

A. M. 2184. 13 ¶ And there was a day ⁹ when
B. C. 1520. his sons and his daughters *were* eating
and drinking wine in their eldest brother's
house :

14 And there came a messenger unto Job, and
said, The oxen were ploughing, and the asses
feeding beside them :

15 And the Sabeans fell *upon them*, and took
them away ; yea, they have slain the servants
with the edge of the sword ; and I only am
escaped alone to tell thee.

16 While he *was* yet speaking, there came
also another, and said, ¹¹The fire of God is
fallen from heaven, and hath burned up the
sheep and the servants, and consumed them ;

⁹ Eccles. ix. 12.—¹¹ Or, *A great fire.*—¹² Heb. *rushed.*

Verses 14, 15. *And the asses feeding beside them*—That is, beside the oxen. *And the Sabeans fell upon them*—A people of Arabia, who led a wandering life, and lived by robbery and plunder, as Strabo and other heathen writers observe. They were the descendants of Abraham by Keturah, whose son Jokshan begat Sheba, their progenitor. Indeed, the Hebrew here is, *Sheba fell upon them ; and took them away*—The whole five hundred yoke of oxen, and the five hundred asses which he had. *Yea, they have slain the servants, &c.*—Who faithfully and bravely did their best to defend them. *And I only am escaped to tell thee*—Him Satan spared no less maliciously than he destroyed the rest, that Job might have speedy and certain intelligence of his calamity.

Verse 16. *While he was yet speaking*—Before the former had done speaking, or Job could have time to compose his disturbed mind, and to digest his former loss ; *there came also another*—Another messenger of evil tidings ; *and said, The fire of God is fallen from heaven*—Not ordinary lightning, which could scarcely have destroyed seven thousand sheep at once ; but an extraordinary, terrible, and widely-spreading flame or fire, issuing from the air, accompanied, probably, by a dreadful storm of thunder and hail, such as that recorded Exodus ix., which destroyed both man and beast that were left without shelter in the field ; or that which destroyed the army of the confederate kings, Josh. x. 11. We need not wonder that this fire and storm were so destructive, since they were raised by him who is emphatically termed the *prince of the power of the air*, and who had now permission to use his power to the utmost against the property of Job. Thunder is termed in Hebrew *the voice of God*, and the messenger terms this lightning *the fire of God*, not knowing that the evil spirit had any hand in causing it. How terrible then must have been the tidings of this destruction, which was represented as coming immediately from the hand of God, and which seemed to show that God was angry at Job's very offerings, and would receive no more at his hands !

and I only am escaped alone to tell thee. A. M. 2184.
B. C. 1520.

17 While he *was* yet speaking, there came also another, and said, The Chaldeans made out three bands, and ¹²fell upon the camels, and have carried them away, yea, and slain the servants with the edge of the sword ; and I only am escaped alone to tell thee.

18 While he *was* yet speaking, there came also another, and said, ¹Thy sons and thy daughters *were* eating and drinking wine in their eldest brother's house :

19 And behold, there came a great wind ¹³from the wilderness, and smote the four corners of the house, and it fell upon the young

¹ Verses 4, 13.—¹³ Heb. *from aside, &c.*

Verse 17. *There came also another*—Bringing tidings still more afflictive than either of the two former ; *and said, The Chaldeans*—Who also lived upon spoil, as Xenophon and others observe ; *made out three bands*—That they might come upon their prey several ways, and that nothing might be able to escape them ; *and fell upon the camels, and have carried them away*—The three thousand camels which Job had ; (see verse 3 ;) a prodigious loss indeed ! slaying, at the same time, the servants that tended them. If the fire of God, and the sword of the plunderers, which fell upon Job's honest servants that were in the way of their duty, had fallen upon the Sabean robbers that were doing mischief, God's judgments therein would have been like *the great mountains*, evident and conspicuous ; but when the way of the wicked prospers, and they carry off their booty, while just and good men are suddenly cut off, God's righteousness is like *the great deep*, the bottom of which we cannot find, Psa. xxxvi. 6.

Verse 18. *While he was yet speaking there came also another*—Bringing tidings the most distressing of all. One messenger immediately followed another in this manner, through the contrivance of Satan, by God's permission, that there might seem to be more than ordinary displeasure of God against Job in his troubles, and that he might not have leisure to recollect himself, but be overwhelmed by a complication of calamities. Thus the children of God are often *in heaviness*, *λυπηθεντες*, *distressed, burdened with grief*, through manifold trials ; deep calls to deep ; waves and billows, one after another, go over them. Let one affliction, therefore, quicken and excite us to prepare for another ; for, how deep soever we may have drunk of the bitter cup, as long as we are in the world, we cannot be sure that we have drunk our share. *Thy sons and thy daughters were eating and drinking, &c.*—That is, feasting after their manner, and, as Job had generally feared and suspected, perhaps sinning against God, verse 5.

Verse 19. *And behold, there came a great wind from the wilderness*—From the further part of, or

A. M. 2494. men, and they are dead; and I only
B. C. 1520. am escaped alone to tell thee.

20 Then Job arose, and rent his ¹⁴ mantle, and shaved his head, and ¹⁵ fell down upon the ground, and worshipped,

21 And said, ¹⁶ Naked came I out of my

¹⁴ Gen. xxxvii. 29; Ezra ix. 3.—¹⁵ Or, robe.—¹⁶ 1 Peter v. 6.
¹⁷ Psa. xlix. 17; Eccles. v. 15; 1 Tim. vi. 7.—¹⁸ Eccles. v. 19;

across the wilderness, whence the fiercest winds came, as having most power in such open places: see Jer. iv. 11, and xiii. 24. By this it appears that Job's situation was on the northerly side of the Arabian desert; and smote the four corners of the house—In which the chief strength of the house consisted. The wind smote these either all together, or rather successively, one corner immediately after another, being possibly a whirlwind, which came violently and suddenly whirling about in a circle; and it fell upon the young men—Upon his sons in their youth, and his daughters also, as appears from the sequel. This was the greatest of all Job's losses, his ten children being, undoubtedly, by far the dearest and most valuable of his possessions; and it could not but go nearest to him, and, therefore, Satan reserved it to the last; that, if the other provocations failed, this might make him curse God. Our children are parts of ourselves, and it touches a good man in a most tender part to be deprived of any of them. What then must Job have felt, when he learned that he had lost his whole ten at once, and that in one moment he was written childless! It was also an aggravation of the calamity that they had been taken away so suddenly, without any previous warning. Had they died by some lingering disease, and he had had notice to expect their death, and prepare for the breach, the affliction would have been more tolerable. And that they had died when they were *feasting and making merry*, was another and still more distressing circumstance. Had they died suddenly when they were *praying*, he might have better borne it; for, in that case, he would have hoped that death had found them in a state of preparation for another world, which he had great reason to fear now it had not. They died, indeed, by a wind of the devil's raising, but which seemed to come from the immediate hand of God, and to be sent as a judgment of God upon them for the punishment of their sins: and they were taken away when Job had most need of them to comfort him under all his other losses.

Verse 20. *Then Job arose*—From his seat whereon he had been sitting in a disconsolate posture; and *rent his mantle*—In token of his deep sense of, and just sorrow for, the heavy hand of God upon him, and his humiliation of himself under that hand: see Gen. xxxvii. 34; and *shaved his head*—Caused the hair of his head to be shaved or cut off, which was then a usual ceremony in mourning: of which see Ezra ix. 3; Isa. xv. 2, and xxii. 12; Jer. vii. 29, and xli. 5; Mich. i. 16. *And fell down upon the ground*—In self-abasement, contrition, and supplica-

mother's womb, and naked shall I re- A. M. 2494.
turn thither: The LORD ¹⁷ gave, and B. C. 1520.
the LORD hath ¹⁸ taken away; ¹⁹ blessed be the
name of the LORD.

22 ²⁰ In all this Job sinned not, nor ²¹ charged
God foolishly.

James i. 17.—¹⁷ Matt. xx. 15.—¹⁸ Eph. v. 20; 1 Thess. v. 18.
¹⁹ Chap. ii. 10.—²⁰ Or, attributed folly to God.

tion unto God; and worshipped—Instead of cursing God, which Satan said he would do, he adored him, and gave him the glory of his sovereignty, of his justice, and of his goodness also, in this most severe dispensation.

Verse 21. *Naked came I out of my mother's womb*—I brought none of those things which I have now lost with me when I came out of my mother's womb into the world, but I received them from the hand and favour of that God who hath now required his own again; and *naked shall I return*—I shall be as rich when I die as I was when I was born; and therefore have reason to be contented with my condition, which also is the common lot of all men. We go naked out of the world into the womb or lap of our common mother the earth, as the weary child lays its head on its mother's bosom. Death strips us of all our possessions and enjoyments; clothing can neither warm nor adorn a dead body: a consideration which silenced Job under all his losses. The sanctified soul, however, goes out of the world clothed, (2 Cor. v. 3,) and when it appears in the presence of God is not found naked. *The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away*—He hath taken away nothing but his own; nothing but what he so gave to me as to reserve the supreme dominion and disposal of it in his own hand. So that I have no cause to murmur against him or complain. Nor have I reason to fret and rage against the Chaldeans and Sabeans, the fire or the wind, which were only God's instruments to execute his wise and holy counsel: for, what is it to me by what hand or means he that gives resumes what he gave? *Blessed be the name of the Lord*—That is, blessed be the Lord, his name being put for himself. The sense is, I have no cause to quarrel with God, but much cause to bless and praise him that he did give me such blessings, and suffered me to enjoy them more and longer than I deserved, and that he hath vouchsafed to afflict me, which I greatly needed for my soul's good; and which I take as a token of his love and faithfulness to me, and therefore ministering more matter of comfort than grief to me; and that he hath left me the comfort of my wife, and yet is pleased to continue to me the health of my body, and a composed mind, and a heart to submit to his good pleasure; and that he hath reserved and prepared a felicity for me, which no Chaldeans or Sabeans, no men or devils, can take away from me; of which see chap. xix. 25.

Verse 22. *In all this Job sinned not*—That is, under all these pressures, or in all that he said or did upon these sad occasions, he sinned not in such a

manner as Satan presaged that he would, and as is expressed in the following words. But the meaning is not that he was free from all human infirmity, of which he often acknowledges himself to be guilty. Indeed, the question between God and Satan was not whether Job had any sin in him, but whether he was a hypocrite, and would blaspheme God if brought under heavy calamities, which is here denied and disproved. *Nor charged God foolishly*—Hebrew, *nor imputed folly to God*; so far was he from blas-

pheming God, that he did not entertain any dishonourable thought of God, as if he had done any thing unworthy of his infinite wisdom, or justice, or goodness, but heartily acquiesced in his good pleasure, and in his righteous, though sharp proceedings against him. Discontent and impatience do, in effect, *impute folly to God!* Against the workings of these we should carefully watch, acknowledging that God has done well, but we have done foolishly.

CHAPTER II.

Satan moves for another trial of Job, which God permits, 1-6. Satan smites him with bites from head to foot, 7, 8. He is tempted by his wife, but resists the temptation, 9, 10. His friends come to comfort him, 11-13.

A. M. 2484.
B. C. 1520.

A GAIN * there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the LORD, and Satan came also among them to present himself before the LORD. 2 And the LORD said unto Satan, From whence comest thou? And ^bSatan answered the LORD, and said, From going to and fro in

the earth, and from walking up and down in it. A. M. 2484.
B. C. 1520.

3 And the LORD said unto Satan, Hast thou considered my servant Job, that *there is none like him in the earth*, ° a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God, and escheweth evil? and still he ^dholdeth fast his integrity,

* Chap. i. 6.—^b Chap. i. 7.

° Chap. i. 1, 8.—^d Chap. xxvii. 5, 6.

NOTES ON CHAPTER II.

Verse 1. *Again there was a day*—Another appointed season, some convenient time after the former calamities. Heath translates וַיְהִי הַיּוֹם, *vajehi k-jom, Again it was the day.* Of this and the two next verses, see notes on chap. i. 6-8.

Verse 3. *Hast thou considered, &c.*—Hebrew, הֲשִׁיבָה לִּי, *hashamta libbecha, Hast thou set thy heart on my servant?* &c. *And still he holdeth fast his integrity*—Notwithstanding all his trials and tribulations, and thy malicious suggestion to the contrary, he continues to be the same perfect and upright man he was before; and all thy efforts to wrest from him his integrity, and draw him into sin, have been fruitless. *Although thou movedst me, &c.*—It is justly observed by a late writer, that the translation of this verse will be more agreeable to the Hebrew, if, with the vulgar Latin, we place the interrogation after the word *integrity*; namely, *Timens Deum, et recedens a malo, et adhuc retinens innocentiam? Fearing God, departing from evil, and still holding fast his integrity?* For thus do the three participles in Hebrew follow one another. Instead then of rendering the next word, *although thou movedst me*; he proposes reading, *And yet thou movest me*; or, to continue the interrogation, namely, *And dost thou, or, wilt thou, move me against him to destroy him without cause?* This, and the rest of this representation, respecting Satan's *moving*, that is, persuading and prevailing with God, to bring, or to suffer this his enemy to bring, these grievous calamities upon Job, is not to be understood literally; as if God could be moved

by any of his creatures, especially by Satan, to alter or depart from his own wise and holy purposes, which are all eternal and unchangeable, to gratify that evil spirit by granting his desires: but the design is simply to signify the devil's restless malice, in promoting man's misery, and God's permission of it, for his own glory. *To destroy him without cause*—Without any signal guilt or special provocation, whereby he, more than others, deserved to be chastised by such heavy calamities; not but that there might be other very weighty causes for them: for the divine wisdom, we may be sure, neither does nor suffers any thing without cause; that is, without a sufficient reason. That good men are sometimes extremely afflicted, and that not only in their outward estate, but in their persons, as Job was, is too plain to be denied; (see John ix. 3;) and, whether God permits wicked spirits, or wicked men, or any thing else, to be the immediate instrument of a good man's sufferings, makes no alteration as to the nature or degree of his sufferings. But the word חִנָּם *chinnam*, here rendered, *without cause*, may, with equal propriety, be translated, as it is Prov. i. 17; Ezek. vi. 10, and elsewhere, *in vain*; and be referred, not to God's *destroying* him, but to Satan's moving God so to do. And then the reading will be, *Thou hast in vain moved, or dost, or wilt, in vain move me to destroy him*; that is, without effect, or to no purpose; for thou art not able to take away his integrity, which, in spite of all thy art and malice, he still holds fast. Thus Junius and Tremellius translate the words: *Hast thou considered my servant Job—that he still retains*

A. M. 2484. although thou movedst me against
A. D. 1520. him ¹ to ^o destroy him without
cause.

4 And Satan answered the LORD, and said,
Skin for skin, yea, all that a man hath will he
give for his life.

5 ^f But put forth thy hand now, and touch

¹ Heb. to swallow him up.—^o Chap. ix. 17.—^f Chap. i. 11.

his integrity? and, in vain hast thou excited me to
destroy him: and Houbigant, *He still retains his
integrity, after thou hast excited me against him,
that I might trouble him, in vain.*

Verse 4. *Skin for skin, &c.*—The design of these
words is plain, which was to detract from Job, and
to diminish that honour and praise which God gave
him, by pretending that he had done no more than
the meanest men commonly do by the law of self-
preservation. And it is equally clear that this was
a proverbial speech then in use, to denote the great
value in which life is held, insomuch that, to pre-
serve it, a man would suffer even his skin to be torn
off. It may signify also that a man, in order to save
his life, would willingly suffer himself to be stripped
of all his property. But the words כֶּצֶר נַפְשׁוֹ *beg-
nad naphsho*, rendered here, *for his life*, ought
rather to be rendered, *for his person*. For the ques-
tion was not about his life, which Satan had not the
impudence to desire; nor indeed could the trial be
made, by taking away his life, whether he would
hold fast his integrity; but rather by smiting him in
his bone, and in his flesh. And Satan, in these
words, insinuates that severe bodily pain was much
more grievous to the human nature, and would be
less patiently borne by Job, than any outward cal-
amities which did not affect his own person. It is
as if he had said, How dear soever a man's goods,
or servants, or children, may be to him, yet still his
own person is dearer; and seeing that Job is still
under no pain of body, and in no danger of losing
his life, his constancy is not to be boasted of: nor is
his holding fast his integrity amidst his losses, nor
his patience under them, an evidence of his sincere
and generous piety, but these things are rather
effects of mere self-love: he is content with the loss
of his estate, and even of his children too, so long
as he sleeps in a whole skin; and is well pleased
that thou wilt accept of these as a ransom in his
stead. And it is not true patience which makes him
seem to bear his troubles so submissively, but rather
policy, that he may in this way appease thy wrath
against him, and prevent those further plagues,
which, for his hypocrisy, he fears thou wouldst
otherwise bring upon his body.

Verse 5. *But touch his bone and his flesh*—
That is, smite him, not slightly, but to the quick, to
the bones and marrow, so that he may feel pain and
anguish indeed: *and he will curse thee to thy face*—
Will openly and daringly blaspheme thy perfections,
and reproach the dispensations of thy providence,
and so will let go his integrity. Satan knew, and
we find by experience, that nothing has a greater

his ^o bone and his flesh, and he will ^o curse thee to thy face. A. M. 2484.
B. C. 1520.

6 ^b And the LORD said unto Satan, Behold,
he *is* in thy hand; ² but save his life.

7 ¶ So went Satan forth from the presence
of the LORD, and smote Job with sore biles
¹ from the sole of his foot unto his crown.

^o Chap. xix. 20.—^b Chap. i. 12.—² Or, only.—¹ Isa. i. 6.

tendency to ruffle the mind, and put its passions
into disorder, than acute pain and distemper of
body.

Verse 6. *The Lord said, Behold, he is in thy
hand*—I give thee permission to try him even in
this way: do thy worst at him; afflict him to the
utmost of thy power. *But save his life*—Do not
attempt to take that away which I will not suffer
thee to do. God had mercy in store for Job, after
this trial, and therefore he must survive it; and how
much soever he may be afflicted, his life must be
given him for a prey. If God did not chain up the
roaring lion, how soon would he devour us! As
far as he permits the wrath of Satan and wicked
men to proceed against his people, he will make it
turn to his own praise and theirs, and the remainder
thereof he will restrain. Job, in being thus malign-
ed and afflicted by Satan, was a type of Christ;
whose *heel* that infernal serpent was permitted to
bruise, to touch even his bone and his flesh, yea,
and his life also; because, by dying, he was to do
what Job could not do, *to destroy him that had the
power of death.*

Verse 7. *Satan went forth from the presence of the
Lord*—Or, *from the Lord*, ἀπο το Κυριου, as the LXX.
render it. Compare Acts v. 41, *They departed, απο
προσωπης του συνεδριου, from the presence of the council*
that is, *from the council*. *And smote Job with sore biles*
—Ελκει πονηρας, *with a foul ulcer, or evil inflammation*,
say the Seventy; breaking out and spreading itself
over all his body. The biles, it seems, were
like those inflicted upon the Egyptians, which are
expressed by the same word, and threatened to the
apostate Israelites, (Deut. xxviii. 27,) whereby he
was made loathsome to himself and to his nearest
relations, and filled with consuming pains in his
body, and no less torments and anguish in his mind.
From the sole of his foot unto his crown—In all the
outward parts of his body. "His tongue," says
Poole, "he spared, that it might be capable of uttering
those blasphemies against God which Satan desired
and expected him to utter." One boil, when it is
gathering, is very distressing, and gives a man abun-
dantly of pain and unquietness. What a condition
was Job then in, who had biles all over his body, no
part being free, and those as much inflamed, and of
as raging a heat, as Satan could make them! If
at any time we be exercised with sore and grievous
distempers, let us not think ourselves more hardly
dealt with than God has sometimes dealt with the
best of his saints and servants. We know not how
far Satan may have a hand, by God's permission, in
the diseases with which mankind, especially the

A. M. 2184. 8 And he took him a potsherd to
B. C. 1520. scrape himself withal; ^k and he sat
down among the ashes.

9 ¶ Then said his wife unto him, ^l Dost thou

^k 2 Samuel xiii. 19; Chapter xlii. 6; Ezek. xxvii. 30; Matthew xi. 21.

children of God, are afflicted; or what infections that prince of the air may spread, what inflammations may come from that fiery serpent. We read of one whom he had bound for many years, Luke xiii. 10. And should God suffer him to have his will against us, he would soon make the best and bravest of us very miserable. It is a judicious remark of Dr. Mede here, that it is not Job himself or his friends, but the author of the book, who attributes his calamities to Satan; for this writer's intention seems to have been to show, by a striking example, that the world is governed by the providence of God; and as the holy angels, whose ministry God makes use of in distributing his bountiful gifts, punctually execute all his commands; so Satan himself, with his agents, are under the power of God, and cannot inflict any evils on mankind without the divine permission.

Verse 8. *And he took a potsherd, &c.*—His children and servants were all dead, his wife unkind, and none of those whom he had formerly befriended had so much sense of honour and gratitude as to minister to him in his distress, to furnish him with linen clothes, or lend a hand to cleanse or dress his running sores; either because the disease was loathsome and offensive, or because they apprehended it to be infectious. Being therefore deprived of other relief, he laid hold on what was next at hand, a piece of a broken pot, or tile, to press out, or remove, the purulent matter which was under his ulcers, or flowed from them, and was the great cause of his pain; or to rub them, and allay the itching, which, as they began to die away, probably became intolerable. The Hebrew word להתגרד, *le-hithgared*, here used, which we translate to *scrape himself*, occurs nowhere else in the Bible, but is said to be frequently used in Chaldee and Arabic in the sense of pulling off bark or leaves from trees, and is here rendered by the LXX. *να τον ιχωρα ενη, that he might wipe off, or cleanse away, the corrupt matter.* *And sat down among the ashes*—*Επι της κοπριας εξω της πολεις, upon the dung-hill without the city, say the Seventy.* Here he would easily find a potsherd at hand, but not any clean and soft linen clothes, much less any ointments, salves, or plasters, proper for the healing of his sores. But it is probable, if he had had such things at hand he would not have used them; for as he sat down in this place, *in dust and ashes*, as mourners used to do, humbling himself under the mighty hand of God, so, in the same spirit of self-abasement and humiliation, he would have declined all things that savoured of tenderness and delicacy, and have still used his potsherd.

Verse 9. *Then said his wife*—Whom Satan had spared, that she might be a troubler and tempter to him. For it is his policy to send his temptations by

still ^mretain thine integrity? curse A. M. 2484.
God, and die. B. C. 1520.

10 But he said unto her, Thou speakest as one of the foolish women speaketh. What! ⁿ shall

^l Chap. xxi. 15.—^m Verse 3.—ⁿ Chap. i. 21; Rom. xii. 12; James v. 10.

those that are dear to us. We ought, therefore, carefully to watch, that we be not drawn to any evil by them whom we love and value the most. *Dost thou still retain thine integrity?*—Art thou so weak as still to persist in the practice of righteousness, when it is not only unprofitable to thee, but the chief occasion of all these thy insupportable miseries, and when God himself not only forsakes and leaves thee in this helpless and hopeless condition, but is turned to be thy greatest enemy? This is evidently the meaning of the expression, *holding fast his integrity*, when used by God, speaking of Job, verse 3, and, it seems, must be its meaning here; and not, as some commentators have supposed, *the maintaining that he was innocent* of those secret sins with which his friends appeared to have charged him; a sense of the words which would not at all suit the connection in which this, or the third verse, stands with the verses following. *Curse God and die*—Seeing thy blessing and praising God avail thee so little, it is time for thee to change thy language. Reproach him to his face, and tell him of his injustice and unkindness to thee; and that he loves his enemies and hates his friends, and that will provoke him to take away thy life, and so end thy torments. Or, *Curse God*, though thou die for it. This is the sense in which the same Hebrew word is evidently used by Satan, (chap. i. 11,) and, as it appears from the next verse, that Job's wife was now under Satan's influence, and was an instrument employed by him to tempt her husband, and so to forward his design, which certainly was to prevail with Job to curse or reproach God; this seems to be her meaning. Inasmuch, however, as the original word, although it sometimes evidently signifies to *curse*, yet generally means to *bless*, it may be so interpreted here if we consider Job's wife as speaking ironically, as many, even pious, persons, are represented in the Scriptures to have spoken. The meaning then will be, *Bless God and die*—That is, I see thou art set upon blessing God; thou blessest him for giving, and thou blessest him for taking away: and thou art even blessing him for thy loathsome and tormenting diseases, and he rewards thee accordingly, giving thee more and more of that kind of mercy for which thou blessest him. Go on, therefore, in this thy generous course, and die as a fool dieth. And, this being her meaning, it is not strange that he reproves her so sharply for it in the next words.

Verse 10. *But he said, Thou speakest as one of the foolish women speaketh*—That is, like a rash, inconsiderate, and weak woman, that does not understand nor mind what she says: or rather, like a wicked and profane person, for such are frequently called *fools* in the Scriptures. *Shall we receive good, &c.,*

A. M. 2484. we receive good at the hand of
B. C. 1520.

God, and shall we not receive evil?

° In all this did not Job ^p sin with his lips.

11 ¶ Now when Job's three ^a friends heard of all this evil that was come upon him, they came every one from his own place; Eliphaz the ^r Temanite, and Bildad the ^s Shuhite, and Zophar the Naamathite: for they had made an appointment together to come ^t to mourn

° Chap. i. 22.—^p Psa. xxxix. 1.—^q Prov. xvii. 17.—^r Gen. xxxvi. 11; Jer. xlix. 7.—^s Gen. xxv. 2.

and shall we not receive evil?—Shall we poor worms give laws to our supreme Lord, and oblige him never to afflict us? And shall not those great and manifold mercies, which from time to time God hath given us, compensate these short afflictions? Ought we not to bless God for those mercies which we did not deserve, and contentedly bear those afflictions which we do deserve, and stand in need of, and by which, if it be not our own fault, we may get so much good. Shall we not receive—Shall we not expect to receive *evil*, namely, the evil of suffering? If God give us so many good things, shall we be surprised, or think it strange, if he sometimes afflict us, when he has told us, that prosperity and adversity are set the one against the other? 1 Pet. iv. 12. If we receive so many comforts, shall we not receive some afflictions, which will serve as foils to our comforts, to make them the more valuable? Shall we not be taught the worth of our mercies, by being made sometimes to want them, and as allays to our comforts, to make them the less dangerous, to keep the balance even, and to prevent our being lifted up above measure? 2 Cor. xii. 7. If we receive so much good for the body, shall we not receive some good for the soul? That is, some affliction, by which we may be made partakers of God's holiness? Heb. xii. 10. Let murmuring, therefore, as well as boasting, be for ever excluded. *In all this did not Job sin with his lips*—By any reflections upon God, by any impatient or unbecoming expression. In other words, *he held fast his integrity* in the sense explained above; which this demonstrates to be the true sense of that phrase.

Verse 11. *When Job's three friends heard of all this, &c.*—Who were persons eminent for birth and quality, for wisdom and knowledge, and for the profession of the true religion, being probably, as has been observed on chap. i. 1, of the posterity of Abraham, akin to Job, and living in the same country with him. See that note. The preserving so much wisdom and piety among those that were not children of the promise was a happy presage of God's grace to the Gentiles, when the partition wall should, in the latter days, be taken down. Esau lost the birthright, and when he should have regained it, was rejected, yet it appears many of his descendants inherited some of the best blessings.

Verse 12. *When they lifted up their eyes afar off*—

504

with him, and to comfort him. A. M. 2484.

B. C. 1520.

12 And when they lifted up their eyes afar off, and knew him not, they lifted up their voice and wept; and they rent every one his mantle, and ^u sprinkled dust upon their heads toward heaven.

13 So they sat down with him upon the ground ^v seven days and seven nights, and none spake a word unto him: for they saw that *his* grief was very great.

° Chapter xlii. 11; Rom. xii. 15.—^u Neh. ix. 1; Lam. ii. 10; Ezek. xxvii. 30.—^v Gen. i. 10.

Namely, at some convenient distance from him; whom they found sitting upon the ground, probably in the open air. *And knew him not*—His countenance being so dreadfully changed and disfigured by the ulcers. *They lifted up their voice and wept*—Through their sympathy with him, and great grief for his heavy affliction. *And they rent every one his mantle*—As it was usual for people to do in great and sudden calamities. *And sprinkled dust on their heads toward heaven*—Either on the upper part of their heads toward heaven, or threw it up into the air, so that it fell upon their heads, and showed the confusion they were in: all which things were marks of great grief and affliction, and were the usual ways of expressing sorrow in those days.

Verse 13. *So they sat down with him upon the ground*—In the same mournful posture wherein they found him, which indeed was the usual posture of mourners, condoling with him. *Sitting on the ground*, in the language of the eastern people, signifies their passing the time in the deepest mourning. *Seven days and seven nights*—Which was the usual time of mourning for the dead, Gen. i. 10; 1 Sam. xxxi. 13, and therefore proper, both for Job's children, who were dead, and for Job himself, who was, in a manner, dead while he lived: not that they continued in this posture so long together, which the necessities of nature could not bear: but they spent a great, or the greatest, part of that time in sitting with him, and silent mourning over him. *And none spake a word to him*—About his afflictions or the cause of them, or, perhaps, about any thing. "A long silence," says Dr. Dodd, "is a very natural effect of an extraordinary grief, which overwhelms the mind, and creates a sort of stupor and astonishment. Thus we find the Prophet Ezekiel, chap. iii. 15, sitting with his brethren of the captivity by the river Chebar, for seven days, *astonished, silent among them*, as the Chaldee renders it; struck dumb, as it were, at the apprehension of their present miseries, and the still greater calamities coming on his country." And thus were Job's friends affected on this occasion; their long silence arising from the greatness of their grief for him, and their surprise and astonishment at the condition in which they found him. They probably, also, thought it proper to give him some further time to vent his own sorrows; and might, as yet, not know what to say to him: for

3

though they had ever esteemed him to be a truly good man, and came with a full purpose to comfort him; yet the prodigious greatness of his miseries, and that hand and apparent displeasure of God

which they perceived in them, made them now question his sincerity, so that they could not comfort him as they had intended, and yet were loath to grieve him with reproofs.

CHAPTER III.

We have here Job cursing his birth-day, and complaining that he was born, 1-10. Complaining that he did not die as soon as he was born, 11-19. Complaining that his life was continued now he was in misery, 20-26.

A. M. 2484.
B. C. 1520.

AFTER this opened Job his mouth, and cursed his day.

2 And Job ¹ spake, and said,

3 * Let the day perish wherein I was born,

¹ Heb. answered.

NOTES ON CHAPTER III.

Verse 1. *After this Job opened his mouth*—The days of mourning being now over, and no hopes appearing of Job's amendment, but his afflictions rather increasing, he bursts into a severe lamentation; he wishes he had never existed, or that his death had immediately followed his birth; life under such a load of calamity appearing to him the greatest affliction. Undoubtedly Satan, who had been permitted to bring the fore-mentioned calamities upon him, and to torment his body so dreadfully, had also obtained liberty to assault his mind with various and powerful temptations. This he now does with the utmost violence, injecting hard thoughts of God, as being severe, unjust, and his enemy; that he might shake his confidence and hope, and produce that horror and dismay, which might issue in his cursing God. For, as is justly observed by Mr. Scott, unless we bring these inward trials into the account, during which we may conclude that he was deprived of all comfortable sense of God's favour, and filled with a dread of his wrath, we shall not readily apprehend the reason of the change that took place in his conduct, from the entire resignation manifested in the preceding chapters, to the impatience which appears here, and in some of the subsequent parts of this book. But this consideration solves the difficulty: the inward conflict and anguish of his mind, added to all his outward sufferings, caused the remaining corruption of his nature to work so powerfully, that at length it burst forth in many improper expressions. *And cursed his day*—His birth-day, as is evident from verse 3. In vain do some endeavour to excuse this and the following speeches of Job, who afterward is reproved by God, and severely accuses himself for them, chap. xxxviii. 2; xl. 4; xlii. 3, 6. And yet he does not proceed so far as to curse God, and therefore makes the devil a liar: but although he does not break forth into direct reproaches of God, yet he makes indirect reflections upon his providence. His curse was sinful, both because it was vain, being applied to what was not capable of receiving blessing or cursing, and because it reflected blame on God for bringing that day into existence,

and the night in which it was said, **A** M. 2484. There is a man-child conceived. **B.** C. 1520.

4 Let that day be darkness; let not God regard it from above, neither let the light shine upon it.

* Chap. x. 18; Jer. xv. 10; xx. 14.

and for giving him life on that day. Some other pious persons, through a similar infirmity, when immersed in deep troubles, have vented their grief in the same unjustifiable way. See Jeremiah xx. 14.

Verse 3. Here the metrical part of this book begins, which in the original Hebrew is broken into short verses, and is very beautiful, thus:

יֹאכֵר יוֹם אֲוִלְדִּי כֹ
וְהַלַּיְלָה אֲכַר וְרָחָה נָכַר
Vehalailah amar horah geber.
Let the day perish wherein I was born,
And the night which said, A man child is conceived.

Let the day perish, &c.—So far from desiring, according to the general and prevailing custom, that my birth-day should be celebrated; that any singular tokens of joy and gratulation should be expressed on it, in remembrance of my coming into the world, my earnest and passionate desire is, that it may not so much as be reckoned one of the days of the year, but that both it and the remembrance of it may be utterly lost. *And the night in which it was said*—With joy and triumph, as happy tidings, *There is a man-child conceived*—Or rather, *brought forth*, as the word רָחָה, *harah*, signifies, (1 Chron. iv. 17,) for the exact time of conception is commonly unknown to women themselves, and certainly is not wont to be reported among men, as this day is supposed to be. Indeed, this latter clause is only a repetition of the former, expressing that, whether it was day or night when he was born, he wished the time to be forgotten. Heath translates the words, *And the night which said, See, a man-child is born*; and he observes, from Schultens, “that the bearing of a son was considered a matter of great consequence among the Arabians; the form of their appreciation of happiness to a new-married woman being, ‘May you live happy, and bring forth male children.’”

Verse 4. *Let that day be darkness*—I wish the sun had never risen on that day; or, which is the same thing, that it had never been: and whensoever that day returns, instead of the cheering and refreshing beams of light arising upon it, I wish it may be co-

A. M. 2484. 5 Let darkness and ^b the shadow
B. C. 1520. of death ² stain it; let a cloud dwell
upon it; ³ let the blackness of the day terrify it.

6 *As for* that night, let darkness seize upon it; ⁴ let it not be joined unto the days of the year; let it not come into the number of the months.

7 Lo, let that night be solitary; let no joyful voice come therein.

^b Chap. x. 21; xvi. 16; xxviii. 3; Psa. xxiii. 4; xlv. 19; cvii. 10, 14; Jer. xiii. 16; Amos v. 8. ² Or, challenge it. ³ Or, let them terrify it, as those who have a bitter day, Amos viii. 10.

vered with gross, thick darkness, and rendered black, gloomy, and uncomfortable; *let not God regard it from above*—From heaven, by causing the light of heaven to visit it; or, let God make no more inquiry after it than if such a day had never been. Dr. Waterland renders it, *Let not God take account of it*.

Verse 5. *Let darkness and the shadow of death*—Let the most dismal darkness, like that of the place of the dead, which is a *land of darkness*, and where the *light is darkness*, chap. x. 21, 22; or darkness so gross and palpable, that its horrors are insupportable; *stain it*—Take away its beauty and glory, and render it abominable as a filthy thing; or, rather, *challenge* or *claim* it, as the word גִּיגָלוּחֻ, *jigaluhu*, here used, may properly be rendered, the verb גָּאַל, *gaal*, signifying, primarily, to *avenge*, *redeem*, *rescue*, *deliver*, *claim*, *possess*. Indeed, as Houbigant justly observes, "There enters nothing of pollution into the idea of darkness." *Let a cloud dwell upon it, &c.*—Let the thickest clouds wholly possess it, and render it terrible to men. Dr. Waterland renders the last clause, *Let the blackness make it hideous*.

Verse 6. *As for that night, let darkness seize upon it*—Constant and extraordinary darkness, without the least glimmering of light from the moon or stars; darkness to the highest degree possible. Thus, as Job had thrown out his resentment against the day in which he was born, so now the severity of his censure falls on his birth-right; and his style, we find, increases and grows stronger. Our translation, indeed, makes no difference in the expression of darkness; namely, "Let that day be darkness; as for that night, let darkness seize upon it." But the Hebrew is very different: for חֹשֶׁךְ, *choshhec*, is applied to the day, and אָפֶל, *ophel*, to the night, which latter word signifies a much greater degree of darkness than the former. See Joel ii. 2; in the Hebrew, where the latter word, אֶפְלָה, *ophelah*, means thick and terrible darkness. *Let it not be joined unto the days of the year*—Reckoned as one, or a part of one of them. Or rather, *Let it not rejoice among the days, &c.*, for יֶהָרֵךְ, *jehchal*, from חָדַדָה, *chadah*, *letari*, to *rejoice*, may properly be so rendered. Joy here, and terror verse 5, are poetically and figuratively ascribed to the day or night, with respect to men who may either rejoice or be affrighted therein. *Let it not rejoice*, that is, let it be a *sad*, and, as it were, a funeral day. *Let it not come into the number of the months*—May

8 Let them curse it that curse the A. M. 2484.
day, ^c who are ready to raise up ^d their B. C. 1520
mourning.

9 Let the stars of the twilight thereof be dark; let it look for light, but *have* none; neither let it see ^e the dawning of the day.

10 Because it shut not up the doors of my *mother's* womb, nor hid sorrow from mine eyes.

11 ^d Why died I not from the womb? *why*

^c Or, let it not rejoice among the days.—^e Jer. ix. 17.—^a Or, a *leviathan*.—^b Heb. the eyelids of the morning, Chap. xli. 18. ^d Chap. x. 18.

every month be looked upon as perfect and complete without taking that night or day into the number.

Verse 7. *Let that night be solitary*—Destitute of all society of men, meeting and feasting together. Let it afford no entertainment or pleasure of any kind; *let no joyful voice come therein*—No music, no harmony of sound be heard, no cheerful or pleasing voice admitted! Let no expressions of joy be so much as once attempted, however engaging and affecting they may be.

Verse 8. *Let them curse it that curse the day*—That is, their birth-day: when their afflictions move them to curse their own birth-day, let them remember mine also, and bestow some curses upon it; *who are ready to raise up their mourning*—Who are full of sorrow, and always ready to pour out their cries, and tears, and complaints. A late writer paraphrases this verse as follows: "So little am I concerned to have my birth-night celebrated by any public demonstrations of joy, by any solemn blessing or giving of thanks, that I would rather choose to hire a set of those men, whose business it is to *curse the days* that are esteemed inauspicious, and who are always ready on such occasions. Let them be produced, and let them apply all their skill in raising their mournful voices to the highest pitch: and let them study to find out proper expressions to load it with the highest and heaviest imprecations." If the reader will consult Poole and Dodd on the passage, he will find some reasons adduced which go to justify this exposition; but for which we have not room here.

Verse 9. *Let the stars of the twilight thereof, &c.*—That adorn the heavens with so much beauty and lustre, never be seen that night. *Let it look for light, but have none*—Let it wait with the greatest impatience for some pleasing refreshment from thick, heavy clouds hanging over it; but let not the smallest degree of light appear; *neither let it see the dawning of the day*—Neither let it perceive the least glimpse of those bright rays, which, with so much swiftness, issue from the rising sun.

Verse 10. *Because it shut not up my mother's womb*—Because it did not confine me to the dark prison of the womb, but suffered me to escape from thence; *nor hid sorrow from mine eyes*—Because it did not keep me from entering into this miserable life, and seeing or experiencing those bitter sorrows under which I now groan.

Verses 11, 12. *Why died I not from the womb?*—

A. M. 2494. did I *not* give up the ghost when I
B. C. 1520. came out of the belly?

12 • Why did the knees prevent me? or why the breasts that I should suck?

13 For now should I have lain still and been quiet, I should have slept: then had I been at rest,

14 With kings and counsellors of the earth, which ^f built desolate places for themselves;

15 Or with princes that had gold, who filled their houses with silver:

16 Or ^g as a hidden untimely birth I had not

^a Gen. xxx. 3; Isa. lxvi. 12.—^f Chap. xv. 28.—^g Psa. lviii. 8.
^h Heb. wearied in strength.—^b Chap. xxxix. 7.—ⁱ Jer. xx. 18.

It would surely have been far better, and much happier for me, had I either expired in the womb where I received my life, or it had been taken from me the very moment my eyes saw the light of this world. *Why did the knees prevent me?*—Why did the midwife or nurse receive and lay me upon her knees, and not suffer me to fall upon the bare ground, till death had taken me out of this sorrowful world, into which their cruel kindness hath betrayed me? *Why did the breasts prevent me from perishing through hunger, or supply me that I should have what to suck?*—Thus Job unthankfully despises these wonderful mercies of God toward poor, helpless infants.

Verses 13, 14. *For now should I have lain still, and been quiet*—Free from those torments of body, and that anguish of mind, which now oppress me. *With kings and counsellors of the earth*—I had then been as happy as the proudest monarchs, who, after all their great achievements, go down into their graves; *which built desolate places for themselves*—Who distinguished themselves for a while, and to show their great wealth and power, and to leave behind them a glorious name, and perpetuate their memories, with great labour and expense erected pompous and magnificent buildings; and, to render themselves the more famous, raised them up in places which seemed before to be forsaken, and abandoned to entire desolation.

Verses 15, 16. *Or with princes that had gold, &c.*—My repose and security from worldly anxieties would have been the same with that of those princes who were once celebrated for their wealth, and whose birth entitled them to large treasures of gold and silver. *Or as a hidden*—That is, undiscerned and unregarded; *untimely birth*—Born before the due time, and therefore extinct. *I had not been*—To wit, in the land of the living, of which he here speaks; *as infants which never saw light*—As those fetuses that were never quickened, and come to nothing, or those infants which are stifled and dead before their birth.

Verse 17. *There the wicked cease from troubling*—In the grave the great oppressors and troublers of the world cease from their vexatious rapines and murders; *and there the weary be at rest*—Those who were here molested, and tired out with their

been; as infants *which* never saw ^{A. M. 2494.}
^{B. C. 1520.} light.

17 There the wicked cease *from* troubling; and there the ⁷ weary be at rest.

18 *There* the prisoners rest together; ^h they hear not the voice of the oppressor.

19 The small and great are there; and the servant *is* free from his master.

20 ⁱ Wherefore is light given to him that is in misery, and life unto the ^k bitter *in* soul:

21 Which ^l long ¹ for death, but it *cometh* not; and dig for it more than ^m for hid treasures;

^k 1 Sam. i. 10; 2 Kings iv. 27; Prov. xxxi. 6.—^l Hebrew, wait.
¹ Rev. ix. 6.—^m Prov. ii. 4.

tyrannies, oppressions, and injuries, now quietly sleep with them.

Verse 18. *There the prisoners rest together*—That is, one as well as another; they who were lately deprived of their liberty, kept in the strongest chains and closest prisons, and condemned to the most hard and miserable slavery, rest as well as those who were captives in much better circumstances. *They hear not the voice of the oppressor*—Or exactor, or taskmaster, (as the word *נֹגֶשׁ*, *nogesh*, is translated Exodus v. 6,) who urges and forces them, by cruel threatenings and stripes, to labour beyond their strength. Job does not here take into consideration their eternal state after death, of which he speaks hereafter, but only their freedom from worldly troubles, which is the sole matter of his present discourse.

Verse 19. *The small and great are there*—It should rather be rendered, *are equal there*; persons of all qualities and conditions, whether higher or lower, are in the same circumstances. There is no distinction in the grave, but the meanest and most despised peasant is in a situation equal to that of his rich and powerful neighbour. The man of birth and fortune appears there to no advantage: he commands no place; he usurps no authority; neither does he lord it over the poorest or meanest of the human race. *And the servant is free from his master*—The most contemptible slave, who was entirely subject to the impositions and exactions of his owner, has got his discharge, and is now free from the power of him that tyrannized over him: a good reason this, why those who have power should use it moderately, and why those that are in subjection should take it patiently.

Verse 20. *Wherefore is light given*—*למה יתן, lama jitten*; why doth he give, or hath he given, light, namely, the light of life, to him that is in misery, whose life is a scene of sorrow and distress, loaded and pressed with numberless calamities? *and life unto the bitter in soul*—Unto those whose life itself is very bitter and burdensome, whose souls are full of heaviness, being overpowered with the weight of affliction? Why doth he obtrude his favours upon those that abhor them?

Verse 21. *Who long for death*—With eagerness and impatience, as the Hebrew means. *Who call*

A. M. 2484. 22 Which rejoice exceedingly, and
B. C. 1520. are glad, when they can find the
grave?

23 Why is light given to a man whose
way is hid, and whom God hath hedged
in?

24 For my sighing cometh before I eat, and

* Chap. xix. 8; Lam. iii. 7.—* Heb. before my meat.

aloud for death, as Heath translates it. *Qui ægre expectant, inhiant morti*, who anxiously long and gasp for death; but it cometh not—They long and gasp in vain. And dig for it more than for hid treasures—Whose thoughts and wishes are so intent on their dissolution, that they expect it with as much earnestness as miners look for their golden treasures, who, being indefatigable in their pursuit, spare neither time nor labour, but penetrate still further into the deep caverns of the earth, to find out and enrich themselves with the secret, wished-for gain. It is observable, that Job durst not do any thing to hasten or procure his death. Notwithstanding all his miseries, he was contented to wait all the days of his appointed time till his change should come, chap. xiv. 14.

Verse 22. Which rejoice exceedingly, when they can find the grave—To be thus impatient of life, for the sake of the trouble we meet with, is not only unnatural in itself, but ungrateful to the Giver of life, and shows a sinful indulgence of our own passion. Let it be our great and constant care to get ready for another world: and then let us leave it to God to order the circumstances of our removal thither.

Verse 23. Why is light given to a man whose way is hid?—Hid from him; who knows not his way, that is, which way to turn himself, what course to take to obtain comfort in his miseries, or to get out of them. And whom God hath hedged in—Whom God hath put, as it were, in a prison, so that he can see no way or possibility of escape; but all refuge fails him.

Verse 24. For my sighing cometh before I eat—Hebrew, before the face of my bread. Instead of enjoying the satisfaction of being refreshed with the common necessaries that are afforded us, and taking any pleasure in eating and drinking, which are granted for comfort as well as sustenance, my cries and tears are my meat and drink. And my roarings are poured out like the waters—So severe is my pain, and so great my anguish, that the agonies and outcries, which are extorted from me, are of no common sort: they are deep and noisy; hideous

my roarings are poured out like the waters. A. M. 2484.
B. C. 1520.

25 For the thing which I greatly feared is come upon me, and that which I was afraid of is come unto me.

26 I was not in safety, neither had I rest, neither was I quiet; yet trouble came.

¹⁰ Heb. I feared a fear, and it came upon me.

and frightful, and such as may be compared to the loud roarings of a lion. And though I strive, and take much pains, to check and silence them, yet I find it is to no purpose; for they force their way with irresistible violence and incessant continuance, in great abundance; like so many sudden and impetuous streams of waters, when a river breaks its banks and overflows the adjacent grounds.

Verse 25. For the thing which I greatly feared is come upon me—Before this flood of misery was poured upon me, I was indeed under great and strong apprehensions, which I could not account for, of something or other that would happen to me; something extremely grievous and afflicting; something as bad, nay, worse than death itself. For I considered the variety of God's providences, the changeableness of this vain world, the infirmities and contingencies to which human nature is liable in the present life, God's justice, and the sinfulness of all mankind. And it is now evident that these fears of mine were not in vain, for they are justified by my present calamities. I may, therefore, say that I have never enjoyed any sound tranquillity since I was born; and, of consequence, it hath not been worth my while to live, since all my days have been evil, and full of trouble and distress, either by the fear of miseries or by the suffering of them.

Verse 26. I was not in safety, neither had I rest, neither was I quiet—Three expressions denoting the same thing, which was also signified in the verse immediately preceding, namely, that even in his prosperous days he never esteemed himself secure, or was perfectly free from the torment of fear and anxiety. Or, his meaning is, I did not misbehave myself in prosperity, abusing it by presumption and security; but I lived circumspectly, walking humbly with God, and working out my salvation with fear and trembling. Yet trouble came—As I feared it would. So that between fear and calamity my whole life has been uncomfortable, and I had reason to repent of it. Therefore, in this sense also his way was hid, and he knew not why God contended with him.

CHAPTER IV.

Eliphaz owns Job's former usefulness, but infers from his present state and behaviour that he was a hypocrite, 1-6. He affirms that God never afflicts man but for his wickedness, 7-11. He confirms his assertion by the words he heard in a vision, 12-21. By all this he aims to make Job both penitent and patient under his sufferings.

A. M. 2484. B. C. 1520. **T**HEN Eliphaz the Temanite answered and said,

2 *If we assay* ¹ to commune with thee, wilt thou be grieved? but ² who can withhold himself from speaking?

3 Behold, thou hast instructed many, and thou ^a hast strengthened the weak hands.

4 Thy words have upholden him that was

¹ Heb. a word.—² Heb. who can refrain from words?—^a Isa. xxxv. 3.—^b Isa. xxxv. 3.

NOTES ON CHAPTER IV.

Verse 1. *Then Eliphaz the Temanite answered*—Job's three friends reasoning on the principles of an equal providence, and supposing that affliction could happen only in the way of punishment, which necessarily inferred guilt, and thinking his complaints exceeded the bounds of decency, the eldest of them, Eliphaz, here interposes. He desires Job to recollect himself, not to give way to fruitless lamentations, but to put into practice those lessons he had often recommended to others. He reminds him of that, as he thought, infallible maxim, that those who reaped misery must have sowed iniquity, a maxim which he confirms by his own particular experience, and which he supposes was assented to by all mankind. And, in the display of this maxim, he throws in many of the particular circumstances attending Job's calamity, intimating, that he must have been a great, though secret oppressor, and that, therefore, the breath of God had blasted him at once. He confirms also the truth of this principle by a revelation, which, he says, was made to him in a vision. He urges further, that supposing he, Job, had been guilty of no very atrocious crime; yet the common frailties of human nature were abundantly sufficient to account for any afflictions which it should please God to inflict on man; but takes care, as he proceeds, (as may be seen in the next chapter,) to let him know, they had a far worse opinion of him; representing him as wicked and foolish, and a proper object of divine wrath.

Verse 2. *If we assay to commune with thee, &c.*—This is nearly the sense, but not exactly the construction of the Hebrew, הנסה דבר אליך, *hanissah dabar eeleka*, is rather, *Annon aggre diemur sermonem adversus te. Shall we not attempt a discourse against thee?* Shall we suffer thee to go on with thy complaints? Shall we hear thee with patience, and be altogether silent, without so much as attempting a reply? *Wilt thou be grieved?*—Or, *Thou wilt be grieved;* הלאה, *Tileh, moleste feres, thou wilt take it ill.* Our words will undoubtedly vex, and not comfort thee, as we desired and intended to do. For truth is surely to be regarded more than friendship, and we cannot, in consistency therewith, speak words of consolation, but we must use those of sharp reproof. This makes me desire to be silent, were it possible. *But who can withhold?* &c.—The Hebrew ויצר בכלין, *vagnetser bemillin*, &c., is literally, *But to refrain from words, who can?* Who, when he hears such unreasonable

falling, and thou ^b hast strengthened A. M. 2484.
B. C. 1520.
³ the feeble knees.

5 But now it is come upon thee, and thou faintest; it toucheth thee, and thou art troubled.

6 *Is not this* ^o thy fear, ^d thy confidence, thy hope, and the uprightness of thy ways?

7 Remember, I pray thee, ^e who ever perished,

³ Heb. the bowing knees, Heb. xii. 12.—^c Chap. i. 1.—^d Prov. iii. 26.—^e Psa. xxxvii. 25.

and ungodly words, coming from such a person as thou art, words whereby thou dost accuse thy Maker, reproach his providence, and contemn his blessings, can forbear speaking? No man, who hath any respect to God, or love to thee, can refrain from reproving thee. I will, therefore, suggest to thee some of those observations, which were the thoughts of wise and prudent men of old time; and from which, if well applied, thou mayest receive singular profit. The verse is intended as an apology for what he was about to say.

Verse 3. *Behold, thou hast instructed many*—It is well known thou hast given good counsel unto others, teaching them those lessons which, it appears, thou hast not thyself learned, and wilt not practise, namely, patiently to bear afflictions, and to submit to God's will and providence in all things. *And thou hast strengthened the weak hands*—Hast encouraged those that were dispirited; hast administered counsels, supports, and comforts to such as were unable to bear their burdens, or to do their duty.

Verse 4. *Thy words have upholden him that was falling*—That was ready to sink under his pressures, or to fall into sin, or from God, through despondency and distrust of his providence and promise, or through impatience. *And thou hast strengthened the feeble knees*—Such as were weak-hearted, and fainting under their trials.

Verse 5. *But now it is come upon thee*—That is, the evil which thou didst fear, (chap. iii. 25.) or, that which had come upon those whom thou didst so comfort. *And thou faintest*—There is no more spirit left in thee: and thou canst not practise thy own advice. *It toucheth thee, and thou art troubled*—It is now come to be thine own case, and thou art struck with consternation.

Verse 6. *Is not this thy fear?* &c.—We now plainly see what was the nature of thy fear of God, thy confidence in him, the uprightness of thy ways, and thy hope in God's mercy. Thy present conduct discovers that it was but mere talk and appearance. In thy prosperity it was easy for thee to make a splendid profession of religion; but men are best known by affliction, and this trial now shows what thou art. For now thou castest off thy fear of God, and thy confidence and hope in him, and hast relinquished the integrity of thy ways, which before thou didst seem to hold fast; whereas true piety is uniform and constant, and steadfast in all varieties of condition, and under all trials and temptations.

Verse 7. *Remember, I pray thee*—Consult thy

A. M. 2484. being innocent? or where were the
B. C. 1520. righteous cut off?

8 Even as I have seen, they that plough iniquity, and sow wickedness, reap the same.

9 By the blast of God they perish, and by the breath of his nostrils are they consumed.

10 The roaring of the lion, and the voice of

^f Psa. vii. 14; Prov. xxii. 8; Hos. x. 13; Gal. vi. 7.—⁴ That is, by his anger: Isa. xxx. 33; Exod. xv. 8; Chap. i. 19; xv. 30;

own experience, observation, or reading, and produce one example. *Who ever perished*—That is, was so utterly undone as thou art, so miserably afflicted by such unparalleled and various judgments from God and men, all conspiring against thee; *being innocent*—Who had not, by his wickedness, provoked so merciful a God to do what is so unusual, and contrary to his gracious nature. Therefore thou art guilty of some great, though secret crimes, and thy sin hath now found thee out, and brought down these stupendous calamities upon thee. Or, *where were the righteous cut off?*—By the sword of divine vengeance before his time, which is likely to be thy case. Thus Eliphaz here advances another argument to prove Job a hypocrite, taken not only from his impatience under afflictions, but from his afflictions themselves. His judgment herein was undoubtedly rash and false, but not without some appearance of truth; for God had made many promises, not only of spiritual and eternal, but also of temporal blessings to all that should faithfully serve and obey him, which he accordingly from time to time conferred on such, as we see in the examples of Noah, Lot, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and doubtless many others who had lived in or before their days. And, indeed, this was God's usual method in all the times of the Old Testament, as we see by the people of Israel, who were generally either in a happy and flourishing, or in an afflicted and miserable state, according to their obedience to God, or apostacy from him. And, therefore, it is not strange that Eliphaz and his friends fell into this mistake.

Verse 8. *Even as I have seen, &c.*—As thou hast never seen any example of a righteous man cut off, so I have seen many of wicked men cut off for their wickedness. *They that plough, &c.*—They that designedly work wickedness, first preparing themselves for it, and then continuing to execute it, as husbandmen first plough the ground, and then cast in the seed. See the margin. In other words, the observation I have made of such persons is, they are so far from reaping any advantage from their iniquitous practices, that those practices return on their own heads, and their sinful schemes and contrivances recoil wholly on themselves.

Verses 9, 10. *By the blast of God they perish, &c.*—These two verses are thus interpreted by Heath: *By the breath of God they perish; for, at the blast of his anger, the roarings of the lion, and the growling of the black lion, are hushed, and the teeth of the young lions are broken;* that is, by the mere breath of God's displeasure, or by a secret, and often

the fierce lion, and the teeth of the young lions, are broken. A. M. 2484. B. C. 1520.

11 The old lion perisheth for lack of prey, and the stout lion's whelps are scattered abroad.

12 Now a thing was secretly brought to me, and mine ear received a little thereof.

Isa. xi. 4; 2 Thess. ii. 8.—^f Psa. lviii. 6.—^h Psa. xxxiv. 10. ⁵ Heb. by stealth.

undiscerned, but mighty and irresistible calamity, their projects are blasted, and they are suddenly carried away, as chaff by the wind, and come to a fearful end. Nor can they escape, were they even as strong as lions, yea, as the strongest and fiercest of them. For when the divine wrath is once kindled against them, their power is immediately broken, and in a moment they are cut off, and totally consumed. He speaks of powerful tyrants, fitly compared to lions, Ezek. xxxii. 2, and xxxviii. 13; 2 Tim. iv. 17, who, though for a time they persecute and oppress other men, yet in due time they are restrained and crushed by the mighty power of God. Possibly, he might intend secretly to accuse Job, or his children, that, being persons of great wealth and power, they had abused it to ruin their neighbours, and therefore were justly cut off.

Verse 11. *The old lion perisheth for lack of prey*—Dares not venture out of his den in search of prey, amidst the roar of thunder, the blaze of lightning, and the violence of the storm, that blast of God, mentioned in the preceding verse. *And the young lion's whelps are scattered abroad*—Are so affrighted with the lightning and thunder, that, being separated, they flee different ways, and cannot find the path which leads to the den of the lioness, their dam. Thus do the divine judgments suddenly oppress, scatter, and bring to nothing the fierce and powerful tyrants of the earth, and unexpectedly strip them of all their wealth gotten by injustice and oppression.

Verse 12. *Now*—Hebrew, *and, or moreover, a thing, &c.*—To show Job more evidently the sin and folly of impatience, and to impress what he had already advanced, or should yet further advance on that subject, more fully on his mind, Eliphaz relates a vision he had had, perhaps since he came to him: as if he had said, If these observations be not sufficient to convince thee, hear what God himself hath secretly revealed to me. In those early ages of the world, before God had vouchsafed to mankind a written revelation, it was usual with him to communicate the knowledge of his will to those that were pious, and earnestly desired it, by dreams and visions. *A thing*—Hebrew, *a word, oracle, or message from God; was secretly brought to me*—The Hebrew expression יגנב, *jegunnab*, is very elegant, namely, *stole in upon me; or, was brought by stealth unto me;* that is, privately and secretly, as the word of God used to come to the prophets, being spoken to their ear with a low and still voice, or signified to their minds in a mild and gentle manner. This is opposed to the more public declaration of God's

A. M. 2484. 13 ¹In thoughts from the visions of
B. C. 1520. the night, when deep sleep falleth on
men,

14 Fear ⁶came upon me, and ^ktrembling,
which made ⁷all my bones to shake.

15 Then a spirit passed before my face; the
hair of my flesh stood up:

¹Chapter xxxiii. 15.—⁶ Hebrew, *met me*.—^k Habakkuk
iii. 16.

word to the people by the prophets, which was frequently by their crying aloud, Isa. lviii. 1. *Mine ear received a little thereof*—The word, *שָׁמַע*, *shema*, here rendered *little*, occurs but once more in the Bible, namely, chap. xxvi. 14, where it is also translated *little*: *How little a portion is heard of him?* Symmachus translates it here *ψιθυρισμον*, and in chap. xxvi. *ψιθυρισμα*, both which words signify *whisper*, which here may be interpreted a *hint* or *intimation*. Eliphaz does not pretend to have understood the revelation that had been made to him in this vision perfectly, but something of it he perceived. He certainly would take care not to lose a syllable of what the spirit said, but he intends by the expression, that he did not fully comprehend the deep meaning of the words which he heard. Or he may be considered as expressing himself thus through modesty and humility, from a deep sense of his own weakness, and the small measure which he judged he possessed of the knowledge of divine things. As if he had said, Many, I doubt not, have a much more familiar acquaintance with God, and more full revelations from him, than I can pretend to; but a little of that treasure he hath been pleased to impart to me.

Verse 13. *In thoughts*—Or, *By reason of my thoughts*; my perplexing thoughts. These thoughts, it seems, arose from the *visions of the night*, which, probably, he had had before, and were the occasion of the fear mentioned verse 14. *Visions* differed from *dreams* herein, that God imparted his mind to men in dreams when asleep, but in visions when they were awake. And these visions were sometimes communicated by day, but most frequently by night, whence we read of visions of the night, as Gen. xlv. 2; Job xx. 8; and xxxiii. 15. And such this was, which made it the more terrible. *When deep sleep falleth on men*—In the dead of the night, when men usually are in a deep sleep, and all around is still and quiet.

Verse 14. *Fear came upon me, and trembling*—The Hebrew is very poetical, namely, *Fear called me, or called to me*. Job expresses himself in similar language, chap. xvii. 14. *I have said*, קראתי, *karati*, literally, *I have called to corruption*. Thus also Jer. chap. xxx. 5, *We have heard a voice of trembling, of fear*. As in a poem every thing is, or ought to be, alive, so *fear* is here represented as a person, who comes up to Eliphaz, and speaks to, and arrests him, as an officer of justice. *Which made all my bones to shake*—Which affected me to such a degree that my mind and body lost all power, and

16 It stood still, but I could not ^{A. M. 2484.}
^{B. C. 1520.} discern the form thereof: an image ⁸
was before mine eyes, ⁸ *there was* silence, and
I heard a voice, *saying*,

17 ¹Shall mortal man be more just than
God? shall a man be more pure than his Maker?

⁷ Heb. *the multitude of my bones*.—⁸ Or, *I heard a still voice*.
¹ Chap. ix. 2.

my very bones shook and trembled. It should seem, before he either heard or saw any thing, he was seized with this terror.

Verse 15. *Then*—Hebrew, *And*, as the particle *vau*, generally signifies. *A spirit passed before my face*—An angel in a visible shape, otherwise he could not have discerned it, nor would have been affrighted by it. *The hair of my flesh stood up*—Through that excessive consternation and horror, which seized me at the sight of so glorious and unusual an appearance.

Verse 16. *It stood still*—Though it passed by me, it did not immediately disappear and vanish, but made a stand, as having some business with me, and designing to address me. *But I could not discern the form thereof*—Namely, exactly and distinctly, so as to know what or who it was. *An image was before my eyes*—My eyes could not be deceived. I am thoroughly satisfied there was an image which showed itself to me visibly. *There was silence*—The spirit stood motionless; all other persons and things about me were entirely silent; and I also kept in my voice and breath as much as I could, that I might distinctly hear what I perceived the spirit was about to speak to me. In the Hebrew it is, *Silence, and a voice I heard*. Houbigan's translation of the verse is, *It stood still indeed, but I knew not its form; the appearance vanished from before my eyes, but I heard a voice*.

Verse 17. *Shall mortal man be more just than God?*—Shall man, *fallen man*, as the word *אנוש*, *enosh*, here used, signifies, subject as he is to diseases, troubles, and all those calamities which are the necessary consequences of sin and disobedience, pretend more strictly to observe the laws of justice, and therefore to be more just, than the righteous God? The sense is, *Thou, O Job, dost presumptuously accuse God of dealing harshly and unrighteously with thee in sending thee into the world upon such hard terms, and punishing an innocent and righteous man with unparalleled severity; but, consider things calmly within thyself. Were it possible for God and thee to come to trial before any equal and impartial judge, canst thou think that thou wouldest go away justified, and that the great God would be condemned? No righteous man will punish another without cause, or more than he deserves; and, therefore, if God do so with thee, as thy words imply, he is less just than man, which it is blasphemous and absurd to imagine. Shall a man*—Hebrew, *גבר*, *geber*, a great and mighty man, as this word signifies; shall even such a one a man emi-

A. M. 2484. 18 Behold, ^m he put no trust in his
B. C. 1520. servants; ^o and his angels he charged
with folly :

^m Chapter xv. 15; xxv. 5; 2 Pet. ii. 4.—^o Or, *nor in his angels*,

nent for wisdom, or holiness, or power, or any other perfections, who therefore might expect more favour than a poor, miserable, and contemptible man, signified by the former word *enosh*; *be more pure than his Maker?*—More holy and righteous; show a greater hatred to injustice, or be more equitable in his proceedings, which he would be if he could justly reprehend any of the divine dispensations, and would not act toward his fellow-creatures, as he supposes God acts toward him or others? No, this cannot be: it would be the most daring presumption to entertain a thought of the kind; for though a man may have some qualifications which are not in others of his fellow-creatures, and some pre-eminences above many of them; yet, in the presence of his *Maker*, from whom he has received every excellence which he possesses, and on whom he is daily dependant for them, and all things, he must acknowledge his own comparative nothingness, and confess that the highest qualities which are in him are both derived from God, and exist in God in an infinitely greater degree. It is not without reason that *enosh*, *fallen man*, is here placed in opposition to *Eloath*, *the great and holy God*; and *geber*, *a mighty man*, to *gnoseh*, *his Maker*. For the contrast in both cases is remarkably striking, namely, between man, *sinful, miserable, mortal*, and the *immutable, holy, blessed, and immortal God*; and between even a *great and mighty man*, and the Being from whom he has received all his might and greatness, nay, and his very existence, and on whom he is dependant for them every moment; or between the man of power, and the maker and upholder of that power. In this expression of the angel, *Shall a man be more pure than his Maker?* was contained an unanswerable argument against, and a forcible reproof of, Job's impatience and complaints: as if he had said, He made thee, and that for himself and his own glory; and therefore he hath an unquestionable right to deal with thee and dispose of thee, who art the work of his hands, as he sees fit. *Wo to him that striveth with his Maker*, Isa. xlv. 9.

Verse 18. *Behold*, &c.—For it deserves thy serious consideration. These and the following words seem to be the words of Eliphaz, explaining the former vision, and applying it to Job's case, and enforcing it by further arguments. *He put no trust in his servants*—That is, in his angels, as appears both by the next words of this verse, in which, by way of explication and restriction, they are termed his angels; and by the verse following, where men are opposed to them. They are called *his servants* by way of eminence, the general name being here appropriated to the chief of the kind, to intimate that sovereign dominion which the great God hath, even over the glorious angels, and much more over men: and God is said to *put no trust in them*, because if they were left to themselves, and the supplies of God's power

19 ^a How much less *in them* that dwell ^{A. M. 2484.}
^{B. C. 1520.} in ^o houses of clay, whose foundation is
in the dust, *which* are crushed before the moth?

in whom he put light.—^a Chap. xv. 16.—^o 2 Cor. iv. 7; v. 1.

and grace were withdrawn from them, they would not even continue to exist, much less to be loyal and faithful. *And his angels he charged with folly*—That is, with vanity, weakness, infirmity, imperfection, in comparison with himself, their Maker. The word תהלה, *toholah*, here rendered *folly*, is one of the *σπας λεγομενα*, the words only once occurring, and of consequence the more difficult to be understood. The Chaldee paraphrast renders it *iniquity*; Ab. Ezra, *folly*; Schultens derives it from an Arabic word, which denotes *lapsing*, or from another, which signifies *deficiency*, or *imperfection*. Houbigant renders the clause, *And in his angels mutability was found*. The most probable opinion seems to be, that this refers to the angels who foolishly and wickedly fell from God.

Verse 19. *How much less in them*—Doth he put trust, &c., or, *How much more* (as the Hebrew particle *אף*, *aph*, equally signifies) *doth he charge folly on them*, &c. One or other of these supplements seems necessary to complete the sense, and they are either of them natural and easy, being fetched from the former verse. The sense then is, If he put no trust in his angels, how much less will he put any in them that dwell in houses of clay; or, If he charged his angels with folly, how much more will he charge frail and mortal men therewith! What strange presumption then is it for a weak, sinful, and dying man to pretend to a higher privilege than the angels can lay claim to, and to make himself more just and pure than God, which all do, in effect, who complain of, or are impatient under, the righteous dispensations of the divine providence. *That dwell in houses of clay*—Whose immortal spirits dwell in mortal bodies, which are great clogs, encumbrances, and snares to them. These are called *houses*, because they are the receptacles of the soul, and the places of its settled abode; and *houses of clay*, because they were made of clay or earth; and to denote their great frailty and mutability; whereas the angels are free spirits, unconfined to such carcasses, and dwell in celestial, glorious, and everlasting mansions; *whose foundation*—No less than the rest of the building; *is in the dust*—Who, as they dwell in dust and clay, so they had their original from it, and must return to it. We stand but upon the dust: some have a higher heap of dust to stand upon than others. But still it is mere earth and dust that stays us up, and will soon swallow us up; *which are crushed before the moth*—"Which are as subject to be destroyed," says Bishop Patrick, "as a garment to be fretted with moths;" which, though it be wrought with ever so much art and strength; though it be ever so curious, fine, and beautiful, is soon defaced and spoiled by that subtle and devouring insect. Or, *sooner than, or like as, a moth* is crushed, which is easily done by a gentle touch of the finger: is a hyperbolical expression. Or, as *לִפְנֵי*, *liphnee*, is still

A. M. 2484. 20 P They are ¹⁰ destroyed from
B. C. 1520. morning to evening; they perish for
ever without any regarding it.

P Psa. xc. 5.—¹⁰ Heb. *beaten in pieces.*

more properly rendered, *before the face*, or, *at the presence of a moth*. This interpretation, which is approved by Hervey, makes the passage to represent the body of man so exceedingly frail, that even a moth flying against it may dash it to pieces. And, "besides its closer correspondence," says he, "with the exact import of the Hebrew, presents us with a much finer image of extreme imbecility; for it certainly implies a far greater degree of weakness to be crushed by the feeblest flutter of the feeblest creature, than only to be crushed as easily as that creature by the hand of man." Certainly no creature is so weak and contemptible, but, one time or other, it may have the body of man in its power.

Verse 20. *They are destroyed*—Bruised, or broken, as the same word, כרוּ, *jucattu*, is rendered, Mic. i. 7, where we read, *The graven images shall be broken to pieces; from morning to evening*—That is, either *speedily*, between the morning and evening, like the grass, Psa. xc. 5, 6. They flourish in the morning, and in the evening are cut down: or rather, *all the day long*; there is not a moment wherein man is not sinking toward death and corruption. If these words were considered as being connected with the latter clause of the preceding verse, as Dr. Grey thinks they ought to be, the sense would be, they are crushed and destroyed all the day long, as moths are, which, being an insect hurtful and injurious, every one is ready to destroy. *They perish for ever*—In reference to the present worldly life, which when once lost is never recovered; *without any regarding it*—Or laying it to heart, say most commentators. But the literal interpretation of the Hebrew, מכלי משים, *mibbeli meesim*, Chappelow thinks, is preferable, namely, *absque imponente*, without any one's adding to their misery; or, according to Junius and Tremellius, *nemine disponente*, without any one's ordering or appointing it. That is, they are continually perishing and going to destruction, of their own accord, through the mere

21 ⁹ Doth not their excellency *which* A. M. 2484.
is in them go away? ¹ they die, even B. C. 1520.
without wisdom.

⁹ Psa. xxxix. 11; xlix. 14.—¹ Chap. xxxvi. 12.

frailty of their nature, even if no external violence be offered to them. Our translation, however, conveys an important and instructive truth, namely, that few or none that survive, lay to heart, as they ought to do, the death of those that are taken away. For it is so common a thing for all men, though ever so high and great, to perish in this manner, that no man regards it, but all pass it by, as a general accident not worthy of observation.

Verse 21. *Doth not their excellency which is in them go away?*—Whatsoever is really, or by common estimation, excellent in men, all their natural, and moral, and civil accomplishments, as high birth, great riches, power, and wisdom; these are so far from preserving them from perishing, as one would think they should, that they perish themselves, together with those houses of clay in which they are lodged. Or, the Hebrew יתרה, *jithram*, may be rendered *reliquiae illorum*, *their remains go away*. In a little time the departure of the most skilful projectors, who seem to lay the deepest and strongest foundations for permanent wealth, power, and enjoyment, is such, that every thing belonging to them is absolutely removed. If you inquire after the place and station of life they filled; the fortunes they possessed; the families they raised, you shall find them all taken away, and nothing, not the least remains to be seen. And, what is still worse, *they die even without wisdom*—All that skill and policy, all those arts and contrivances, which distinguished them from others, and placed them in a superior rank and situation, are, at the point of death, even in their own opinion, no better than worldly craft and human folly. They die like fools, without having attained that only wisdom for which they came into the world. Now shall such a mean, weak, foolish, sinful, dying creature as this pretend to be *more just than God, more pure than his Maker?* No; instead of quarrelling with his afflictions, let him admire that he is out of hell!

CHAPTER V.

See occasions destruction, 1-5. Affliction is the common lot of mankind, 6, 7. In affliction we should fly to God, who is both able and willing to help, 8-16. He will deliver them that trust in him, 17-27.

A. M. 2484. CALL now, if there be any
B. C. 1520. that will answer thee; and

to which of the saints wilt thou A. M. 2484.
¹ turn? B. C. 1520.

¹ Or, look.

NOTES ON CHAPTER V.

Verse 1. *Call now, &c.*—Wouldst thou know the reason why I relate to thee this night vision? I do it with an intent that thou mayest apply it to thy-
Vol. II. (33)

self, and thy present circumstances. Thou hast heard how weak and imperfect the best of men must be in comparison with God, but if this does not satisfy thee, if thou dost not believe what has been advanced,

A. M. 2484. 2 For wrath killeth the foolish man,
B. C. 1520. and ² envy slayeth the silly one.

3 ^a I have seen the foolish taking root: but suddenly I cursed his habitation.

4 ^b His children are far from safety, and they

^a Or, indignation.—^a Psa. xxxvii. 35; Jer. xii. 2.

thou mayest inquire of others. Try, therefore, if there be any one that will defend thee in these thy bold expostulations with God. Thou mayest find fools or wicked men that will do it, but not one of the children of God. There is no good man but is of my opinion; and if an angel should appear to thee as one did to me, thou wouldst receive no other information but this.

Verse 2. *For wrath killeth the foolish man, &c.*—That is, say some, a man's wrath and impatience prey upon his spirit, and so hasten his death. But the meaning seems rather to be, as Bishop Patrick observes, that "God in his anger and indignation destroys the wicked, and such as err from his precepts." It is probable that Eliphaz intended to distinguish Job by the characters of *foolish and silly one*, to insinuate that all his misfortunes were owing to his folly and weakness, or to his sins and vices. By the *foolish* is meant the *rash and inconsiderate man*, who does not weigh things impartially; and by the *silly one*, the man who, for want of true wisdom, is soon deceived with false opinions, and with appearances of present things.

Verse 3. *I have seen the foolish taking root*—I have observed the wicked man, whom I term foolish, as being destitute of true, that is, of heavenly, wisdom, not only prosperous for the present, but, as it seemed, firm and secure for the future, being strongly fortified with power and riches, and children too, so that there was no likelihood or apparent danger of a change; but suddenly—In a moment, before any one's expectation; *I cursed his habitation*—I saw, by the event which followed his prosperity, that he was a man under a divine curse, and that, notwithstanding the seeming depth and strength in which he vainly promised himself a permanent, unshaken situation for many years, all his hopes were built on a weak and false foundation. Thus Eliphaz answers an objection concerning the present seeming prosperity of the wicked, which he confesses that he himself had sometimes observed, but which, he insists, was of short duration, destructive judgments from God unexpectedly overwhelming them.

Verse 4. *His children*—Whose greatness he designed in all his enterprises, supposing his family would be established for ever; *are far from safety*—Are exposed to dangers and calamities, and can neither preserve themselves, nor the inheritance which their fathers left them. There is no question but he glances here at the death of Job's children; *and they are crushed in the gate*—That is, in the place of judicature, to which they are brought for their offences, and where they find severe judges,

are crushed in the gate, ^c neither is ^a *there any to deliver them.* A. M. 2484. B. C. 1520.

5 Whose harvest the hungry eateth up, and taketh it even out of the thorns, and ^d the robber swalloweth up their substance.

^b Psa. cxix. 155; cxxvii. 5.—^c Psa. cix. 12.—^d Chap. xviii. 9.

and few or no friends; because, being wickedly educated, and trusting to their own greatness, they had been insolent and injurious to all their neighbours; as also because those many persons, whom their powerful fathers had defrauded or oppressed, seek for justice and the recovery of their rights, which they easily obtain, against persons who plainly declared, by their actions, that they neither feared God nor regarded man, and therefore were hated by all sorts of people. *Neither is there any to deliver them*—They can find no advocates or assistants who are either able or willing to help them: for, as *their hand was formerly against every man, so now every man's hand is against them.* Justice, therefore, takes hold on them, and will not let them escape.

Verse 5. *Whose harvest*—Which they confidently expected to reap after all their cost and labour; *The hungry eateth up*—The hungry Sabeans, or the poor, whose necessities make them greedy and ravenous to eat it all up; so that he can never recover it, or any thing in recompense of it. As if he had said, They may cultivate their ground with the utmost care, and sow it with the choicest seed, in expectation of reaping, at the usual time, the fruits of their labour; but when once the sentence of the judge is declared against them, behold, instead of carrying in, and filling their barns and store-houses with the great and plentiful increase, their field is laid open to the hungry poor, who soon devour their whole harvest. *And take it even out of the thorns* That is, out of the fields, notwithstanding the strong thorn-hedges wherewith it is enclosed and fortified; and in spite of all the dangers or difficulties which may be in their way. *They will take it, though they be scratched and wounded by the thorns about it.* *And the robber swalloweth up their substance*—The word צַמְמִים, *tzammim*, here rendered robber, occurs but once more, namely, chap. xviii. 9, where Bildad, taking it for granted that Job must be a wicked man, says the robber, *tzammim*, shall prevail against him. R. Levi derives it from *tzammah, hair*, and says it represents a man who suffers his hair to grow long and squalid, and appears with a terrible countenance. It may however signify *thirsty*, as derived from another root. Either way it points out a set of savage and barbarous plunderers. The word שָׁאָפָה, rendered *swalloweth up*, literally means to draw in the air, to pant after, to swallow greedily; and is applied to wild beasts, snuffing up the wind in pursuit of their prey. The sense of the clause is, that these robbers shall hasten with great eagerness, shall greedily pant after and swallow up their entire substance, so as to leave them in the most deplorable condition.

A. M. 2484. 6 Although ³affliction cometh not
B. C. 1520. forth of the dust, neither doth trouble
spring out of the ground ;

7 Yet man is ⁴born unto ⁴trouble, as ⁶the
sparks fly upward.

8 I would seek unto God, and unto God would
I commit my cause :

³ Or, iniquity.—⁴ Gen. iii. 17, 19 ; 1 Cor. x. 13.—⁴ Or, labour.—⁵ Heb. the sons of the burning coal lift up to fly.—⁶ Chap. lv. 10 ; xxxvii. 5 ; Psa. xl. 5 ; lxxii. 18 ; cxlv. 3 ; Rom. xi. 33.

Verse 6. *Although affliction cometh not forth out of the dust*—The word *אֵפֶן*, *aven*, here rendered *affliction*, rather signifies *iniquity*, and the clause is literally, *Iniquity cometh not forth out of the dust ; neither doth trouble spring out of the ground*—That is, says Dr. Dodd, “As the wickedness of men does not proceed from any natural cause, but from their own free-will ; so neither are their miseries to be considered as the effects of natural causes, but as the distributions of a free agent likewise, namely, of a just God, who suits men’s punishments to their crimes ; and hence man, being prone to sin, is necessarily born to suffer,” as is signified in the next verse.

Verse 7. *Yet man is born to trouble, &c.*—He is so commonly exposed to various troubles, as if he were born to no other end ; affliction is become natural to man, and is transmitted from parents to children, as their constant inheritance ; God having allotted this portion to mankind for their sins. And therefore thou takest a wrong course in complaining so bitterly of that which thou shouldst patiently bear, as the common lot of mankind. *As*—As naturally, and as generally, *as the sparks of fire fly upward*—Why then should we be surprised at our afflictions, as strange, or quarrel with them, as hard ? This last clause, literally translated from the Hebrew, is, *As the sons of the burning coal raise themselves up to fly*. Instead, however, of *sparks*, or *the sons of the coal*, the author of the Vulgate writes, *Homo nascitur ad laborem, et avis ad volatum, man is born for labour, (or trouble,) and the bird for flying* ; reading, *גִּנּוּף*, *gnoph*, a bird, for *gnoph*, to fly. To the same purpose is the interpretation of the LXX., Syr. and Arab.

Verse 8. *I would seek unto God, &c.*—If I were in thy condition, instead of accusing the dispensations of Divine Providence, and repining under them, I would apply to God, by a full and free confession of those sins which have drawn this sad calamity upon me, and by sincere repentance, humiliation, and submission to his will : to God, who is able to do wonders, (as he presently adds,) and who can and will restore thee to thy former happy state, if he sees that thou art penitent for thy past transgressions, and hast reformed thy conduct. For this is the whole purport of the following part of his speech, namely, to give him hopes of a happy turn to his condition, if he would do what he thought was absolutely necessary to be done in this case ; make a frank confession of those crimes which had brought

9 ¹Which doeth great things ⁶and ⁶unsearchable ; marvellous things

⁷without number :

10 ⁸Who giveth rain upon the earth, and sendeth waters upon the ⁹fields :

11 ¹⁰To set up on high those that be low ; that those which mourn may be exalted to safety.

⁶ Heb. and there is no search.—⁷ Heb. till there be no number. ⁸ Chap. xxviii. 28 ; Psa. lxxv. 9 ; cxlvii. 8 ; Jer. v. 24 ; x. 13 ; li. 16 ; Acts xiv. 17.—⁹ Heb. out-places.—¹⁰ 1 Sam. ii. 7 ; Psa. cxliii. 7.

down this severe chastisement upon him. See Peters and Dodd. *And unto God would I commit my cause*—Would resign myself and all my concerns to him, and humbly hope for relief from him. And let my cause be what it would, and my own opinion of it ever so favourable, I would commit it wholly to him, and leave him to judge and determine it.

Verse 9. *Which doth great things and unsearchable*—Here Eliphaz enters upon a discourse of the infinite perfection of God’s nature and works ; which he does as an argument to enforce the exhortation *to seek and commit his cause to God*, verse 8, because God was infinitely able either to punish him yet far worse, if he continued to provoke him, or to raise him from the dust, if he humbly addressed himself to him : and that, by a representation of God’s excellence and glory, and of that vast disproportion which was between God and Job, he might convince Job of his great sin in speaking so boldly and irreverently of him. *Marvellous things*—Which (though common, and therefore neglected and despised, yet) are matter of wonder to the wisest men. The works of nature are mysteries : the most curious searches come far short of full discoveries ; and the works of Providence are still more deep and unaccountable.

Verse 10. *Who giveth rain upon the earth*—He begins with this ordinary work of God, in which he implies that there is something wonderful, as indeed there is, in the rise of it from the earth, in the strange hanging of that heavy body in the air, and in the distribution of it as God sees fit ; and how much more in the hidden paths of Divine Providence ! *And sendeth waters upon the fields*—When the scorching heat of the sun is so strong and intense as to dry up and consume almost every herb of the field, every green thing upon the face of the earth, God, in great compassion, opens the windows of heaven, and pours down a gracious, refreshing, and long-wished-for rain ; by which wonderful supply the springs and rivers, which were much exhausted, and, in a manner, had quite disappeared, do now rise and swell to their usual height ; nay, are not only full, but overflow, so as to reach several distant places which waited, as it were, for refreshment from those superabundant treasures.

Verse 11. *To set up on high those that be low*—The consequences which proceed from the fore-mentioned happy change, from God’s sending a refreshing rain upon the earth, after a long drought

A. M. 2484. 12 ¹He disappointeth the devices
B. C. 1520. of the crafty, so that their hands ²can-
not perform *their* enterprise.

13 ³He taketh the wise in their own crafti-
ness: and the counsel of the froward is carried
headlong.

14 ⁴They ⁵meet with darkness in the day-

¹ Neh. iv. 15; Psa. xxxiii. 10; Isa. viii. 10.—² Or, cannot per-
form any thing.—³ Psa. ix. 15; 1 Cor. iii. 19.

are inexpressibly great and beneficial. Those who had been reduced to straits and difficulties, and, by the pressing necessities arising therefrom, had been brought very low, and obliged to submit to mean and laborious employments, are now enabled to lift up their heads with joy, and appear in a very different condition. *That those who mourn may be exalted to safety*—That through the blessings of Providence flowing in upon them, like a plentiful stream of water upon a barren and thirsty land, they may be raised from their former state of extreme poverty and want, and may find themselves placed in a comparatively safe and comfortable situation, without any apparent reason to fear a relapse into their former difficulties and distresses. Thus he gives Job another example of God's great and wonderful works, to comfort and encourage him to seek unto him, forasmuch as he could easily raise him from the depth of his distress, however great, as he was wont to raise others in the like condition.

Verse 12. *He disappointeth the devices of the crafty*—On the contrary, he defeats the craftiest designs of evil and subtle men to exalt themselves. They may place a great deal of confidence in their own abilities, and, without any regard to the overruling hand of Providence, may imagine that their good or bad success in the world depends wholly on their own wisdom and efforts: they may form deep and secret designs; and, to the utmost stretch of their knowledge and foresight, may contrive and project measures which will have the most plausible appearance of accomplishing their purpose. But after all this dexterous management, should the Almighty once interpose, and throw an obstacle in their way, all their crafty devices are frustrated, and their promising expectations vanish away. *So that their hands cannot perform their enterprise*—Hebrew, תושיה, *tushijah*, a word of an extensive meaning, implying that which is *solid* and *substantial*, or which is *wise, good, and virtuous*. Instead of executing any thing of moment, any thing advantageous or praiseworthy; instead of having the satisfaction of seeing a prosperous event of their best-formed counsels, they quickly perceive with what weak hands they have been labouring, and that all their aspiring attempts are vain and fruitless.

Verses 13, 14. *He taketh the wise in their own craftiness*—Men wise to do evil, or wise in the opinion of the world; he not only deceives their hopes and counsels, but turns those counsels against themselves. *And the counsel of the froward*—Hebrew, *Qf the perverse, or wrestlers, such as wind and turn*

time, and grope in the noon-day as in A. M. 2484.
the night. B. C. 1:20.

15 But ⁶he saveth the poor from the sword,
from their mouth, and from the hand of the
mighty.

16 ⁷So the poor hath hope, and iniquity stop-
peth her mouth.

¹ Deut. xxviii. 29; Isa. lix. 10; Amos viii. 9.—² Or, run into.
³ Psa. xxxv. 10.—⁴ 1 Sam. ii. 9; Psa. cvii. 42.

every way, as wrestlers do, and will leave no means untried to accomplish their designs: *is carried headlong*—That is, tumbled down and broken, and that by their own precipitation and haste. Such is their malice, that they cannot proceed leisurely and wisely, but are eager, and venturesome, and rash, and so make more haste than good speed in their wicked designs: or, the meaning may be, The event will show that such deceitful cunning, though never so coolly and sedately digested, will deserve no better name than precipitate rashness and insatiation. *They meet with darkness in the day-time*—In plain things they run into gross mistakes, and choose those courses which are worst for themselves. *Darkness* often denotes misery, but here ignorance or error. *And grope in the noon-day*—Like blind men to find their way, not knowing what to do. They trip in the plainest way, and see not their danger, when it is visible to every body but themselves.

Verse 15. *But he saveth the poor, &c.*—According to the order in which the words stand in the Hebrew, the translation is, *But he saveth from the sword, from their mouth, and from the hand of the mighty, the poor*. Schultens thinks it should be interpreted, *from the sword which proceedeth out of their mouth*, meaning, their cutting and killing reproaches. A sense this which is approved by Buxtorf, and which receives no small confirmation from divers passages of Scripture, in which reproachful language is stigmatized by the name of a sword. See Psa. lvii. 4, and lxiv. 3. Dr. Waterland's translation of the verse is to the same purpose. *But he saveth the poor from destruction by their mouth, and from the hand of the mighty*. The general sense undoubtedly is, that God saveth such as, being poor, are defenceless, and therefore flee to him for refuge, from the censures, slanders, threatenings, and deceitful insinuations of their enemies; from the false swearing of witnesses, and the unrighteous sentences of corrupt judges, by which things their characters, or estates, or lives, may be exposed to great hazards.

Verse 16. *So the poor, &c.*—Heb. ויהי לרל, *vatehi ladal*, even to the poor there is hope: *Dal* signifies one who is deprived of his strength or power, either by poverty or sickness: in Arabic, He who is submissive, and humbles himself in a low, abject manner. Here the interpretation seems to be, *Even the abject, contemptible man hath hope*; that is, obtains what he hoped for from God, to whom he had committed his cause. *And iniquity*—Iniquitous men

A. M. 2484. 17 ° Behold, happy is the man
B. C. 1520.

whom God correcteth: therefore despise not thou the chastening of the Almighty.

18 ° For he maketh sore, and bindeth up: he woundeth, and his hands make whole.

19 ° He shall deliver thee in six troubles: yea, in seven ° there shall no evil touch thee.

20 ° In famine he shall redeem thee from death: and in war ° from the power of the sword.

° Psa. xciv. 12; Prov. iii. 11; Heb. xii. 5; James i. 12; Rev. iii. 19.—° Deut. xxxii. 39; 1 Sam. ii. 6; Isa. xxx. 26; Hos. vi. 1.—° Psalm xxxiv. 19; xci. 3; Proverbs xxiv. 16; 1 Cor. x. 13.

the abstract term being put for the concrete, as *pride*, *deceit*, *injustice*, are put for proud, deceitful, unrighteous men, Jer. xiii. 9; 2 Pet. iii. 13. *Stappeth her mouth*—They are silenced and confounded, finding not only the poor are got out of their snares, but that the oppressors themselves are insnared in them.

Verse 17. *Behold*—Consider, for what I am saying, though most true and important; will not be believed, without serious consideration. Eliphaz concludes his discourse with giving Job a comfortable hope of deliverance from his troubles, and of restoration to his former, or even a greater state of prosperity, if he humbled himself before God. *Happy is the man*—Heb. *blessednesses*, various kinds and degrees of happiness belong to that man whom God rebukes. The reason is plain, because afflictions are pledges of God's love, which no man can buy too dear; and are necessary to purge out sin, and thereby to prevent infinite and eternal miseries. Without respect to this, the proposition could not be true. And therefore it plainly shows, that good men in those ancient times had the belief and hope of everlasting blessedness. *Despise not*—Do not abhor it as a thing pernicious, refuse it as a thing useless, or slight it as an unnecessary thing: but more is designed than is expressed. Reverence the chastening of the Lord: have an humble, awful regard to his correcting hand, and study to answer the design of it. *The Almighty*—Who is able to support and comfort thee in thy troubles, and deliver thee out of them; and also to add more calamities to them, if thou art obstinate and incorrigible.

Verses 18, 19. *For he maketh sore, &c.*—God's usual method is first to wound and then to heal, first to convince and then to comfort, first to humble and then to exalt. And he never makes a wound too great, too deep, for himself to cure. *He will deliver thee*—If thou seek to him by prayer and repentance; *in six troubles*—In distresses, manifold and repeated. Here he applies himself to Job directly. *Yea, in seven there shall no evil touch thee*—Thou shalt have a good issue out of all thy troubles, though they be both great and many.

Verse 20. *In famine he shall redeem thee from death*—From that terrible kind of death. Eliphaz might think that Job feared perishing by want, as being so poor, that he needed the contributions of his friends for his relief. *And in war from the sword*

21 ° Thou shalt be hid ° from the A. M. 2484.
B. C. 1520. scourge of the tongue: neither shalt thou be afraid of destruction when it cometh.

22 At destruction and famine thou shalt laugh: ° neither shalt thou be afraid of the beasts of the earth.

23 ° For thou shalt be in league with the stones of the field: and the beasts of the field shall be at peace with thee.

° Psa. xci. 10.—° Psa. xxxiii. 19; xxxvii. 19.—° Heb. from the hands.—° Psa. xxxi. 20.—° Or, when the tongue scourgeth.—° Isa. xi. 9; xxxv. 9; lxxv. 25; Ezek. xxxiv. 25.—° Psa. xci. 12, Hos. ii. 18.

—These things he utters with more confidence, because the rewards or punishments of this life were more constantly distributed to men in the Old Testament, according to their good or bad behaviour, than they are now: and, because it was his opinion, that great afflictions were the certain evidences of wickedness; and, consequently, that great deliverances would infallibly follow upon true repentance.

Verses 21, 22. *Thou shalt be hid*—Protected, as in some secret and safe place; *from the scourge of the tongue*—From false accusations, and virulent slanders and reproaches. *Neither shalt thou be afraid of destruction*—Thou shalt have no cause to fear it, because God will secure thee in it and from it: *when it cometh*—Namely, upon others, near or round about thee. Bishop Patrick's paraphrase on the verse is, "False accusers shall not be able to hurt thee; and when whole countries are depopulated, thou shalt be secure." *At destruction, &c., thou shalt laugh*—With a laughter of joy and triumph; arising from a just security and confidence in God's watchful and gracious providence. *Neither shalt thou be afraid of the beasts of the field*—The wild beasts, which were numerous and mischievous in those parts. As no apprehensions of fear shall possess thee in other heavy calamities, so neither shalt thou be under any dreadful consternation, should even the most fierce and savage beasts of the earth rise up against and be ready to devour thee. Perhaps it is not possible for that *peace of mind*, which arises from a good conscience and a confidence in the divine care and protection, to be expressed more elegantly or poetically than it is in this verse. Thus, leviathan, so far from being terrified, is said to laugh at the shaking of a spear, chap. xli. 29. And God himself, in the same beautiful style, is represented as disdaining the politic intrigues of kings, and the crafty counsels of the rulers of the earth against his church. *He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh, the Lord shall have them in derision*, Psa. ii. 4.

Verse 23. *Thou shalt be in league with the stones of the field*—Thou shalt be free from any annoyance thereby, as if they had made an inviolable league with thee. It is a bold metaphor, but such are frequent in the Scriptures, as also in other authors. *And the beasts of the field shall be at peace with thee* This is an addition to the former privilege; they

A. M. 2484. 24 And thou shalt know ¹³ that thy
B. C. 1520. tabernacle shall be in peace; and thou
shalt visit thy habitation, and shalt not ¹⁴ sin.

25 Thou shalt know also that ⁷ thy seed shall
be ¹⁵ great, and thine offspring ² as the grass of
the earth.

⁷ Or, that peace is thy tabernacle.—¹⁴ Or, err.—⁷ Psa. cxii. 2.
¹⁵ Or, much.—² Psa. lxxii. 16.

shall not hurt thee, verse 22. Nay, they shall be-
friend thee, as being at peace with thee. Our co-
venant with God is a covenant with all the creatures,
that they shall do us no hurt, but serve and be ready
to do us good.

Verse 24. *And thou shalt know*—By certain and
constant experience; *that thy tabernacle shall be in
peace*—That is, thy habitation, as it follows, including
also the inhabitants, children or friends, and servants.
They shall enjoy great safety from all their enemies,
and concord among themselves, and prosperity in all
their concerns; all which things are comprehended
under the sweet name of *peace*. *And thou shalt
visit thy habitation*—Shalt order and manage thy
family, and all thy domestic and worldly affairs, with
care and diligence; *and shalt not sin*—Either by
unrighteousness in thy dealings, with thy family or
others; or by neglecting God and his service in thy
family, or by conniving at any sin in thy domestics,
which thou canst hinder. But because Job's duty
does not seem to be the subject of Eliphaz's dis-
course here, but rather his privilege, and that in
outward and worldly things, the clause is probably
better rendered thus: *And thou shalt not err, or
miscarry, or miss thy way*. Thou shalt not be dis-
appointed of thy hopes, or blasted in thy endeavours,
but shalt succeed in them. "When thou takest an
account of thine estate," says Bishop Patrick, "all
things shall answer thine expectation."

Verse 25. *Thou shalt know*—By assurance from

26 ^a Thou shalt come to thy grave A. M. 2484.
in a full age, like as a shock of corn B. C. 1520.
¹⁶ cometh in his season.

27 Lo this, we have ^b searched it, so it
is; hear it, and know thou it ¹⁷ for thy
good.

^a Proverbs ix. 11; x. 27.—¹⁶ Hebrew, ascendeth.—^b Psalm
cxi. 2.—¹⁷ Heb. for thyself, Prov. ix. 12.

God's promises, the impressions of his Spirit, and by
experience, in due time, *that thy seed shall be great*
—Thy posterity, which God shall give thee, instead
of those whom thou hast lost, shall be high, and
honourable, and powerful: or, *shall be many*, as *רַב*,
rab, often signifies. *And thine offspring*—The fruit
of thy body; (for he speaks of his natural, not of his
spiritual seed, as Abraham's seed is in part to be
understood;) *as the grass of the earth*—Both for
its plentiful increase, and for its flourishing greenness.

Verse 26. *Thou shalt come to thy grave in a full
age, &c.*—Heath translates it, *In old age shalt thou
come to the sepulchre, as the corn is heaped upon
the thrashing-floor in its season*. Thou shalt die in
a mature and old, though vigorous age, as the word
implies. It is a great blessing to live to a full age,
and not to have the number of our years cut short:
much more to be willing to die; to come cheerfully
to the grave; and to die seasonably; in the best time,
when our souls are just ripe for God.

Verse 27. *Lo this, we have searched out*—It is not
my single opinion, but my brethren concur with
me, as thou wilt hear from their own mouths. And
it is no rash or hasty conceit, but what we have
learned by deep consideration, long experience, and
diligent observation. *Know thou it for thy good*—
Know it *for thyself*, (so the word is,) *make applica-
tion of it to thine own case*. That which we thus
hear and know for ourselves, we hear and know for
our good.

CHAPTER VI.

Job shows that he has reason to complain, 1-7. He passionately wishes for death, 8-13. Reproves his friends for their
uncharitable censures, 14-30.

A. M. 2484. BUT Job answered and said,
B. C. 1520. 2 O that my grief were tho-

¹ Hebrew,

roughly weighed, and my calamity A. M. 2484.
¹ laid in the balances together! B. C. 1520.

lifted up.

NOTES ON CHAPTER VI.

Verse 1. *Job answered and said*—Eliphaz con-
cluded his discourse with an air of assurance, being
very confident that what he had advanced was so
plain and so pertinent that nothing could be objected
to it. Job, however, is not at all convinced by it,
but still justifies himself in his complaints, and con-
demns his friend for the weakness of his arguing.
Though Eliphaz, in the beginning and some other
parts of his speech, was very severe upon Job, he

gave him no interruption, but heard him patiently
till he had delivered his whole mind. But when he
had done this, and had finished all he had to say,
Job modestly, but feelingly, makes his reply. He
begins with an apology for venting his grief in a
manner somewhat unbecoming, and begs it may be
ascribed to the great multitude and sharpness of his
afflictions; but as to the advice given him by Eliphaz,
to hope for an amendment of his condition, and to
address God for that purpose, he tells them, that his

A. M. 2484. 3 For now it would be heavier ^a than
B. C. 1520. the sand of the sea: therefore ² my
words are swallowed up.

4 ^b For the arrows of the Almighty *are* within

^a Prov. xxvii. 3.—³ That is, *I want words to express my grief*,
Psa. lxxvii. 4.

petition to God should be of a quite different nature, namely, that he would be pleased to cut him off speedily; for that the desperateness of his condition would by no means permit him to hope for any amendment. That, however, he could not help resenting their unkind suspicions of him, that they should think him capable of such great wickedness; but, above all, should imagine him to be so abandoned as to be able to entertain a thought tending to a revolt from the Almighty. He begs them not to condemn him barely on suspicion, and on the strength of general maxims, but to consider it was possible he might be innocent.

Verse 2. *O that my grief*—The cause of my grief; *were thoroughly weighed*—Were fully understood and duly considered! O that I had an impartial judge! that would understand my case, and see whether I have not just cause for such bitter complaints. *And my calamity laid in the balances*—Would to God some more equal person than you would lay my complaint and my sufferings one against the other, and judge sincerely which is heaviest!

Verse 3. *For now it*—That is, my grief or calamity; *would be heavier than the sand of the sea*—Which is much heavier than dry sand. *Therefore my words are swallowed up*—My voice and spirit fail me. I cannot find or utter words sufficient to express my sorrow or misery.

Verse 4. *The arrows of the Almighty are within me, &c.*—The sublimity of style, and beautiful vein of poetry, which run through this verse, are well deserving of the reader's particular attention. He fitly terms his afflictions *arrows*, because, like arrows, they came upon him swiftly and suddenly, one after another, and that from on high, and wounded him deeply. And he calls them *arrows of the Almighty*, not only, generally speaking, because all afflictions come from him, but particularly, because God's hand was in a singular manner visible and eminent in his sufferings, and especially because they were immediately shot by God into his spirit, so that they were *within him*, as it follows, not like the external evils mentioned chap. i., which were passed, but *fixed* and *constant* in his very nature, producing sharp pains in his body, and dismal horrors in his mind. *The poison whereof drinketh up my spirit*—Or, as the Hebrew may be rendered, *The poison whereof my spirit drinketh up*: which is the construction of Pagninus and the Targum. But our translation is more poetical, and quite agreeable to Moses's sublime expression, Deut. xxxii. 42, where he represents God as taking vengeance on his enemies, and saying, *I will make mine arrows drunk with blood*. The words imply, that these arrows

me, the poison whereof drinketh up ^{A. M. 2484}
my spirit: ^{B. C. 1520.} the terrors of God do set
themselves in array against me.

5 Doth the wild ass bray ³ when he hath grass?

^b Psalm xxxviii. 2.—^c Psalm lxxxviii. 15.—³ Hebrew, *at grass*.

were more keen and pernicious than ordinary, being dipped in God's wrath, as the barbarous nations used to dip their arrows in poison, that they might not only pierce, but burn up and consume the vital parts. Thus did the poison of God's arrows *drink up his spirit*, that is, exhaust and consume his life and soul. *The terrors of God do set themselves in array*—They are like a numerous army invading me on every side. Houbigant renders it, *The terrors of the Lord confound me*. This was the sorest part of his calamity, wherein he was an eminent type of Christ, who complained most of the sufferings of his soul. Indeed, trouble of mind is the sorest trouble. *A wounded spirit, who can bear?* "He had patience enough," says Lord Clarendon, "for the oppression and rapine of his enemies, for the unkindness and reproach of his friends, and for the cunning and malice of the devil; but he was so transported with the sense of God's anger against him, he could not bear that with temper: the apprehension that all those miseries, of so piercing and destroying a nature in themselves, fell upon him, not only by God's permission, to try and humble him, but proceeded directly from his indignation and resolution to destroy him, almost confounded him. When they appeared no more the arrows of his enemies levelled and shot at his greatness and prosperity, the enterprises and designs of evil men, suborned by the devil against him; but the artillery which God himself discharged upon him in his greatest displeasure and fury, he was able to stand the shock no longer, and thought he had some reason to pour out his complaints and lamentations with a little more earnestness; and that the grief and trouble of his mind might excuse the want of that order, and method, and deliberation, which the ease, and calm condition, and disputing humour of his friends, who were only healthy spectators of what he suffered, reproachfully required from him."

Verse 5. *Doth the wild ass bray when he hath grass? &c.*—*Grass* and *fodder* here are a figure of abundance and tranquillity, such as the friends of Job enjoyed. To *bray* and *low* refer to expressions of grief and uneasiness. Job therefore compares his friends, with some smartness, to a *wild ass* exulting in its food, and to an *ox* perfectly satisfied with grateful pasture." His words may be paraphrased thus: Even the brute beasts, when they have convenient food, are quiet and contented. So, it is no wonder that you complain not, who live in ease and prosperity, any more than I did when I wanted nothing; "happy yourselves, you do not condole with me in my wretchedness, nor mourn with me, but rather blame my mourning as importunate clamour, and as if I had behaved myself toward God with insolence and impatience."—Schultens.

A. M. 2484. or loweth the ox over his fodder?
B. C. 1520.

6 Can that which is unsavoury be eaten without salt? or is there *any* taste in the white of an egg?

7 The things *that* my soul refused to touch *are* as my sorrowful meat.

8 O that I might have my request; and that God would grant *me* ⁴the thing that I long for!

9 Even ^dthat it would please God to destroy

⁴ Heb. *my expectation*.—^d 1 Kings xix. 4.

Verse 6. *Can that which is unsavoury—Or rather, that which is insipid, be eaten without salt?—Is it not requisite that every thing insipid should be seasoned, to give it a relish, and make it agreeable? Therefore life itself, when it has lost those comforts, which are the seasoning to it, and give it its relish, then becomes insipid, so that it is nothing more than a burden. Now, if men commonly complain of their meat when it is only unsavoury, how much more when it is so bitter as mine is? Some commentators, however, consider Job here as referring to Eliphaz's discourse, which had been insipid and disagreeable to him, as having no substance, and carrying no weight with it: like unsavoury food, not seasoned nor cured, instead of satisfying and instructing him, it had been nauseous and offensive, like corrupted meat to a weak and sick stomach. Or is there any taste in the white of an egg?—Our version of this clause," says Dr. Dodd, "seems to be void of all sense and connection with what goes before. Mr. Mudge supposes Job to allude, in the original words, to those medicinal potions, which were administered by way of alterative; and, agreeably to his criticism, the clause should be rendered, *Is there any relish in the nauseous medicinal draught?*"*

Verse 7. *The things that my soul refused, &c.*—"Job, persisting in his allegory," says Schultens, "goes on to show how disagreeable to his stomach the speech of Eliphaz had been." This learned critic accordingly translates the verse thus: *My soul refuseth to touch such things; they are to me as corrupted food.* But Dr. Dodd, after quoting these words of Schultens, observes, he "cannot help thinking that this and the two preceding verses will bear another interpretation, and that Job means, in them, to offer a justification for himself; to declare that he had sufficient ground for complaint, without which it was no more usual for man to lament than for the ox or ass to low or bray, when they had sufficient food, &c." The sense of the verse seems to be, Those grievous afflictions, which I dreaded the very thought of, are now my daily, though sorrowful, bread.

Verses 8, 9. *O that I might have my request!*—The thing which I so passionately desired, and which, notwithstanding all your vain words, and weak arguments, I still continue to desire, and beseech God to grant me. *The thing that I long for!*—Hebrew, תְּקוּוֹתַי, *tickvati*, *my hope or expectation.* *That it would please God to destroy me*—To end

me; that he would let loose his hand, A. M. 2484.
and cut me off! B. C. 1520.

10 Then should I yet have comfort; yea, I would harden myself in sorrow: let him not spare; for ^oI have not concealed the words of ¹the Holy One.

11 What *is* my strength, that I should hope? And what *is* mine end, that I should prolong my life?

^o Acts xx. 20.—¹ Lev. xix. 2; Isa. lvii. 15; Hos. xi. 9.

my days and calamities together: *that he would let loose his hand*—Which is now, as it were, bound up or restrained from giving me that deadly blow which I desire. O that he would not restrain it any longer, and suffer me to languish in this miserable condition, but give me one stroke more and quite cut me off. Mr. Peters has justly observed, that "these two verses, as well as verse 11, with many more that might be quoted to the same purpose, are utterly inconsistent with Job's believing that God would restore him to his former happy state;" as Bishop Warburton contended, that he might lay a foundation for an interpretation of the noted passage in chap. xix. 25–27, different from that commonly received, and might explain it, not of Job's hope of immortality, but of his expectation of a restoration to temporal prosperity.

Verse 10. *Then should I yet have comfort*—The thoughts of my approaching death would comfort me in all my sorrows, and yield me abundantly more solace than life, with all that worldly safety, and glory, and happiness, for which thou hast advised me to seek unto God. *Yea, I would harden myself in sorrow*—I would bear up with more courage and patience, under all my torments, with the hopes of death and blessedness after death. *Let him not spare*—Let him use all severity against me, so far as to cut me off, and not suffer me to live any longer. *For I have not concealed the words of the Holy One*—That is, of God, who is frequently called the *Holy One* in Scripture, and is so in a most eminent and peculiar sense. The meaning is, As I have myself steadfastly believed the words, or truths of God, and not wilfully and wickedly departed from them; so I have endeavoured to teach and recommend them to others, and have not been ashamed nor afraid boldly to confess and preach the true religion in the midst of the heathen round about me. And, therefore, I know, if God do cut me off, it will be in mercy, and I shall be a gainer by it.

Verse 11. *What is my strength that I should hope?*—My strength is so small and spent, that although I may linger a while in my torments, yet I cannot live long, and therefore it is vain for me to hope for such a restitution as thou hast promised me, chap. v. 22. *And what is my end?*—What is the end of my life? Or, what is death to me? It is not terrible, but comfortable. *That I should prolong my life?*—That I should desire or endeavour to prolong it, by seeking unto God for that purpose. But, as desirous of death

A. M. 2484. 12 *Is my strength the strength*
B. C. 1520. of stones? or *is my flesh* ⁵ of
brass?

13 *Is not my help in me?* and is wisdom
driven quite from me?

14 ⁶ *To* ⁷ him that is afflicted pity *should be*
showed from his friend; but he forsaketh the
fear of the Almighty.

⁶ Heb. brazen.—⁷ Heb. *To him that melteth.*—⁸ Prov. xvii. 17.
⁹ Psa. xxxviii. 11; xli. 9.

as Job was, yet he never offered to put an end to his
own life. Such a thought will never be entertained
by any that have the least regard to the law of God
and nature. How uneasy soever the soul's confine-
ment in the body may be, it must by no means
break the prison, but wait for a fair discharge.

Verse 12. *Is my strength the strength of stones?*
—I am not made of stone or brass, but of flesh and
blood, as others are; therefore I am not able to en-
dure these miseries longer, and can neither desire
nor hope for the continuance of my life. Bishop
Patrick's paraphrase on this verse is, "God hath not
made me insensible; and therefore do not wonder
that I desire to be released from these very sharp
pains."

Verse 13. *Is not my help in me?*—Though I have
no strength in my body, or outward man, yet I have
some help and support within me, or in my inward
man, even a consciousness of my sincerity toward
God, notwithstanding all your bitter accusations and
censures, as if I were a hypocrite and had no integ-
rity in me, chap. iv. 6. *And is wisdom driven quite*
from me?—If I have no strength in my body, have I
therefore no wisdom or judgment left in my soul?
Am I therefore unable to judge of the vanity of thy
discourse, and of the truth of my own case? Have I
not common sense and discretion? Do not I know
my own condition, and the nature and degree of my
sufferings, better than thou dost? And am I not a
better judge whether I have integrity or not than
thou art? It may not be improper to observe here,
that there is considerable difficulty in determining
the precise sense of the Hebrew of this verse; and
that, accordingly, different learned men have pro-
posed different translations of it. Houbigant renders
it, *Because my help is not at hand, is wisdom there-
fore departed far from me?* Dr. Waterland reads
it, *Is my help in me vain, and the substance quite*
gone from me? And Heath, *Do not I find that I*
cannot in the least help myself, and that strength is
quite driven out of me? In justification of our trans-
lation, and of the interpretation given above, it may
be sufficient to observe, that the same form of ex-
pression in the Hebrew is used Isaiah l. 2, ^{וְיָצַח מִיָּדִי כֹחִי},
ha-im en bi choach, and is translated, and ac-
cording to the context must necessarily be trans-
lated, in a similar manner. *An vero, nulla (est)*
in me potestas? Is there no power in me? (saith the
Lord.) or, *Have I no power to deliver?* If, how-
ever, a different translation of the words be contend-
ed for, perhaps that mentioned by Poole, which is

15 ^h My brethren have dealt deceit- A. M. 2484
fully as a brook, and ⁱ as the stream B. C. 1520.
of brooks they pass away;

16 Which are blackish by reason of the ice,
and wherein the snow is hid:

17 What time they wax warm, ⁷ they vanish:
⁸ when it is hot, they are ⁹ consumed out of
their place.

¹ Jer. xv. 18.—⁷ Heb. *they are cut off.*—⁸ Hebrew, *in the heat*
thereof.—⁹ Heb. *extinguished.*

perfectly agreeable to the Hebrew, and admits of an
easy explication, is preferable to any other that has
been proposed; which is, *What, if I have not help*
in me, is wisdom driven quite from me? That is, if
I cannot help myself, if my outward condition be
helpless and hopeless, as I confess it is, have I there-
fore lost my understanding? Cannot I judge whe-
ther it is more desirable for me to live or to die;
whether I am sincere in my religion or not; whether
your words have truth and weight in them; and
whether you take the right method of dealing with
me?

Verse 14. *To him that is afflicted*—Hebrew, *To*
him that is melted, or dissolved with afflictions: or,
as Dr. Waterland renders it, *To one that is wasting*
away; pity should be showed from his friend—His
friend, such as thou, O Eliphaz, pretendest to be to
me, should show kindness and compassion in his
judgment of him, and behaviour toward him, and
not pass such unmerciful censures upon him as thou
hast passed upon me, nor load him with reproaches;
but he forsaketh the fear of the Almighty—Thou
hast no love or pity for thy friend; a plain evidence
that thou art guilty of what thou didst charge me
with, even of the want of the fear of God. The least
which those that are at ease can do for them that are
pained, is to pity them, to feel a tender concern for
them, and to sympathize with them.

Verse 15. *My brethren*—That is, my kinsmen, or
three friends; for though Eliphaz only had spoken;
the other two had shown their approbation of his
discourse; *have dealt deceitfully*—Under a pretence
of friendship dealing unmercifully with me, and
adding to the afflictions which they said they came
to remove. *As the stream of brooks, &c.*—Which
quickly vanish and deceive the hopes of the thirsty
traveller. It is no new thing for even brethren to
deal deceitfully. It is therefore our wisdom to cease
from man. We cannot expect too little from the
creature, or too much from the Creator.

Verse 16. *Which are blackish, &c.*—Which in
winter, when the traveller neither needs nor desires
it, are full of water congealed by the frost. *Where-*
in the snow is hid—Under which the water from
snow, which formerly fell, and afterward was dis-
solved, lies hid. So he speaks not of those brooks
which are fed by a constant spring, but of them which
are filled by accidental falls of water or snow.

Verses 17, 18. *What time they wax warm*—When
the weather grows milder, and the frost and snow
are dissolved; *they vanish*—^{נִמְצְאוּ}, *nitomathu, ex-*

A. M. 2484. 18 The paths of their way are turned
B. C. 1520. aside; they go to nothing, and perish.

19 The troops of ^kTema looked, the companies of ^lSheba waited for them.

20 They were ^mconfounded because they had hoped; they came thither, and were ashamed.

21 ¹⁰For now ⁿye are ¹¹nothing; ye see *my* casting down, and ^oare afraid.

^k Gen. xv. 15.—^l 1 Kings x. 1; Psa. lxxii. 10; Ezek. xxvii. 22.
^m Jer. xiv. 3.

cisi sunt, they are cut off, having no fountain from whence to draw a supply. *When it is hot*—In the hot season, when waters are most refreshing and necessary; they are consumed out of their place—The place where the traveller expected to find them to his comfort; but they are gone he knows not whither. *The paths of their way are turned aside*—That is, the courses of those waters are changed; they are gone out of their channel, flowing hither and thither, till they be quite consumed, as it here follows. There “is a noble climax,” as Heath observes, in these last three verses; “a most poetical description of the torrents in the hot climates. By extraordinary cold they are frozen over, but the sun no sooner exerts its power than they melt; they are exhiled by the heat, till the stream for smallness is diverted into many channels; it yet lasts a little way, but is soon quite evaporated and lost.”

Verse 19. *The troops of Tema looked*—This place and Sheba were both parts of the hot and dry country of Arabia; in which waters were very scarce, and therefore precious and desirable, especially to travellers. The word אֶרְחוֹת, *orchoth*, signifies companies of travellers or merchants, such as that mentioned Gen. xxxvii. 25, *A company of the Ishmaelites came from Gilead, with their camels, &c.*, or those spoken of Isaiah xxi. 13, 14, *In the forest of Arabia shall ye lodge, O ye travelling companies. The inhabitants of Tema brought water, &c.* The Hebrew word, however, properly means *ways*, or *roads*; but is here put for *travellers* in the ways, by a common metonymy. *The companies of Sheba waited for them*—The Scenitæ, who lived in tents, may here be included, as well as the troops before mentioned, for they removed with their cattle from one place to another for the convenience of pasture and water. It must be observed, men did not there travel singly as we do, but in companies, for their security against wild beasts and robbers. “By a very slight alteration in the pointing, Mr. Heath so translates this verse as to introduce the speaker using a prosopopœia, or addressing himself to the travellers: *Look for them, ye troops of Tema, ye travellers of Sheba, expect them earnestly.* This gives great life to the poetry, and sets a very beautiful image before the eye: the travellers wasting their time, depending on those torrents for water; but, when they come hither, how great the disappointment!”—Dodd.

Verse 20. *They were confounded*—That is, the troops and companies were miserably disappointed;

22 Did I say, Bring unto me? or, A. M. 2484.
Give a reward for me of your sub- B. C. 1520.
stance?

23 Or, Deliver me from the enemy's hand? or, Redeem me from the hand of the mighty?

24 Teach me, and I will hold my tongue: and cause me to understand wherein I have erred.

¹⁰ Or, *For now ye are like to them.*—ⁿ Chapter xiii. 4.
¹¹ Heb. not.—^o Psa. xxxviii. 14.

because they hoped—Comforted themselves with the expectation of water there to quench their thirst; *they came, and were ashamed*—To think that they should expect relief from such uncertain streams, and had deceived themselves and others. Thus we prepare confusion for ourselves by our vain hopes: the reeds break under us because we lean upon them.

Verse 21. *For now ye are nothing, &c.*—Just such are you, who, seeing my calamity, afford me no comfort, and seem afraid lest I should want something of you. Thus Job very properly applies the preceding most beautiful description of the torrents in the hot climates, to his three friends who thus disappointed his expectations. Indeed, it is a very fine image of pretended friends in adversity. When their help is most wanted and coveted, they are too apt to fail the expectations of those that trusted in them. They may properly enough be said to be either frozen or melted away by adversity. All their warm professions are congealed, as it were, when adverse circumstances have laid hold on their friends, and their friendship is quite dissolved and melted away. *Ye see my casting down, and are afraid*—You are shy of me, and afraid for yourselves, lest some further plague should come upon me, wherein you, for my sake, should be involved; or, lest I should be burdensome to you. Therefore you are to me as if you had never come; *you are nothing to me, for I have no help or comfort from you.*

Verses 22, 23. *Did I say*—Or, is it *because I said; Bring unto me?*—Give me something for my support or relief? Is this, or what else is the reason why you are afraid of me, or alienated from me? Did either my former covetousness, or my present necessity, make me troublesome or chargeable to you? or, *Give a reward for me of your substance*—Or, *Give a gift for my use or need?* Did I send for you to come and visit me for this end? Nay, did you not come of your own accord? Why then are you so unmerciful to me? You might at least have given me comfortable words, when I expected nothing else from you. *Or, Deliver me from the enemy's hand?*—By power and the force of your arms, as Abraham delivered Lot; or, *Redeem me from the hand of the mighty?*—Namely, by price or ransom.

Verses 24, 25. *Teach me*—Instead of censuring and reproaching, instruct and convince me by solid arguments; *and I will hold my tongue*—I will patiently hear and gladly receive your counsels; *and cause me to understand wherein I have erred*—

A. M. 2484. 25 How forcible are right words!
B. C. 1520. but what doth your arguing reprove?

26 Do ye imagine to reprove words, and the speeches of one that is desperate, *which are as wind?*

27 Yea, ¹²ye overwhelm the fatherless, and ye ^pdig a *pit* for your friend.

¹² Heb. *ye cause to fall upon.*—^p Psa. lvii. 6.—¹³ Heb. *before your face.*—¹ Chap. xvii. 10.

Show me my mistakes and miscarriages; for I am ready to receive your reproofs, and humbly to submit to them. *How forcible are right words!*—The words of truth and solid argument have a marvelous power to convince and persuade a man; and, if yours were such, I should readily yield to them. *But what doth your arguing reprove?*—There is no truth in your assertions, nor weight in your arguments, and therefore they are of no account, and have no power with me.

Verse 26. *Do you imagine to reprove words?*—What! is all your wisdom employed for this, to catch hold of and reprove some of my words, without making allowance for human infirmity or extreme misery? *and the speeches of one that is desperate?*—Of a poor, miserable, helpless, and hopeless man; *which are as wind*—Which you esteem to be like wind, vain and light, without solidity, giving a sound, but with little sense, and to little purpose. Heath renders it, *Are they as the wind?* vain and empty.

Verse 27. *Ye overwhelm the fatherless*—Your words are not only vain, useless, and uncomfortable to me, but also grievous and pernicious. Hebrew, תפילי, *tappilu*, you rush, or throw yourselves upon him. You fall upon him with all your might, and say all that you can devise to charge and grieve him. You load him with censures and calumnies. The word יתום, *jathom*, here rendered *fatherless*, means a solitary person in distress, as well as an orphan; or one desolate. Job intends himself by the expression, being deprived of all his children, and of all his estate, and forsaken by his friends. *And you dig a pit for your friend*—You insult and triumph over me, whom once you owned for your friend. I spoke

28 Now therefore be content, look upon me; for *it is* ¹³evident unto you if I lie. A. M. 2484. B. C. 1520.

29. ^aReturn, I pray you, let it not be iniquity; yea, return again, my righteousness *is* ¹⁴in it.

30 Is there iniquity in my tongue? cannot ¹⁵my taste discern perverse things?

¹⁴That is, in this matter.—¹⁵ Heb. *my palate*, Chapter xiii. 11; xxxiv. 3.

all I thought, as to my friends, and you from thence take occasion to cast me down. There is nothing in the Hebrew for the word *pit*: it is literally, You dig for your friend; or as Heath and Houbigant render it, *make a mock of your friend*.

Verse 28. *Now therefore be content, look upon me*—Hebrew, *Be willing; look upon me*, or, *to look upon me*, the second imperative being put for the infinitive. Be pleased to consider me and my cause further and better than you have done, that you may give a more true and righteous judgment concerning it; *for it is*—Or rather, *will be; evident*—You will plainly discover it; *if I lie*—A little farther consideration and discourse will make it manifest if I have uttered any thing untrue or without foundation, and I shall readily acknowledge it.

Verse 29. *Return, I pray, let it not be iniquity*—Or, *Recollect yourselves, I beseech you; call it not wickedness: yea, return again; my righteousness is in it*—Or, *Consider it yet again, righteousness may be in me*.—Chappelow. Notwithstanding your suspicions, if you will examine more candidly and strictly, you may, perhaps, be convinced that I am not the sinner you think; but that righteousness is still in me, though I have fallen under these sore afflictions.

Verse 30. *Is there iniquity in my tongue?*—Consider, if there be any iniquity, or untruth, in what I have already said, or shall further speak? Have I hitherto uttered any thing that is faulty? *Cannot my taste discern perverse things*—That is, my understanding, which judges of words and actions, as the palate doth of meats. I hope it is not so corrupted but that I can discern what is bad, though spoken by myself.

CHAPTER VII.

Job bemoans himself to his friends, 1-6. To God, 7-16. Begs for pardon and death, 17-21.

A. M. 2484. **I**S there not ¹an ^aappointed time
B. C. 1520. to man upon earth? *are not his*

days also like the days of a hire- A. M. 2484.
ling? B. C. 1520.

¹ Or, a warfare.

^a Chap. xiv. 5, 13; Psa. xxxix. 4.

NOTES ON CHAPTER VII.

Verse 1. *Is there not, &c.*—Job is here excusing what he cannot justify, his passionate longing for death. *An appointed time for man upon earth*—Heb. צבא, *tzaba*, a warfare; or, time of warfare.

The Targum is, *Chela, militia*. The Vulgate, *militia est vita hominis*, The life of man is a warfare. The heathen had the same thoughts of life: ο δὲ βίος πόλεμος, M. Anton. l. ii. sec. 17. Comp. ch. xiv. 14. *All the days, tzebai, of my appointed time;*

A. M. 2484. 2 As a servant ² earnestly desireth
B. C. 1520. the shadow, and as a hireling looketh
for the reward of his work :

3 So am I made to possess ^b months of vanity,
and wearisome nights are appointed to me.

4 ^a When I lie down, I say, When shall I
arise, and ³ the night be gone ? and I am full
of tossings to and fro unto the dawning of
the day.

5 My flesh is ^d clothed with worms and clods
of dust ; my skin is broken, and become loath-
some.

^a Heb. *gapeth after*.—^b Chap. xxix. 2.—^c Deut. xxviii. 67 ;
Chap. xvii. 12.—^d Heb. *the evening be measured*.—^e Isa. xiv.
11.—^f Chap. ix. 25 ; xvi. 22 ; xvii. 11 ; Psa. xc. 6 ; cii. 11 ;
ciii. 15 ; cxliv. 4 ; Isa. xxxviii. 12 ; xl. 6 ; James iv. 14.

militiæ mee, of my warfare. But our own transla-
tion appears to be as agreeable to the Hebrew, and
to contain as good sense, as any other. Job seems
to mean, Is there not a short time, limited by God,
wherein man shall live in this sinful and miserable
world ; that afterward he may live in a more holy
and happy place and state ? And is it a crime in me
to desire that God would bring me to that joyful
period ? Our time on earth is limited and short, ac-
cording to the narrow bounds of this earth. . . But
heaven cannot be measured, nor the days of heaven
numbered. Reader, consider this ! *Are not his
days also like the days of a hireling ?*—Whose
time is short, being but a few years or days, and
whose condition is full of toil and hardship.

Verse 2. *As a servant earnestly desireth the
shadow*—Of the evening, the sun-set, or the night,
the time allotted for his rest and repose. *For man
goeth forth to his labour until the evening*, Psa. civ.
23. So, why may not I also desire the time of my
rest ? The Hebrew, however, *לַיְלָה יִשָּׁב*, *jishap tzel*,
is more literally rendered, *gapeth*, or *panteth after
the shade*. And the meaning probably is, As a ser-
vant, labouring in the heat of the sun, earnestly de-
sires a cool, refreshing shade. *And as a hireling*
—Heb. *שָׂכִיר*, *sacir*, properly, a servant hired for a
certain time, whereas, the preceding word, *עָבֵד*,
gnebed, signifies a servant, whose time of service is
not fixed or limited : *looketh for the reward of his
work*—As the Heb. *פְּגַלָּה*, *pognal*, according to Bux-
torf, signifies both *work*, and, by a metonymy, the
wages of work, and is accordingly translated *wages*,
(Lev. xix. 13.) the words in the Italic character
(namely, *the reward of*) did not need to be added
here in the text, but the version might properly have
been, *As a hireling looketh*, or, as Heath renders
it, *earnestly longeth for his wages*.

Verse 3. *So am I made to possess, &c.*—This
word, *so*, respects not so much the desire of a hired
servant, as the cause of it, his hard toil and service.
He means, God hath allotted me these painful suffer-
ings, as he hath allotted to a hired servant hard
labour. *Months of vanity*—Months empty and un-
satisfying, or false and deceitful, not affording me

6 ^a My days are swifter than a weaver's A. M. 2484.
shuttle, and are spent without hope. B. C. 1520.

7 O remember that ^c my life is wind : mine
eye ^d shall no more ^e see good.

8 ^a The eye of him that hath seen me shall
see me no more : thine eyes *are* upon me, and
^b I am not.

9 *As the cloud is consumed and vanisheth
away* : so ^b he that goeth down to the grave
shall come up no more.

10 He shall return no more to his house, ⁱ nei-
ther shall his place know him any more.

^a Psalm lxxviii. 39 ; lxxxix. 47.—^b Hebrew, *shall not return*.
^c *To see, that is, to enjoy*.—^d Chap. xx. 9.—^e *That is, I can
live no longer*.—^f 2 Sam. xii. 23.—^g Chap. viii. 18 ; xx. 9 ;
Psa. ciii. 16.

the ease and rest which they promised me, and I
expected. He terms them *months*, rather than *days*,
to signify the tediousness of his affliction. *And
wearisome nights*—He mentions *nights*, because
that is the saddest time for sick and miserable per-
sons ; the darkness and solitude of the night being of
themselves uncomfortable, and giving them more op-
portunity for solemn and sorrowful reflections.

Verses 5, 6. *My flesh is clothed with worms*—
Which were bred out of his corrupted flesh and
sores, and which, it seems, covered him all over
like a garment. *And clods of dust*—The dust of
the earth on which he lay. *My skin is broken*—By
ulcers breaking out in all parts of it. *My days are
swifter than a weaver's shuttle*—Which passes in a
moment from one side of the web to the other. So
the time of my life hastens to a period ; and there-
fore vain are those hopes which you would give me
of a restoration to my former prosperity in this
world. *And are spent without hope*—Of enjoying
any good day here.

Verses 7, 8. *O remember*—He turns his speech to
God ; perhaps observing that his friends grew
weary of hearing it. If men will not hear us, God
will : if men cannot help us, he can : for his arm is
not shortened, neither is his ear heavy. *The eye,
&c., shall see me no more*—In this mortal state : I
shall never return to this life again. *Thine eyes
are upon me, and I am not*—If thou cast one angry
look upon me, *I am not* ; that is, I am a dead man :
or, when thine eyes shall be upon me, that is, when
thou shalt look for me to do me good, thou wilt find
that *I am not*, that I am dead and gone, and incapa-
ble of enjoying that bounty and goodness which
thou givest to men in this world.

Verses 9, 10. *As the cloud is consumed*—Being
dissolved by the heat of the sun. *And vanisheth
away*—Never to return again. *So he that goeth
down, &c., shall come up no more*—Never until the
general resurrection. When you see a cloud, which
looked great, as if it would eclipse the sun, of a
sudden dispersed and disappearing, say, Just such a
thing is the life of man, a vapour that appears for a
while and then vanisheth away. *He shall return no*

A. M. 2484. 11 Therefore I will ^k not refrain my
B. C. 1520. mouth; I will speak in the anguish of
my spirit; I will ^l complain in the bitterness of
my soul.

12 *Am I a sea, or a whale, that thou settest a
watch over me?*

13 ^m When I say, My bed shall comfort me,
my couch shall ease my complaint;

14 Then thou scarest me with dreams, and
terrifiest me through visions:

^a Psalm xxxix. 1, 9; xl. 9.—¹ Samuel i. 10; Chapter x. 1.
^m Chap. ix. 27.—⁷ Heb. *than my bones*.

more to his house—He shall no more be seen and
known in his former habitation. It concerns us to
secure a better place when we die: for this will own
us no more.

Verse 11. *Therefore I will not refrain, &c.*—
Since my life is so vain and short, and, when once
lost, without all hopes of recovery. I will plead
with God for pity before I die; I will not smother
my anguish within my breast, but will ease myself
by pouring out my complaints.

Verse 12. *Am I a sea*—Am I as fierce and unruly
as the sea, which, if thou didst not set bounds to it,
would overwhelm the earth? *Or a whale?*—Am I
a vast and ungovernable sea-monster? *that thou set-
test a watch over me?*—That thou must restrain me
by thy powerful providence; must shut me up and
confine me under such heavy, unexampled, and in-
supportable sufferings, as these creatures are con-
fined by the shore? “*To set a watch over a whale,*”
says Dr. Dodd, “is certainly a very improper and
absurd idea. Hence Houbigant, by a very slight al-
teration, reads it, *Am I a sea, or a whale, that thou
raisest a tempest against me?* an idea which very
well suits with that storm of troubles, wherewith
Job was nearly overwhelmed.” We are apt in
affliction to complain of God, as if he laid more upon
us than there is occasion for: whereas we are never
in heaviness but when there is need, nor more than
there is need.

Verses 13, 14. *My couch shall ease my complaint*
—By giving me sweet and quiet sleep, which may
take off my sense of pain for that time. *Then thou
scarest me with dreams*—With sad and frightful
dreams. *And terrifiest me with visions*—With hor-
rid apparitions; so that I am afraid to go to sleep,
and my remedy proves as bad as my disease. This
contributed no little to render the night so unwell-
come and wearisome to him. How easily can God,
when he pleases, meet us with terror there where
we promised ourselves ease and repose. Nay, he
can make us a terror to ourselves; and, as we have
often contracted guilt, by the rovings of an unsancti-
fied fancy, he can likewise, by the power of our
imagination, create us a great deal of grief, and so
make that our punishment which has often been our
sin. Job’s dreams might probably arise, in part,
from his distemper, but, no doubt, Satan also had a
hand in them. We have reason to pray, that our

15 So that my soul chooseth A. M. 2484.
strangling, *and* death rather ⁷ than B. C. 1520.
my life.

16 ^a I loathe *it*; I would not live always:
^o let me alone; ^p for my days *are* vanity.

17 ^q What is man, that thou shouldest mag-
nify him? and that thou shouldest set thy
heart upon him?

18 *And that thou shouldest visit him every
morning, and try him every moment?*

^a Chap. x. 1.—^o Chap. x. 20; xiv. 6; Psa. xxxix. 13.—^p Psa.
lxii. 9.—^q Psa. viii. 4; cxliv. 3; Heb. ii. 6.

dreams may neither defile nor disquiet us; neither
tempt us to sin, nor torment us with fear; that he
who keeps Israel, who neither slumbers nor sleeps,
would keep us when we slumber and sleep. And
we ought to bless God if we lie down and our sleep
is sweet, and we are not thus scared.

Verse 15. *So that my soul chooseth strangling*—
The most violent death, so it be but certain and sud-
den, rather than such a wretched life. Heb. כַּעֲצוּמֵי,
megnatsmothai, rather than my bones—That is, than
my body, the skin of which was everywhere
broken, and the flesh almost consumed, so that
little remained but bones.

Verse 16. *I loath it*—To wit, my life, last men-
tioned. *I would not live alway*—In this world, if I
might, no not in prosperity; for even such a life is
but vanity; much less in this extremity of misery.
Let me alone—That is, withdraw thy hand from me,
either, 1, Thy supporting hand, which preserves my
life, and suffer me to die: or, rather, 2, Thy correct-
ing hand, as this phrase signifies, verse 19. *For my
days are vanity*—My life is in itself, and in its best
estate, a vain, unsatisfying, uncertain thing, empty
of solid comfort, and exposed to real griefs, and
therefore I would not be for ever tied to it. And it
is a decaying and perishing thing, and will, of it-
self, quickly vanish and depart, and does not need
to be forced from me by such exquisite torments.

Verse 17. *What is man*—*Enosh*, lapsed, fallen
man; *that thou shouldest magnify him?*—What is
there in that poor, mean creature called man, *miser-
able man*, which can induce thee to take any notice
of him, or to make such account of him? Man is not
worthy of thy favour, and he is below thy anger. It
is too great a condescension in thee, and too great an
honour done to man, that thou shouldst contend
with him, and draw forth all thy forces against him,
as if he were a fit match for thee. Therefore do not,
O Lord, thus dishonour thyself or magnify me;
and that thou shouldest set thy heart upon him—
Shouldst concern thyself so much about him, as
though he were a creature of great dignity and
worth, or were near and dear to thee.

Verse 18. *And that thou shouldest visit him*—
Namely, punish or chastise him, as the word *visiting*
is often used; *every morning*—That is, every day;
the word *morning*, which is the beginning of the
day, being put, by a synecdoche, for the whole day,

A. M. 2484. 19 How long wilt thou not depart
B. C. 1520. from me, nor let me alone till I swallow down my spittle?

20 I have sinned; what shall I do unto thee, O thou Preserver of men? why hast thou set me as a mark against thee, so

* Psa. xxxvi. 8.

as the evening (verse 4) is put for the whole night; and try him every moment—That is, afflict him, which is often called *trying*, because it does indeed try a man's faith, and patience, and perseverance. But this and the former verse may possibly be understood of mercies as well as afflictions. Having declared his loathing of life, and his passionate desire of death, and urged it with this consideration, that the days of his life were mere vanity; he may be considered as pursuing his argument with this expostulation, What is man, that vain, foolish creature, that thou shouldst magnify, or regard, or visit him with thy mercy and blessings; that thou shouldst so far honour and regard him, as by thy visitation to preserve his spirit, or hold his soul in life; and try him, which God doth, not only by his afflictions, but also by prosperity, and both inward and outward blessings? That thou shouldst observe his motions every moment, as in care for him, and jealous over him?

Verse 19. *How long wilt thou not depart from me*—How long will it be ere thou withdraw thy afflicting hand from me? The Hebrew is literally, How long wilt thou not take thine eyes off me? "This," says Dodd, "is a metaphor from combatants, who never take their eyes from off their antagonists. The figure is preserved in the next sentence, which represents a combatant seized by his adversary in such a manner as to prevent his swallowing his spittle or fetching his breath." *Till I swallow my spittle?*—For a little while: or, that I may have a breathing time: an Arabic proverb at present in use. See Schultens.

Verse 20. *I have sinned*—Although I am free from those crying sins for which my friends suppose thou hast sent this uncommon judgment upon me; yet I freely confess that I am a sinner, and therefore obnoxious to thy justice. And *what shall I do unto thee?*—To satisfy thy justice, or regain thy favour. I can do nothing to purchase or deserve it, and therefore implore thy mercy to pardon my sins; *O thou Preserver of men*—O thou, who, as thou wast

that I am a burden to myself? A. M. 2484.
B. C. 1520. 21 And why dost thou not pardon my transgression, and take away mine iniquity? for now shall I sleep in the dust; and thou shalt seek me in the morning, but I shall not be.

* Chap. xvi. 12; Psa. xxi. 12; Lam. iii. 12.

the Creator of man, delightest to be, and to be called, the Preserver and Saviour of men; and who waitest to be kind and gracious to men, from day to day: do not deal with me in a way contrary to thy own nature and name, and to the manner of thy dealing with all the rest of mankind. As Job had expressed himself before as if he thought he was treated with severity, Schultens chooses to render צַוּן, *notzer*, *observer*, rather than *preserver*. This indeed seems to be more agreeable to the context, which intimates that the eye of God was upon Job to observe and watch him as an offender; and this construction may be justified from Jer. iv. 16, where the same word, in the plural number, is rendered *watchers*. According to this translation the meaning is, O thou observer of men, who dost exactly know and diligently observe all men's inward motions and outward actions; if thou shalt be severe to mark mine iniquities, as thou seemest to be, I have not what to say or do unto thee. *Why hast thou set me as a mark, &c.*—Into which thou wilt shoot all the arrows of thy indignation? *So that I am a burden to myself*—I am weary of myself and of my life, being no way able to resist or endure the strokes of so potent an adversary.

Verse 21. *Why dost thou not pardon, &c.*—Seeing thou art so gracious to others, so ready to preserve and forgive them; why may not I hope for the same favour from thee? *For now shall I sleep in the dust*—If thou dost not speedily help me it will be too late, I shall be dead, and so incapable of receiving those blessings which thou art wont to give to men in the land of the living; and thou shalt seek me, &c., but I shall not be—When thou shalt diligently seek for me that thou mayest show favour to me, thou wilt find that I am dead and gone, and so wilt lose the opportunity of doing it; help, therefore, speedily. The consideration of this, that we must shortly die, and perhaps may die suddenly, should make us all very solicitous to get our sins pardoned, and our iniquities taken away

CHAPTER VIII.

Baldad affirms that Job had spoken amiss, 1-3. That if he would sincerely seek to God, God would help him, 4-7. That it is usual with God to destroy the hypocrite, 8-19. The joy of the upright, 20-23.

A. M. 2484. B. C. 1520. **THEN** answered Bildad the Shuhite, and said,

2 How long wilt thou speak these *things*? and *how long shall* the words of thy mouth be like a strong wind?

3 * Doth God pervert judgment; or doth the Almighty pervert justice?

4 If ^b thy children have sinned against him, and he have cast them away ¹ for their transgression;

^a Gen. xviii. 25; Deut. xxxii. 4; 2 Chron. xix. 7; Chap. xxxiv. 12, 17; Dau. ix. 14; Rom. iii. 5.

NOTES ON CHAPTER VIII.

Verse 1. *Then answered Bildad the Shuhite*—“Bildad, whose sentiments are the same with those of the preceding friend, now comes to the attack, and tells Job that his general asseverations of innocence are of no avail; that to deny his guilt was to charge the Almighty with injustice; that, if he would not yield to the arguments of Eliphaz, drawn from his experience, and strengthened by revelation, he would do well to pay respect to the general experience of mankind, as handed down by tradition; where he would find it established, as a certain truth, that misery was the infallible consequence of wickedness; that therefore they could not argue wrong who inferred from actual misery antecedent guilt: and though he might urge that these calamities were fallen upon him on account of his children’s wickedness, yet he only deceived himself; for in that case God might have indeed chastised them for their crimes, but he would, by no means, have destroyed the innocent with the guilty: he would rather have heaped his blessings on the innocent person, that the contrast might have vindicated his providence. He would have even wrought a miracle for the preservation or restoration of such a person; and he concludes that since, from the known attributes of God, it was impossible he should cut off the innocent, or suffer the guilty to go free; and, as no interposition of providence had happened in his behalf, he thought him in a likely way, by his utter destruction, to prove a terrible example of the truth of that principle which they had urged against him.”—Heath and Dodd.

Verse 2. *How long wilt thou speak these things?* &c.—Why dost thou persist to talk in this manner? and why are thy words thus vehement? As a strong wind which overturns all things without any moderation, and suffers nothing else to be heard, so thy boisterous and violent words will not permit the voice of truth and wisdom to be heard.

Verse 3. *Doth God*—Hebrew, **אֱלֹהִים**, *Eel*, the mighty God, as this word signifies; *pervert judgment?*—Judge unrighteously? No: this is inconsistent with God’s nature, which is essentially and necessarily just, and with his office of governor of the world. *Or doth the Almighty pervert justice?*—Hebrew, **שַׁדְדַי**, *Shaddai*, a word that sets forth God’s *omnipotence* and *all-sufficiency*. These names are emphatically used to prove that God cannot deal unjustly or falsely with men, because he hath no need so to

5 ° If thou wouldest seek unto God ^{A. M. 2484. B. C. 1520.} betimes, and make thy supplication to the Almighty;

6 If thou *wert* pure and upright, surely now he would awake for thee, and make the habitation of thy righteousness prosperous.

7 Though thy beginning was small, yet thy latter end should greatly increase.

^b Chap. i. 5, 18.—¹ Hebrew, *in the hand of their transgression.*
^c Chap. v. 8; xi. 13; xxii. 23, &c.

do, nor temptation to it, being self-sufficient for his own happiness, and being able, by his own invincible power, to do whatsoever pleaseth him.

Verse 4. *If thy children have sinned against him*—If thou wast innocent, thy children, upon whom a great part of these calamities fell, might be guilty; and therefore God is not unrighteous in these proceedings. *And he have cast them away*—Hebrew, *hath expelled, or cast them out*; (namely, out of the world, or out of his favour; as a man gives his wife a bill of divorce, of which the same word is used;) *for their transgression*—Hebrew, *by the hand*, that is, *by means of, their wickedness*. Bildad argued in this way according to the maxim which he had entertained: but it does not appear that he had any foundation for judging thus of them.

Verse 5. *If thou wouldest seek unto God, &c.*—God hath spared thee, whom he might justly have destroyed with thy children, and thou art yet capable of obtaining his favour if thou wilt seek it. And, therefore, cease from thy causeless and unthankful complaints. *Seek unto God betimes*—Hebrew, **אֶת־הַשָּׁמַיִם**, *im teshacher*, if thou wouldest rise early to seek him; if thou wouldest seek him speedily, early, and diligently, chap. v. 8; and vii. 18–21. *And make thy supplication to the Almighty*—Instead of complaining, implore his grace and favour with humble supplication.

Verse 6. *If thou wert pure and upright*—That is, of a sincere heart and blameless life toward God and men; *surely now he would awake for thee*—**עָרַב**, *jagnir, excitarit se*, he would raise, or stir up himself. Thus David prays, using the same word, *Stir up thyself, and awake to my judgment. And make the habitation of thy righteousness prosperous*—He would certainly have a regard to thee, and restore the concerns of thy house and family to their former splendour. He says the habitation of *thy righteousness*, to signify that if it were such, and he would manage his affairs with righteousness and not wrongfully, God would prosper him accordingly; and perhaps also to intimate, that because he had not prospered they had cause to suspect that he had acquired his property by fraud and oppression.

Verse 7. *Though thy beginning was small*—The sense is either, 1st, Though thou hadst possessed but very little at first, yet God would have wonderfully blessed and increased thy estate: whereas, now he hath brought thee down from a great estate almost to nothing; which is an evidence of his displeasure

A. M. 2484. S^d For inquire, I pray thee, of the
B. C. 1520. former age, and prepare thyself to the

search of their fathers :

9 (For ^o we are but of yesterday, and know
² nothing, because our days upon earth are a
shadow :)

10 Shall not they teach thee, and tell thee,

⁴ Deut. iv. 32 ; xxxii. 7 ; Chap. xv. 18.—^o Genesis xlvii. 9 ;
1 Chron. xxix. 15 ; Chap. vii. 6 ; Psa. xxxix. 5 ; cii. 11 ; cxlv.

and of thy hypocrisy. Or, 2d, Though what thou
hast left be now very little, yet if thou repent and
seek God it shall vastly increase.

Verse 8. *For inquire, &c., of the former age*—
That is, of our predecessors, who had the advantage
of longer life and more experience, besides more
frequent revelations from God than we have. They
also will be more impartial judges of this cause than
we may be thought to be. Inform thyself by the
instructions which they have left, either in word or
writing, what their opinion was about the manner
of God's dealing with men. *And prepare thyself
to the search, &c.*—Do not slightly, but seriously and
industriously, search the ancient records.

Verse 9. *We are but of yesterday, &c.*—But late-
ly born, and therefore have but little knowledge and
experience. We live not so long as they did to make
observations on the methods of Divine Providence.
“There are three things in this passage,” says Dr.
Dodd, from Peters, “well worthy of our observa-
tion. As, first, his referring Job to their ancestors of
former times as the best instructors in wisdom ; then
urging the comparative ignorance of the generation
that then was, and the reason of it, namely, the short-
ness of men's lives ; *We are but of yesterday, &c.*,
human life being at this time in a swift decline, and
reduced, in a few generations, from eight or nine
hundred years to one hundred and fifty, or there-
abouts : for, what is most to our purpose is, in the
next place, his representing these long-lived ances-
tors of theirs, from whom they derived their wis-
dom, as living but an age or two before them : they
were the *men of the former age*, or perhaps the
fathers and grand-fathers of these. And it appears
from the Scripture history, that Shem, the son of
Noah, who lived five hundred years after the flood,
might well have been a cotemporary with the grand-
fathers, or great-grand-fathers, of Job and his friends ;
and with what authority would such a one teach
them ! and with what attention would his instruc-
tions be received ! Indeed, the fame of these res-
torees of the human race was so great for many
ages after, that when mankind fell into the supersti-
tion of worshipping men-deities, there is little doubt
to be made, but that these were the first mortals that
were deified. The last thing I shall observe from
the passage, is the style or manner in which the pre-
cepts of their ancestors were transmitted to them ;
and that is, by some apt simile or comparison, drawn
from nature ; and like a picture fitted to engage the
attention, and by agreeably entertaining the imagina-
tion, to leave a strong impression on the memory.

and utter words out of their heart? A. M. 2484.

B. C. 1520.

11 Can the rush grow up without
mire? can the flag grow without water?

12 ^f While it is yet in his greenness, and not
cut down, it withereth before any other herb.

13 So are the paths of all that forget God ;
and the ^g hypocrite's hope shall perish :

14.—^g Heb. not.—^f Psa. cxxix. 6 ; Jer. xvii. 6.—^g Chap.
xi. 20 ; xviii. 14 ; xxvii. 8 ; Psa. cxli. 10 ; Prov. x. 28.

Such is that natural and beautiful comparison we
have here ; and which, by the way of introducing it,
appears plainly to have been a proverbial saying de-
livered down from their forefathers ; perhaps taught
them from their cradles. *Have not they then, says
he, transmitted to thee this wise lesson? That, as
the rush cannot grow up without mire, nor the flag
without water, so neither can any thing flourish
or prosper long without the blessing of Almighty God?
and how should the ungodly, or the hypocrite, ex-
pect his blessing!* One scarcely knows which to
admire most, the piety of the sentiment, or the ele-
gance and justness of the comparison.”

Verse 10. *Shall not they teach thee?*—Assuredly
they will inform thee that it is as we say. *And utter
words out of their heart*—Not partially, but sincere-
ly, speaking their inward thoughts ; not rashly, but
from deep consideration ; not by hearsay from oth-
ers, but their own knowledge and experience.

Verses 11, 12. *Can the rush grow without mire,
&c.*—This, and what follows, he speaks as from
those ancients, to whom he had referred him, and
concerning whom he says, that they would give him
such instructions as these. *While it is yet in its
greenness*—Whereby it promises long continuance :
and not cut down—Though no man cut it down it
withers of itself, and saves a man the labour of cut-
ting or plucking it up. *Before any other herb*—
Sooner than other herbs, or, as ^{לִפְנֵי}, *liphnee*, means,
in their presence, or they surviving ; in which sense
it is said, that Ishmael died in the presence of his
brethren ; the rest of the herbs, as it were, looking
upon it, and admiring the sudden change.

Verse 13. *So are the paths of all that forget God*
—Of wicked men, who are often described by this
character ; see Psa. ix. 17, and l. 22 ; or, of hypo-
crites, as the next words explain it, whose first and
fundamental error is, that they forget, that is, ne-
glect, forsake, and despise God, his presence, com-
mands, worship, and providence ; and, therefore,
break out into manifold sins. But, by their *paths*, he
does not intend their manner of living, but the events
which befall them, God's manner of dealing with
them. Now this may be accommodated to the fore-
going similitude in this manner, namely, Such is the
prosperity of wicked men ; because it wants the solid
foundation of piety, and of God's promise and bless-
ing consequent thereupon, it quickly vanishes into
nothing. *The hypocrite's hope shall perish*—That
is, the object of his hope, his riches, his friends, his
honours, and other such like things, on which he
founded his expectations ; for, when these are lost,

A. M. 2484. 14 Whose hope shall be cut off, and
B. C. 1520. whose trust shall be ³a spider's web.

15 ^h He shall lean upon his house, but it shall not stand: he shall hold it fast, but it shall not endure.

16 He is green before the sun, and his branch shooteth forth in his garden.

17 His roots are wrapped about the heap, and seeth the place of stones.

³ Hebrew, a spider's house, Isa. lix. 5.—^h Chapter xxvii. 18.
¹ Chap. vii. 10; xx. 9; Psa. xxxvii. 36.

hope may be said to perish, because that from which it arose is no more.

Verse 14. *Whose hope shall be cut off*—That is, whose wealth and outward glory, which is the foundation and matter of his hope, shall be suddenly and violently taken away from him; or, as the Hebrew קִיט, *jacot*, may be translated, whose hope shall be irksome or tedious to him, by the succession of earnest expectations and great disappointments. *Whose trust shall be a spider's web*—Which though it be formed with great art and industry, and may do much mischief to others, yet is most slender and feeble, and easily swept down, or pulled in pieces, and unable to defend the spider that made it. The application is obvious.

Verse 15. *He shall lean upon his house*—He shall trust to the multitude and strength of his children and servants, and to his wealth, all which come under the name of a man's house in Scripture. *But it shall not stand*—That is, not be able to uphold itself, nor him that trusted to it. *He shall hold it fast*—Or, he shall take fast hold of it to strengthen and uphold himself by it. But his web, that refuge of lies, will be swept away, and he crushed in it. Or, by *holding it fast*, may be meant, that he shall endeavour to support his house by strong alliances, but it will be to no purpose, for *it shall not endure*.

Verse 16. *He, &c.*—The hypocrite, or the secure and prosperous sinner, may think himself degraded when he is compared to a rush or flag. Compare him, then, to a flourishing and well-rooted tree, which spreads its branches in a fair garden. Yet, even then, shall he suddenly wither and come to nothing. *Is green before the sun*—Flourisheth in the world publicly, and in the view of all men. *And his branch shooteth forth*—His children, who are here mentioned as additions, not only to his comfort, but also to his strength and safety. *In his garden*—A place where it is defended from those injuries to which the trees of the field are subject, and where, besides the advantages common to all trees, it hath peculiar helps from the art and industry of men. So he supposes this man to be placed in the most desirable circumstances.

Verse 17. *His roots are wrapped about the heap*—Heath renders this, *He windeth his roots about a spring; he twisteth himself about a heap of stones*: and he approves a slight alteration of the text made by Houbigant; who, rather more elegantly, reads, *He has his roots involved, or, fixed, in a hill; he ad-*

18 ¹ If he destroy him from his place, A. M. 2484.
then it shall deny him, saying, I have B. C. 1520.
not seen thee.

19 Behold, this is the joy of his way, and
² out of the earth shall others grow.

20 Behold, God will not cast away a perfect man, neither will he ⁴ help the evil doers:

21 Till he fill thy mouth with laughing, and thy lips with ⁵ rejoicing.

¹ Psa. cxiii. 7.—⁴ Heb. take the ungodly by the hand.—⁵ Heb. shouting for joy.

heres to the midst of stones. This circumstance is added to signify the tree's firmness and strength; that it was not fixed in loose and sandy ground, which a violent wind might overthrow, but in solid ground, within which were many stones, which its numerous and spreading roots embraced, folding and interweaving themselves about them. *He seeth the place of stones*—The tree reacheth thither, takes the advantage of that place for the strengthening of itself. By this the writer seems to express the apparent firmness and worldly dependance of the hypocrite.

Verse 18. *If he, &c.*—Namely, God, who is the saviour of good men and the destroyer of the wicked; *destroy him from his place*—When God blasts him and plucks him up; *then it shall deny him*—That is, the place shall deny him; *saying, I have not seen thee*—The reader will easily observe, that *denying him and seeing him* are here ascribed to the place figuratively, and the meaning is, that he shall be so utterly extirpated and destroyed, that there shall be no memorial of him left, nor any remembrance that such a man ever lived in that place. He shall no more recover himself than a tree which is plucked out of the ground, and left to wither.

Verse 19. *Behold, this is the joy of his way*—Or, rather, *This is the way of his joy*: it all ends in this: this is the issue of his flourishing state. He falls into heavy calamities, from which he can never deliver himself again. *And out of the earth shall others grow*—Out of the same earth or place shall other trees arise. Heath reads the verse, *Behold him now; destruction is his path; and strangers out of the dust shall spring up in his room*. In other words, The wicked come speedily to an end, and strangers with whom they had no affinity come in to possess what they had gathered up, in expectation of making their name and family endure a long time.

Verse 20. *Behold, God will not cast away a perfect man*—God, who will not help the evil doer, will not cast away a good man, though he may be cast down: yet it may be he will not be lifted up in this world; and therefore Bildad could not infer, that if Job was not restored to temporal prosperity he was not a good man. Let us judge nothing before the time, but wait till the secrets of all hearts are revealed, and the present difficulties of providence solved, to universal and everlasting satisfaction.

Verse 21. *Till he fill thy mouth with laughing—*

A. M. 2484. 22 They that hate thee shall be
B. C. 1520. ¹ clothed with shame; and the dwell-

¹ Psa. xxxv. 26; cix. 29.

What I have said in general of good men shall be made good to thee if thou art such: God will not forsake thee, nor desist from doing thee good, till he give thee abundant matter of rejoicing.

Verse 22. *They that hate thee*—That rejoice in thy calamities; *shall be clothed with shame*—That is, shall be wholly covered with it, shall be utterly confounded, when they shall observe thee, whom they have despised and insulted over, to be wonderfully restored to thy former or greater felicity. *And the*

ing-place of the wicked ⁶ shall come A. M. 2484.
to naught. B. C. 1520.

⁶ Heb. shall not be.

dwelling-place of the wicked—Either, particularly, of thy enemies, who acted so unworthily and wickedly toward thee; or, more generally, of all wicked men; *shall come to naught*—Having showed what good God would do to the perfect, or good man, he now declares what would be the portion of the wicked. And, as he said, verse 20, that God would not help them; so here he adds, that God would bring not only them, but their house, that is, their family and estate, to utter ruin.

CHAPTER IX.

Job's answer: man cannot stand in judgment with God, because of God's justice, wisdom, power, and sovereignty, 1–13.

Job condemns himself, as not able to contend with God, 14–21. Shows that we cannot judge of men by their outward condition, 22–24. And complains of the greatness of his troubles, and the loss he was at what to say or do, 25–35.

A. M. 2484. **T**HEN Job answered and said,
B. C. 1520. 2 I know it is so of a truth: but

^a Psa. cxlii. 2; Rom. iii. 20.

NOTES ON CHAPTER IX.

Verse 1. *Then Job answered and said*—“In reply to Bildad, Job begins with hinting, that their opinions seemed a little to clash; Eliphaz had insisted, from revelation, that the common failings of men were a sufficient justification of providence, even in the most afflicting dispensations. Bildad says, if he were pure and upright, God would interpose in his behalf. Job replies, that all this is very true; but the difficulty is, to be thus pure and upright: ‘for I am not exempt from the common failings of men: if, therefore, they are sufficient to account for the great calamities which have befallen me, I am still without a remedy. As to God’s power and wisdom, I am as thoroughly convinced, and can give as many instances of it as you; and, therefore, I know it is in vain for me to contend with him, verses 2–13. I have nothing left but to acknowledge my own vileness, and to make my supplication to him, verses 14–19. But yet, as to any heinous crimes, beyond the common infirmities of human nature, these I disclaim; and let the event be what it will, I will rather part with my life than accuse myself wrongfully. And whereas you affirm, that affliction is an infallible mark of guilt, you quite mistake the matter; for afflictions are indifferently assigned to be the portion of the innocent and the guilty. God, indeed, sometimes in his anger destroys the wicked; but, doth he not as frequently afflict the innocent? The dispensations of providence, in this world, are frequently such, that, were it not that God now and then lets loose his fury against them, one would be almost tempted to imagine the rule of this world was delivered over into the hands of wicked

how should ^a man be just ¹ with A. M. 2484
God? B. C. 1520.

¹ Or, before God.

men, verses 21–24. As for my own part, my days are almost come to an end: it is therefore labour lost for me to plead the cause of my innocence: besides, that in the sight of God I must appear all vileness; so that it is not for such a one as me to pretend to put myself on a level with him. And, even though I were able to do so, there is no one that hath sufficient authority to judge between us, verses 25–33. Yet, were it his pleasure to grant me a little respite, I could say a great deal in my own vindication; but, as matters stand, I dare not; for which reason my life is a burden to me, and my desire is, it may speedily come to an end, chap. x. verse 1, to the end. I would, however, expostulate a little with the Almighty.’ And here he enters into the most beautiful and tender pleading which heart can conceive; ending, as before, with a prayer, that his sufferings and life might soon come to a period; and that God would grant him some little respite before his departure hence.”—Heath and Dodd.

Verse 2. *I know it is so of a truth*—Namely, as you say, that God must be just and righteous; that purity and uprightness are qualities belonging to him; that he cannot possibly be biased or prejudiced in judging and determining the state and condition of mankind. I am likewise satisfied, that the time we have to live here is too short to compass any considerable points of knowledge; and that, whenever he pleases, he can exercise his power so as to change our exalted mirth to most bitter weeping, our highest joy to the most abject sorrow: can bring the most insolent offender to shame, and dispossess the wicked of his strongest and most magnificent situation. *But how*—Hebrew, *And how,*

A. M. 2484. 3 If he will contend with him, he
B. C. 1520. cannot answer him one of a thou-
sand.

4 ^b He is wise in heart, and mighty in strength:
who hath hardened *himself* against him, and
hath prospered?

5 Which removeth the mountains, and they
know not: which overturneth them in his
anger;

^b Chapter xxxvi. 5.—^c Isa. ii. 19, 21; Hag. ii. 6, 21; Hebrews
xii. 26.—^d Chap. xxvi. 11.

should man—*Enosh, weak, frail* man, imperfect as
he is, *be just with God?*—Be justified, or clear him-
self in God's account. I know that no man is ab-
solutely holy and righteous, if God be severe to
mark what is amiss in him.

Verse 3. *If he will contend with him*—If God be
pleased to contend with man, namely, in judgment,
or to debate, or plead with him; *he cannot answer
him one of a thousand*—One accusation among a
thousand which God might produce against him.
So far would he be from being able to maintain his
own innocence against God, if God should set him-
self against him as his adversary.

Verse 4. *He is wise in heart*—He is infinitely
wise, and searcheth all men's hearts and ways, and
discovers a multitude of sins, which men's short-
sighted eyes cannot see; and therefore can charge
them with innumerable evils, of which they thought
themselves innocent, and sees far more malignity
than men can discern in their sins. *Mighty in
strength*—So that, whether men contend with God
by wisdom or by strength, God will be conqueror.
Who hath hardened himself, &c.—Obstinately con-
tended with him. The devil promised himself that
Job, in the day of his affliction, would curse and
speak ill of God. But, instead of that, he sets him-
self to honour God and speak highly of him. As
ill pained as he is, and as much as he is taken up
with his own miseries, when he has occasion to
mention the wisdom and power of God, he forgets
his complaints, and expatiates, with a flood of elo-
quence, on that glorious subject.

Verses 5, 6. *Which removeth the mountains*—He
proceeds to give particular evidences of the divine
power and wisdom, which he mentioned verse 4.
And they—That is, the mountains, to which he figu-
ratively ascribes sense and knowledge; *know not*—
He removes them suddenly and unexpectedly ere
they are aware of it. *Which overturneth them in
his anger*—In token of his displeasure with men,
that lived upon or near them. *Which shaketh the
earth*—Great portions of it by earthquakes, or by
removing islands. *And the pillars thereof tremble*
—The deep and inward parts of it, which, like pil-
lars, support those parts which appear to our view.

Verse 7. *Who commandeth the sun, and it riseth
not*—Nor are the heavens less subject to his power;
for neither sun nor stars can shine if he forbid
them. "Bishop Warburton supposes, that this al-

6 Which ^o shaketh the earth out of ^{A. M. 2484.}
her place, and ^d the pillars thereof ^{B. C. 1520.}
tremble;

7 Which commandeth the sun, and it riseth
not; and sealet up the stars;

8 ^o Which alone spreadeth out the heavens,
and treadeth upon the ² waves of the sea;

9 ^f Which maketh ³ Arcturus, Orion, and Ple-
iades, and the chambers of the south;

^o Gen. i. 6; Psa. civ. 2.—² Heb. *heights*.—^f Gen. i. 16; Chap.
xxxviii. 31, &c.; Amos v. 8.—³ Heb. *Ash, Cesil, and Cimah*.

ludes to the miraculous history of the people of
God, such as the Egyptian darkness, and the stop-
ping the sun's course by Joshua. But surely there
is no necessity, from the words themselves, to sup-
pose any allusion of this kind, or, indeed, any thing
miraculous, since God, by throwing a thick cloud
over the sun and stars, can and does obscure them
when he pleases."—Dodd. And things in the Scrip-
tures are often said *to be* or *not to be*, when they
appear or disappear; of which some instances have
been given in the former part of this work, and we
shall have more hereafter in their proper places.
Thus it is that the Chaldee Paraphrast understands
the passage. *And sealet up the stars*—That is,
covereth and shutteth them up, that they may not
shine, as in dark and dismal tempests, like that
mentioned Acts xxvii. 20, when *neither sun nor
stars appeared for many days*.

Verse 8. *Which alone*—That is, by his own sin-
gle power, without any other help. *Spreadeth out
the heavens*—He spread them out like a curtain,
Psa. civ. 2, when he first created them, and he, in a
manner, spreads them again every day; that is,
keeps them spread for the comfort and benefit of
this lower world, and does not roll and fold them up
as he will do in due time. Or, as the same Hebrew
word, נטח, *natah*, is rendered, Psa. xviii. 9, *boveth
down the heavens*; and so it is a further description
of a black and tempestuous season, wherein the
heavens seem to be brought down nearer to the
earth. *And treadeth upon the waves of the sea*—
That is, represseth and ruleth them, when they
rage and are tempestuous: for *treading upon* any
thing signifies, in the Scriptures, exercising power
and dominion over it.

Verse 9. *Which maketh Arcturus, Orion, and
Pleiades, &c.*—Who ordereth and disposeth them,
as the word *making* is sometimes used in the Scrip-
tures; governeth their rising and setting, and all
their influences. These he names as constellations
of greatest eminence; but under them he seems to
comprehend all the stars, which, as they were cre-
ated by God, so are under his government. Arctu-
rus is a northern constellation, near that called the
Bear. Orion is a more southerly constellation, that
rises to us in December. The Pleiades is a constel-
lation not far from Orion, which we call the Seven
Stars. By *the chambers* (or *inmost chambers*, as
the word signifies) *of the south*, he seems to under-

A. M. 2484. 10 ^a Which doeth great things past
B. C. 1520. finding out; yea, and wonders with-
out number.

11 ^b Lo, he goeth by me, and I see *him*
not: he passeth on also, but I perceive him
not.

12 ⁱ Behold, he taketh away, ⁴ who can hinder
him? who will say unto him, What doest
thou?

13 *If* God will not withdraw his anger, ^h the
⁶ proud helpers do stoop under him.

^a Chapter v. 9; Psalm lxxi. 15.—^b Chapter xxiii. 8; xxv. 14.
ⁱ Isa. xlv. 9; Jer. xviii. 6; Rom. ix. 20.—⁴ Heb. *who can turn
him away?* Chap. xi. 10.

stand those stars and constellations which are to-
ward the southern pole, which are called *inward
chambers*, because they are for the most part hid
and shut up from these parts of the world.

Verse 10. *Which doeth great things, &c.*—Job
here says the same that Eliphaz had said chap. v. 9,
and in the original, in the very same words, with
design to show his full agreement with him, touch-
ing the divine perfections.

Verse 11. *Lo he goeth by me*—Or *besides*, or *be-
fore* me, in my presence; that is, he worketh by his
previdence in ways of mercy or judgment. *And
I see him not*—I see the effects, but I cannot under-
stand the causes or grounds of his actions, for they
are incomprehensible to me, or any other man: for
though Job speaks only in his own person, yet he
means to affirm it of all men, that such is the weak-
ness of their understandings that they cannot search
out God's counsels and ways. The operations of
second causes are commonly obvious to our senses;
but, though God works by those causes, we see him
not, nor can our finite minds fathom his counsels,
apprehend his motions, or comprehend the measures
he takes. *He passeth on also*—He goeth from
place to place; from one action to another. *But I
perceive him not*—He passes and acts invisibly and
undiscovered.

Verse 12. *Behold, he taketh away*—If he deter-
mine to take away from any man his children, or
servants, or estate, who is able to restrain him from
doing it? Or, who dare presume to reprove him for
it? And, therefore, far be it from me to quarrel with
God, whereof you untruly accuse me.

Verse 13. *If God will not withdraw his anger*—
There is nothing in the Hebrew for *if*. The words,
literally rendered, are, *God will not withdraw his
anger*; or, continuing the interrogation, used twice
in the preceding verse, which Chappelow thinks
ought to be continued, *Will not God withdraw?* &c.;
the consequence that follows is then quite natural
and just; *the proud helpers do (then) stoop under
him*—Those who undertake to uphold and defend
one another against him fall, and are crushed by
him; that is, his majesty is so dreadful that nothing
can resist it, but every thing must submit that dares
to oppose it. They are fitly called *proud helpers*,

14 How much less shall I answer ^{A. M. 2484.}
^{B. C. 1520.} him, *and* choose out my words to
reason with him?

15 ¹ Whom though I were righteous, *yet*
would I not answer, *but* I would make sup-
plication to my judge.

16 If I had called, and he had answered me;
yet would I not believe that he had hearkened
unto my voice.

17 For he breaketh me with a tempest, and
multiplieth my wounds ^m without cause.

¹ Chapter xxvi. 12; Isaiah xxx. 7.—⁶ Hebrew, *helpers of
pride, or, strength.*—¹ Chapter x. 15.—^m Chapter ii. 3;
xxxiv. 6.

because it is a most proud, insolent, and presump-
tuous act to oppose themselves to the Lord God
Almighty, and to his counsels and proceedings; or,
helpers of pride, as it is in the Hebrew, because
they give assistance to those who carry themselves
proudly and stoutly toward God, under his correct-
ing hand.

Verses 14, 15. *How much less shall I answer him*
—Since no creature can resist his power, and no
man can comprehend his counsels and ways, how
can I contend with him; answer his allegations
and arguments produced against me? *Whom though
I were righteous*—Though I had a most just cause,
and were not conscious to myself of any sin; *yet
would I not answer*—That is, I durst not undertake
to plead my cause against, or maintain my integrity
before him, because he knows me better than I know
myself, and because I am wholly in his hands and
at his mercy. *But I would make supplication to
my judge*—That he would judge favourably of me
and my cause, and not according to the rigour of his
justice.

Verse 16. *If I had called*—That is, prayed, as the
word קָרָאתי, *karati*, commonly means, namely, unto
my judge for a favourable sentence, as he had just
said; *and he had answered me*—Had given me
what I asked; *yet would I not believe, &c.*—So weak
and imperfect are my best prayers; and, I am so in-
finitely below him, so obnoxious to him, and still so
full of the tokens of his displeasure, that I would
not believe he had done it because I had asked him;
or, that it was owing to my prayers, but that he had
bestowed the favour purely for his name's sake. Bi-
shop Patrick's paraphrase is, "If I had made suppli-
cation, and he had granted my desire, I would not
think my prayer had done the business."

Verse 17. *For he breaketh me with a tempest*—As
with a tempest; that is, unexpectedly, violently, and
irrecoverably. This is the reason of his foremen-
tioned diffidence, that even when God seemed to an-
swer his supplication in words, yet the course of his
actions toward him was of a quite contrary nature
and tendency. *And multiplieth my wounds without
cause*—He does not mean, simply without any de-
sert of his, as if he had been free from all sin, and
perfectly innocent and holy, the contrary to which

A. M. 2484. 18 He will not suffer me to take my
B. C. 1520. breath, but filleth me with bitterness.

19 If *I speak* of strength, lo, *he is strong*: and if of judgment, who shall set me a time to plead?

20 If I justify myself, mine own mouth shall condemn me: *if I say I am perfect*, it shall also prove me perverse.

21 *Though I were perfect, yet would I not*

* Eccles. ix. 2; Ezek. xxi. 3.

he oft declares; but without any special cause of such singular afflictions; without any peculiar and extraordinary guilt, such as his friends charged him with.

Verse 18. *He will not suffer me to take my breath*—My pains and miseries are continual, and I have not so much as a breathing time free from them; *but filleth me with bitterness*—My afflictions are not only long and uninterrupted, but also exceeding sharp and violent, contrary to the common course of God's providence. Houbigant's version of this and the two preceding verses shows their connection admirably well, and, according to Bishop Lowth, gives us the true sense of the passage. "But, if I should call that he might answer me, I could not easily believe that he would hear my voice; since he hath broken me with a tempest, and inflicted many wounds upon me without cause; nor hath given me space to take my breath, so hath he filled me with bitterness."

Verse 19. *If I speak of strength*—If my cause were to be decided by power; *he is strong*—Infinitely stronger than I; *and if of judgment*—If I would contend with him in a way of right; *who shall set, &c.*—There is no superior judge that can summon him and me together. Heath thus explains the words: "If I think to right myself by force, it is vain; for he is stronger than I: if I choose to decide our dispute by law, who hath authority to call us before him?"

Verse 20. *If I justify myself*—If I plead against God my own righteousness and innocence; *my own mouth shall condemn me*—God is so infinitely wise, and just, and holy, that he will find sufficient matter of condemnation from my own words, though spoken with all possible care and circumspection; or he will discover so much imperfection in me, of which I was not aware, that I shall be compelled to join with him in condemning myself. *If I say, I am perfect*—The words, *I say*, are not in the Hebrew, but seem to be properly supplied to complete the sense. The meaning is, If I were perfect in my own opinion, if I thought myself completely righteous and faultless; *it shall prove me perverse*—That is, my own mouth shall prove, as he had just said; or *he*, that is, God shall, who is easily understood from the former verses, where he is often mentioned.

Verse 21. *Though I were perfect, &c.*—Hebrew, **אני, tam ani, the perfect I, would not know my soul*—Namely, myself, as the word *נפש, nephesh*, is rendered, Est. iv. 13; or, *my heart, or spirit*. That

know my soul: I would despise my
A. M. 2484. B. C. 1520.

22 This is one thing, therefore I said it, ^a He destroyeth the perfect and the wicked.

23 If the scourge slay suddenly, he will laugh at the trial of the innocent.

24 The earth is given into the hand of the wicked: ^o he covereth the faces of the judges thereof; if not, where, *and who is he?*

^o 2 Sam. xv. 30; xix. 4; Jer. xiv. 4.

is, my thinking myself perfect, or completely innocent and faultless, would be an evidence that I did not know myself. Or, the meaning of the verse is, Were I to be tried by infinite justice, however perfect I may now think myself, I should then be astonished at finding how little I knew myself, and what a multitude of faults God had taken notice of, which I had not perceived in myself; so that, when they were set before me, I should no longer insist upon, nor trust to, the integrity, either of my soul and heart, or of my life, so as any longer to attempt to justify myself before the pure eyes of the all-seeing God; but I would condemn myself and *despise my life*; would put no value upon it, nor be in any care about prolonging it, while it is loaded with these miseries. And, therefore, I abhor the thoughts of contending with my Maker, whereof you accuse me.

Verses 22, 23. *This one thing*—In the other things which you have spoken of, God's greatness, power, and justice, I do not contend with you; but this one thing I do, and must affirm against you. *Therefore I said it*—I did not utter it rashly, but upon deep consideration. *He destroyeth the perfect and the wicked*—God sends afflictions promiscuously upon good and bad men. *If the scourge slay suddenly*—If some common judgment come upon a people, which destroys both good and bad: or if God inflict some grievous and unexpected stroke upon a holy person. *He will laugh at the trial of the innocent*—God will be pleased to see how the same, or a similar scourge, which is the perdition of the wicked, is only the trial of the integrity, faith, and patience of the innocent, that is, of his own people, and a means of their further purification and improvement.

Verse 24. *The earth is given into the hand of the wicked*—Hebrew, *רשע, rashang, of the wicked man*. The possession and dominion of a large portion of it are frequently given, by the great Lord and Proprietor of all, in the course of his providence, into the power of a wicked man. *He covereth the faces of the judges thereof*—The wicked man, by his power, or by gifts, corrupts the officers of justice, and thereby blinds their eyes, that they cannot discern between truth and falsehood, justice and unrighteousness. Thus Bishop Patrick: "So false is your discourse," (the discourse of Job's friends,) "that we see the government of the earth given into the hands of a wicked prince, who blinds the eyes of his judges." The bishop conjectures Job meant some noted tyrant then living in those parts, whose great wickedness and great prosperity were well

A. M. 2484. 25 Now ^p my days are swifter than
B. C. 1520. a post: they flee away, they see no good.

26 They are passed away as the ⁶ swift ⁷ ships:
⁸ as the eagle *that* hasteth to the prey:

27 ^r If I say, I will forget my complaint,
I will leave off my heaviness, and comfort
myself:

^p Chap. vii. 6.—⁶ Hebrew, *ships of desire*.—⁷ Or, *or ships of Ebeh*.—⁸ Hab. i. 8.

known, both to Job and his friends. Many commentators, however, think, that Job's words are not to be considered as referring to any particular man, but as asserting this general truth, that as good men are often scourged, (verse 23,) so the wicked are often advanced to great riches and power in the world. And they understand the next clause, *He covereth the faces of the judges thereof*, as intended of God's blinding the eyes of the rulers and magistrates, that is, *suffering* them to be blinded, by withdrawing abused light and grace, and means of information, in which only sense can God be ever said to blind the minds of any. Indeed, as a learned writer justly observes, this expression, *He covereth the faces, &c.*, means the same in Scripture phrase, as, *The faces of the judges are covered*, which, indeed, is the literal version of both the Syriac and Arabic interpreters. Thus, *την ψυχην ου απαιρωσιν*, (Luke xii. 20,) which is literally, *They shall require thy soul of thee*, is properly rendered, *Thy soul shall be required, &c.* The meaning, however, of the phrase of *covering the faces of the judges*, is understood by many, not of *blinding their eyes*, but of concealing their persons in obscurity. Thus Henry interprets the passage: "God, in his providence, advanceth wicked men, while he covers the faces of those who are fit to be judges, who are wise and good, and qualified for government, and buries them alive in obscurity; perhaps suffers them to be run down and condemned, and to have their faces covered as criminals, by those wicked ones, into whose hands the earth is given. We daily see this done; if it be not God that doth it, *where, and who is he that doth it?* To whom can it be ascribed, but to him that rules in the kingdoms of men, and gives them to whom he will?" Dan. iv. 32.

Verse 25. *Now my days*—The days of my life; *are swifter than a post*—Who rides upon swift horses; *they see no good*—I enjoy no good in them; seeing being often put for experiencing either good or evil. Thus Job now exemplifies in himself what he had said of the calamities which God frequently inflicts on good men.

Verse 26. *As the swift ships*—Hebrew, *ships of desire*; that is, such as are longed for, and long to be at their destined port, and crowd all the sail they can for that purpose. Or, as in the Chaldee paraphrase, *ships loaded, pretiosus*, with things of value; and are therefore named *swift ships*, because the more valuable the effects are, the more haste is made to return home for readier sale. The Hebrew may also

28 ^r I am afraid of all my sorrows, A. M. 2484.
I know that thou ^t wilt not hold me B. C. 1520
innocent.

29 *If I be wicked, why then labour I in vain?*

30 ^u If I wash myself with snow-water, and make my hands never so clean;

31 Yet shalt thou plunge me in the ditch, and mine own clothes shall ⁸ abhor me.

^r Chap. vii. 13.—^s Psa. cxix. 120.—^t Exod. xx. 7.—^u Jer. ii. 22.—⁸ Or, *make me to be abhorred*.

be translated, *ships of pleasure*, which sail more swiftly than ships of burden. *As the eagle that hasteth to the prey*—Which generally flies most swiftly when hungry, and in sight of his prey. See here how swift the motion of time is! It is always upon the wing, hastening to its period. What little need have we of pastimes! What great need to redeem time, which runs out, runs on so fast toward eternity! And how vain are the enjoyments of time, which we may be deprived of, even while time continues. Our day may be longer than our sunshine: and when that is gone, it is as if it had never been.

Verses 27, 28. *If I say, I will forget my complaints, &c.*—If I resolve within myself that I will cease complaining, and endeavour to take comfort. *I am afraid of all my sorrows*—Or, of my pains and griefs: I find all such endeavours vain; for if my griefs be suspended for a time, yet my fears continue. *I know that thou wilt not hold me innocent*—I plainly perceive that thou, O God, (to whom he makes a sudden address, as he does also verse 31,) wilt not clear my innocence by removing those afflictions which make them judge me guilty of some great crime. Words proceeding from despair and impatience.

Verse 29. *If I be wicked, &c.*—The Hebrew, *אנכי ארשע*, *anochi ershang*, is, *I am, or, I shall be wicked, or guilty*, without any supposition. That is, Whether I be holy or wicked, if I dispute with thee I shall be found guilty; or, I shall be treated as guilty; I shall not be acquitted, or exempted from punishment. *Why then labour I in vain?*—Since my friends will still continue to think and treat me as wicked, and thou wilt still continue to afflict me with the calamities and miseries which gave them occasion to think so, why should I use any efforts to clear myself, and vindicate my innocence? Why should I speak in a cause that is already prejudged? Or, why should I comfort myself with vain hopes of deliverance? With men it is often labour in vain for the most innocent to go about to clear themselves: they will be adjudged guilty, though the evidence be ever so plain for them. But it is not so in our dealings with God, who is the patron of oppressed innocence, and to whom it was never in vain to commit a righteous cause.

Verses 30, 31. *If I wash myself with snow-water, &c.*—If I clear myself from all imputations, and fully prove my innocence before men; *yet shalt thou plunge me in the ditch*—That is, in miry and puddle

A. M. 2484. 32 For ²he is not a man, as I am,
B. C. 1520. *that I should answer him, and we should come together in judgment.*

33 ⁷Neither is there ⁹any ¹⁰daysman betwixt us, *that might lay his hand upon us both.*

² Ecclesiastes vi. 10; Isa. xlv. 9; Jer. xlix. 19; Romans ix. 20.
⁷ Verse 19; 1 Sam. ii. 25.—⁹ Heb. *one that should argue.*

water, whereby I shall become most filthy. As Job's washing himself is to be understood only of his clearing himself judicially, and showing that he was innocent of the things laid to his charge, so God's plunging him, &c., is not to be understood of his making him sinful and guilty, but of his proving him to be so, notwithstanding all the professions and evidences of his purity before men. *And mine own clothes shall abhor me*—I shall be so filthy, that my own clothes, if they had any sense in them, would abhor to touch me. Job saw that his afflictions, coming from the hand of God, were the things that blackened him in the eyes of his friends, and caused them to think him a wicked man; and therefore, on that account, as well as because of the pain and torment they gave him, he complained of them, and of the continuance of them. Observe, reader, if we be ever so industrious to justify ourselves before men, and to preserve our credit with them; if we keep our hands ever so clean from the pollutions of gross sin; yet God, who knows our hearts, can charge us with so much secret iniquity, and internal depravity, as must for ever cut us off from all hopes of ever being able to justify ourselves before him. Paul, while a Pharisee, had made his hands, as he thought, very clean, but when the commandment came, and discovered to him that his inward parts were very wickedness, he found himself plunged in the ditch.

A. M. 2484. 34 ²Let him take his rod away
B. C. 1520. *from me, and let not his fear terrify me:*

35 *Then would I speak, and not fear him: ¹¹but it is not so with me.*

¹⁰ Or, *umpire.*—² Chap. xiii. 20, 22; xxxiii. 7; Psa. xxxix. 10.
¹¹ Heb. *but I am not so with myself.*

Verses 32, 33. *For he is not a man as I am*—But one infinitely superior to me in majesty and power, wisdom and justice. *That I should answer him*—That I should presume to debate my cause with him, or answer his allegations against me. *That we should come together in judgment*—Face to face, to plead upon equal terms. *Neither is there any daysman*—Or, *umpire*; *that might lay his hand upon us both*—Order and govern us in pleading, and oblige us to stand to his decision. The laying the hand on both parties implies a coercive power to enforce the execution of his decrees. This no one could have over the Almighty: it was in vain, therefore, to contend with him. Our Lord Jesus Christ is now the blessed daysman, who has mediated between heaven and earth, *has laid his hand upon us both*: to him the Father hath committed all judgment. But this was not made so clear then as it is now by the gospel, which leaves no room for such a complaint as this.

Verses 34, 35. *Let not his fear terrify me*—The fear and dread of his majesty and justice. Let him not deal with me according to his perfect justice, but according to his grace and clemency. *Then would I speak, and not fear*—I would speak freely for myself, being freed from that dread, which takes away my spirit and courage. *But it is not so with me*—I am not free from his terror, and therefore cannot plead my cause with him.

CHAPTER X.

Job complains of the hardships he was under, 1-7. Pleads with God, that he is his workmanship, 8-13. Complains again, that God deals severely with him, 14-17. Comforts himself with the thoughts of death, 18-22.

A. M. 2484. MY ^asoul is ¹weary of my life; I
B. C. 1520. *will leave my complaint upon myself; ^bI will speak in the bitterness of my soul.*

^a 1 Kings xix. 4; Chap. vii. 16; Jonah iv. 3, 8.

NOTES ON CHAPTER X.

Verse 1. *My soul is weary of my life*—My soul is weary of dwelling in this rotten and miserable body; or, I am, from my heart or soul, weary of my life. Sol Jarchi's comment is, *My soul loathes itself because I am alive*. The Hebrew, however, נַפְשִׁי נִקְטָה בְּחַיִּי, *naketa napshi bechaji*, may be properly rendered, *My soul is cut off while I live*; that is, I am dead while I live; I am in a manner buried alive. *I will leave my complaint upon myself*—I will continue to complain, and will take upon my-

A. M. 2484. 2 I will say unto God, Do not con-
B. C. 1520. *demn me; show me wherefore thou contendest with me.*

^a Or, *cut off while I live.*—^b Chap. vii. 11.

self the hazard of so doing, and be willing to bear it. Let what will come on me, I must give my sorrows vent. Thus Ab. Ezra, "I will not restrain my grief, but leave or suffer it to take its course." *I will speak in the bitterness of my soul*—My extreme misery forceth my complaints from me.

Verse 2. *I will say unto God, Do not condemn me*—Hebrew, אַל תְּרַשְׁעֵנִי, *al tarshigneeni*, *Do not pronounce me to be a wicked man*; as my friends do; neither deal with me as such, as I confess thou mightest do, by thy sovereign power, and in rigorous

A. M. 2484. 3 *Is it good unto thee that thou*
B. C. 1520. shouldst oppress, that thou shouldst
despise ² the work of thy hands, and shine upon
the counsel of the wicked?

4 Hast thou eyes of flesh? or ^c seest thou as
man seeth?

5 *Are thy days as the days of man? are thy*
years as man's days,

6 That thou inquierest after mine iniquity, and
searchest after my sin?

² Heb. *the labour of thy hands?* Psa. cxxxviii. 8; Isa. lxiv. 8.
¹ Sam. xvi. 7. ³ Heb. *It is upon thy knowledge.* ⁴ Psalm

justice: O discover my integrity by removing this
stroke, for which my friends condemn me. *Where-*
fore—For what ends and reasons, and for what
sins; for I am not conscious to myself of any peculiar
sins by which I have deserved to be made the most
miserable of all men. When God afflicts, he con-
tends with us: when he contends with us, there is
always a reason for it. And it is desirable to know
what that reason is, that we may forsake whatever
he has a controversy with us for.

Verse 3. *Is it good unto thee?*—Dost thou take
any pleasure in it, *that thou shouldst oppress?*—
By thy absolute and irresistible power, without re-
gard to that justice and clemency by which thou
usest to govern mankind. *Shouldst despise the*
work of thy hands—Show thy contempt of thy
creatures, either by denying them protection, or by
destroying them. *And shine upon the counsel of*
the wicked—That is, by the methods of thy pro-
vidence seem to favour the practices of wicked men,
to whom thou givest prosperity and success, while
thou frownest upon me and other good men. Far
be it from Job to think that God did him wrong.
But he is at a loss to reconcile his providences with
his justice. And so other good men have often been,
and will be, until *the day shall declare it.*

Verse 4. *Hast thou eyes of flesh?*—No. Eyes of
flesh cannot see in the dark: but darkness hideth not
from God. Eyes of flesh are but in one place at
a time, and can see but a little way. *But the eyes*
of the Lord are in every place, and run to and fro
through the whole earth. Eyes of flesh will shortly
be darkened by age, and shut up by death. But the
eyes of God are ever the same, nor does his sight
ever decay. *Or seest thou as man?*—Man sees the
outside only, and judges by appearances: but thou
seest my heart.

Verse 5. *Are thy days as the days of man?*—
Man's time is short and uncertain, and therefore he
must improve it, and diligently search out the crimes
of malefactors, lest by death he lose the opportunity
of doing justice: but thou art eternal, and seest at
one view all men's hearts, and all their actions,
present and to come; and therefore thou dost not
need to proceed with me in this manner, by making
so long a scrutiny into my heart and life.

Verses 6, 7. *That thou inquierest, &c., and searchest*
after my sin—Keeping me so long upon the rack,

7 ³ Thou ^d knowest that I am not ^{A. M. 2484.}
wicked; and *there is none that can* ^{B. C. 1520.}
deliver out of thy hand.

8 ⁴ Thy hands ⁴ have made me and fashioned me
together round about; yet thou dost destroy me.

9 Remember, I beseech thee, that ⁴ thou hast
made me as the clay; and wilt thou bring me
into dust again?

10 ⁵ Hast thou not poured me out as milk, and
curdled me like cheese?

cxxxix. 1. ² Psa. cxix. 73. ⁴ Hebrew, *took pains about me.*
¹ Gen. ii. 7; iii. 19; Isa. lxiv. 8. ⁵ Psa. cxxxix. 14, 16.

to compel me to accuse myself. *Thou knowest I*
am not wicked—That is, a hypocrite, or an ungodly
man, as my friends account me. *There is none that*
can deliver, &c.—Thou art the supreme ruler of the
world; therefore I must wait thy time, and throw
myself on thy mercy, in submission to thy sovereign
will. "It would be injurious to the character of
Job," says Mr. Peters, "should we interpret in a
severe and rigorous sense, as it is certain his friends
too often did, his frequent protestations of his in-
nocence, and his bold appeals to the supreme Judge
to prove and try him; for where he is thus strenuous
in asserting his integrity, it is only in opposition to
the notion which those mistaken friends had enter-
tained of him, namely, that he had been guilty of
some gross sins, which he had the art to hide from
the world, but that he was in reality a wicked man,
and a hypocrite in his behaviour. This is what Job
utterly denies and disclaims, though he nowhere
arrogates to himself perfect innocence or freedom
from sin."

Verse 8. *Thy hands have made me, &c., round*
about—That is, all of me; all the faculties of my
soul, and all the parts of my body, which are now
overspread with sores and ulcers; I am wholly thy
creature and workmanship, made by thee and for
thee. *Yet thou dost destroy me*—Hebrew, תכלני,
teballegneeni, swallow me up; namely, without
any eminent provocation of mine; as if thou didst
delight in doing and undoing, in making and then
destroying thy creatures.

Verse 9. *Remember, thou hast made me as the clay*
—I was formed by thee as a potter makes a vessel
of clay; so this may note both the frailty of man's
nature, which of itself decays and perishes, and doth
not need such violent shocks to overthrow it; and
the excellence of the divine artifice commended
from the meanness of the materials; which is an
argument why God should not destroy it. *And wilt*
thou bring me? &c.—Or, rather, without an in-
terrogation, *thou wilt bring me into dust again*—
Out of which I was made: I must die by the course
of nature, and by the sentence of thy law; and, there-
fore, while I do live, give me some ease and comfort.

Verse 10. *Hast thou not poured me out as milk?*
—Thus he modestly and accurately describes God's
admirable work in forming the fœtus in the womb,
out of a small and liquid substance, gradually coagu-

A. M. 2484. 11 Thou hast clothed me with skin
B. C. 1520. and flesh, and hast fenced me with
bones and sinews.

12 Thou hast granted me life and favour, and
thy visitation hath preserved my spirit.

13 And these things hast thou hid in thy
heart: I know that this is with thee.

14 If I sin, then thou markest me, and thou
wilt not acquit me from mine iniquity.

15 If I be wicked, wo unto me; and if I
be righteous, yet will I not lift up my head. I
am full of confusion; therefore see thou mine
affliction;

16 For it increaseth. Thou huntest me as

^a Heb. *hedged*.—^b Psa. cxxxix. 1.—^c Isa. iii. 11.—^d Chap. ix. 12; xv. 20.—^e Psa. xxv. 18.—^f Isa. xxxviii. 13; Lam. iii. 10.

lated and condensed, as milk is curdled into cheese,
into the exquisite frame of man's body.

Verse 11. *Thou hast clothed me with skin*—Covered my inward and more noble parts, which are first formed. So he proceeds in describing man's formation gradually. *And fenced me with bones*—The stay and strength of the body; and some of them, as the scull and ribs, enclose and defend its vital parts.

Verse 12. *Thou hast granted me life*—Thou didst not only give me a curious body, but also a reasonable soul: thou didst at first give me life, and then maintain it in me: both when I was in the womb, (which is a marvellous work of God,) and afterward, when I was unable to do any thing to preserve my own life. *And favour*—Thou didst not give mere life, but many other favours, such as nourishment by the breast, education, knowledge, and instruction. *Thy visitation*—The care of thy providence watching over me for my good, and visiting me in mercy; *preserved my spirit*—My life, which is liable to manifold dangers, if God did not watch over us every day and moment. Thou hast hitherto done great things for me, given me life, and the blessings of life, and daily deliverances: and wilt thou now undo all that thou hast done? And shall I, who have been such an eminent monument of thy mercy, now be a spectacle of thy vengeance.

Verse 13. *These things hast thou hid in thy heart*—Both thy former favours and thy present frowns. Both are according to thy own will, and therefore undoubtedly consistent with each other, however they seem. When God does what we cannot account for, we are bound to believe there are good reasons for it *hid in his heart*. It is not with us, or in our reach, to assign the cause; but I know this is with thee.

Verse 14. *If I sin*—If I commit the least sin; *then thou markest me*—Thou dost not connive at, or pass by my sins, but dost severely and diligently observe them all, that thou mayest punish me. *And thou wilt not acquit me from mine iniquity*—Wilt not pardon, pity, and help me, but art resolved to

a fierce lion: and again thou showest thyself marvellous upon me. A. M. 2484. B. C. 1520.

17 Thou renewest thy witnesses against me, and increasest thine indignation upon me; changes and war are against me.

18 Wherefore then hast thou brought me forth out of the womb? O that I had given up the ghost, and no eye had seen me!

19 I should have been as though I had not been; I should have been carried from the womb to the grave.

20 Are not my days few? cease then, and let me alone, that I may take comfort a little,

21 Before I go whence I shall not return,

^a That is, *thy plagues*, Ruth i. 21.—^b Chap. iii. 11.—^c Chap. vii. 6, 16; viii. 9; Psa. xxxix. 5.—^d Psa. xxxix. 13.—^e Chap. vii. 16, 19.

punish me with rigour: words of great impatience and distrust. But he was so oppressed and overwhelmed with his troubles that it seems he could not look up with any comfort or confidence. Without were fightings, within were fears, so that between both he was full of confusion.

Verse 15. *If I be wicked*—That is, an ungodly hypocrite, as my friends esteem me; *wo unto me*—I am truly and extremely miserable; and, if I continue wicked, must be eternally so. *And if I be righteous*—An upright man; *yet will I not, or yet can I not, lift up my head*—Yet I have no comfort, nor hope of any good: so, whether I am good or bad, all comes to one. *I am full of confusion; therefore see thou mine affliction*—I am confounded within myself, not knowing what to say or do. Let my extremity move thee to pity and help me.

Verse 16. *Thou huntest me as a fierce lion*—Which hunteth after his prey with eagerness, and, when he overtakes it, falls upon it with great fury. *Again thou showest*—Heb. וַיִּשְׁבֹּחַ חַתְּמָלָא בִּי, *retashob tithpalla bi, Thou turnest again: Thou art marvellous, or, thou showest thyself marvellous upon, in, or against me*. The lion tears its prey speedily, and so ends its torments; but thou renewest my calamities again and again, and makest my plagues wonderful, both for kind, and extremity, and continuance.

Verse 17. *Thou renewest thy witnesses*—Thy judgments, which are the evidences both of my sins and of thy wrath; *and increasest thine indignation*—That is, my miseries, the effects of thine indignation. *Changes and war*—Or, changes and an army, that is, many miseries succeeding one another, like companies of soldiers successively coming on to the attack in a battle. Or, changes may signify the various kinds, and an army the great number of his afflictions.

Verses 20-22. *Are not my days few? Cease then, &c.*—My life is short, and of itself hastens to an end; there is no need that thou shouldst grudge me some ease for so small a moment. *Let me alone*—Or lay aside, or remove thy hand or anger from

A. M. 2484. ^r even to the land of darkness, ^a and
B. C. 1520. the shadow of death;

22 A land of darkness, as darkness itself;

^r Psa. lxxxviii. 12.

me. *That I may take comfort a little*—Heb. אכליגור, *abligah, et recreabo me, I shall refresh, or strengthen myself*: shall have some respite, some remission of my grief and pain, some consolation. Those that are not duly thankful for constant ease should think how welcome one hour's ease would be if they were in constant pain. *Before I go to the place whence I shall not return*—Shall not come back into this world and life. At death we must bid a final farewell to this world: the body must then be laid where it will lie long; and the soul appointed to that state where it must be for ever. That had need to be well done which is to be done but once, and done for eternity. *Even to the land of darkness, and the shadow of death*—That is, a dark and dismal shade. Holy souls at death remove to a land of light, where there is no death; but their bodies they leave to a land of darkness, and the shadow of death. *Of darkness, as darkness itself, &c.*—He heaps up expressions here to show that he has as

and of the shadow of death, without A. M. 2484.
any order, and where the light is as B. C. 1520.
darkness.

^r Psa. xxiii. 4.

dreadful apprehensions of death and the grave as other men naturally have, so that it was only the extreme misery he was in that made him wish for it. *Without any order*—No order is observed in bringing people to the grave, not the eldest are brought first, not the richest, not the poorest, and yet every one in his own order, the order appointed by the God of life. All lie there on the same level, and there is no distinction between the prince and the peasant; but *the servant is there free from his master*: and in the grave there is perpetual night, and no succession of day. *And where the light is as darkness*—Where there is no difference between light and darkness; where the day is as dark as the night; where there is nothing but perpetual and uninterrupted darkness. In the grave there is no knowledge, no comfort, no joy, no praising God, no working out our salvation, for *the night is come wherein no man can work*. Let us consider this, and therefore walk and work while we have the light with us.

CHAPTER XI.

Zophar charges Job with falsehood and pride, 1-4. Wishes that God would convince him of his wisdom, justice, and unsearchable perfections, 5-9. Of his sovereignty, power, and the cognizance he takes of men, 10-12. He assures him, that on his repentance God would restore him to prosperity, but that the wicked should perish, 13-20.

A. M. 2484. **THEN** answered Zophar the Naamathite, and said,

2 Should not the multitude of words be an-

¹ Heb. a man of lips.

NOTES ON CHAPTER XI.

Verse 1. *Then answered Zophar the Naamathite*—How hard is it to preserve calmness in the heat of disputation! Eliphaz began modestly: Bildad was a little rougher: but Zophar falls upon Job without mercy. "Those that have a mind to fall out with their brethren, and to fall foul upon them, find it necessary to put the worst colours they can upon them and their performances, and, right or wrong, to make them odious." Zophar, highly provoked that Job should dare to call in question a maxim so universally assented to as that urged by his friends, immediately charges him home with secret wickedness. He tells him that he makes not the least doubt, were the real state of his heart laid open, that it would be found God had dealt very gently with him, verses 2-7. That he was highly blameworthy to pretend to fathom the depths of divine providence, a task to which he was utterly unequal: that, however his wickedness might be concealed from men, yet it was open and bare to God's

answered? and should ¹ a man full of A. M. 2484.
talk be justified? B. C. 1520.

3 Should thy ² lies make men hold their peace?

² Or, devices.

all-seeing eye; could he therefore imagine that God would not punish the wickedness he saw? verses 7-11. It would surely be far more becoming in him to submit, and give glory to God, by making an ample confession and full restitution. In that case, indeed, he might hope for a return of God's goodness to him; but the way he was in at present was the common road of the wicked, whose only hope was annihilation, verses 12-20.—Heath and Dodd.

Verse 2. *Should not the multitude of words be answered?*—Truly, sometimes it should not. Silence is the best confutation of impertinence, and puts the greatest contempt upon it. Zophar means, Dost thou think to carry thy cause by thy long, tedious discourses, consisting of empty words, without weight or reason? *And should a man full of talk be justified?*—Shall we, by our silence, seem to approve of thy errors? Or, shall we think thy cause the better because thou usest more words than we do?

Verse 3. *Should thy lies*—That is, thy false opin-

A. M. 2484. and when thou mockest, shall no man
B. C. 1520. make thee ashamed?

4 For ^a thou hast said, My doctrine *is* pure, and I am clean in thine eyes.

5 But O that God would speak, and open his lips against thee;

6 And that he would show thee the secrets of wisdom, that *they are* double to that which is! Know therefore that ^b God exacteth of thee

^a Chap. vi. 10; x. 7.—^b Ezra ix. 13.—^c Ecclesiastes iii. 11; Rom. xi. 33.

ions and assertions, both concerning thyself and thy own innocence, and concerning the counsels and ways of God, *make men hold their peace?*—As if thy arguments were unanswerable. *And when thou mockest*—Both God and us, and our friendly and faithful counsels; *shall no man make thee ashamed?*—By discovering thy errors and follies.

Verse 4. *Thou hast said, My doctrine*—Concerning God and his providence; *is pure*—That is, true and certain. The word לקחי, *likchi*, according to R. Levi, signifies *consuetudo mea, et dispositio mea, my way and manner of life*; the same that St. Paul calls η βιωσις μου *my way of life*. See Chappelow. *And I am clean in thine eyes*—I am innocent before God: I have not sinned either by my former actions or by my present expressions. But Zophar aggravates and perverts Job's words; for he did not deny that he was a sinner in God's sight; but only that he was a hypocrite or ungodly man, as they thought him to be.

Verse 5. *O that God would speak*—Plead with thee according to thy desire: he would soon put thee to silence. We are commonly ready, with great assurance, to interest God in our quarrels. But they are not always in the right who are most forward to appeal to his judgment, and prejudice it against their antagonists.

Verse 6. *That he would show thee the secrets of wisdom*—The unsearchable depths of his wisdom in dealing with his creatures. *That they are double to that which is*—That they are far greater (the word *double* being used indefinitely for manifold, or plentiful) than that which is manifested. The secret wisdom of God is infinitely greater than that which is revealed to us by his word or works: the greatest part of what is known of God is the least part of those perfections that are in him. And therefore thou art rash in judging so harshly of his proceedings with thee, because thou dost not comprehend the reasons of them, and in judging thyself innocent, because thou dost not see thy sins: whereas, the all-knowing God sees innumerable sins in thee, for which he may utterly destroy thee. *God exacteth of thee less than thine iniquity deserveth*—Or, as the Hebrew, *שה כיעון, jasha magnavoneka*, may be rendered, *gives, or forgives thee part of thine iniquity*; doth not deal with thee according to the full demerit of it, but remits thee a part of the punishment due to thee: which he affirms, on an ungrounded persuasion that Job was an ungodly hypocrite. "Strange presumption!" says Dr. Dodd, "thus to

less than thine iniquity *deserveth*. A. M. 2484.

7 ^c Canst thou by searching find out
God? canst thou find out the Almighty unto perfection?

8 *It is* ³ as high as heaven; what canst thou do? deeper than hell; what canst thou know?

9 The measure thereof *is* longer than the earth, and broader than the sea.

10 ^d If he ^e cut off, and shut up, or gather to-

^a Heb. *the heights of heaven*.—^d Chap. ix. 12; xii. 14; Rev. iii. 7.—^e Or, *make a change*.

pronounce positively upon a point of which he could not possibly be a judge. But it happened here, as usual, that this speaker, who sets out with the greatest heat, is the first whose arguments are spent. For, after this vehement speech, he makes but one reply, and it is over with him." We may however, so far agree with Zophar, as to allow that when, and so far as the debt of duty is not paid, it belongs to justice to insist on the debt of punishment; and that whatever punishment is inflicted upon us in this world, it is less than our iniquities deserve, and that, therefore, instead of complaining of our troubles, we ought to be thankful that we are out of hell.

Verses 7, 8. *Canst thou by searching find out God?*—That is, discover all the depths of his wisdom, and the reasons of all his actions. *It is as high as heaven*—Thou canst not measure the heights of the visible heavens, much less of the divine perfections; *what canst thou do?*—Namely, to find him out. *Deeper than hell; what canst thou know?*—Concerning him and his ways, which are far out of thy sight and reach. God is unsearchable. The ages of his eternity cannot be numbered, nor the spaces of his immensity measured; the depths of his wisdom cannot be fathomed, nor the extent of his power bounded: the brightness of his glory can never be described, nor the treasures of his goodness counted. This is a good reason why we should always speak of God with humility and caution, and never prescribe to him, or quarrel with his dispensations; why we should be thankful for what he has revealed of himself, and long to be there where we shall see him as he is.

Verse 9. *The measure thereof is longer than the earth*—From one end to the other. *And broader than the sea*—Called the great and wide sea, Psalm civ. 25. It infinitely exceeds the limits of the whole creation. Examine the earth in its utmost dimensions: consider all the beauties and excellences belonging to it. Having done this, compare it with the vast, unbounded wisdom of God, and thou wilt soon be sensible how small and inconsiderable the one will be in proportion to the other. *The sea*, how wide and broad soever it may seem to be; though, at first view, it may appear to be immeasurable; yet, should you examine it in the scale with the divine perfections, the whole ocean, in its utmost extent, would be only as the drop of a bucket, and the waters thereof such as he could measure in the hollow of his hand.

Verse 10. *If he cut off*—Namely, a person or fa-

A. M. 2484. gether, then ⁶ who can hinder him?
B. C. 1520.

11 For ⁶ he knoweth vain men: he seeth wickedness also; will he not then consider it?

12 For ⁶ vain ^f man would be wise, though man be born *like* a wild ass's colt.

13 ⁶ If thou ^h prepare thy heart, and ^l stretch out thy hands toward him;

14 If iniquity *be* in thy hand, put it far away, and ^h let not wickedness dwell in thy tabernacles.

15 ^l For then shalt thou lift up thy face with-

⁶ Heb. *who can turn him away?* Chap. ix. 12.—⁶ Psa. x. 11, 14; xxxv. 22; xciv. 11.—⁶ Heb. *empty.*—^f Psa. lxxiii. 22; xcii. 6; Eccles. iii. 18; Rom. i. 22.—⁶ Chap. v. 8; xxii. 21. ^h 1 Sam. vii. 3; Psa. lxxviii. 8.—^l Psa. lxxxviii. 9; cxliii. 6.

mily; and shut up—In prison, or in the hands of an enemy, or in the net of affliction and trouble, Psa. lxxi. 11. Or gather together—Make our condition strait and narrow, as some interpret it; or, gather together as tares to the fire, or gather to himself man's breath and spirit, chap. xxxiv. 14. Then who can hinder him?—From doing what he pleaseth with his creatures? Who can either arrest the sentence, or oppose the execution? Who can control his power, or arraign his wisdom and justice? If he, who made all out of nothing, think fit to reduce all to nothing; if he that separated between light and darkness, dry land and sea, at first, please to gather them together again; if he that made, think proper to unmake, מִי יִשְׁבֹּנוּ, *mi jeshibennu, who can turn him*; alter his mind, or stay his hand, impede or impeach his proceedings?

Verse 11. For he knoweth vain men—Though men know but little of God, and therefore are very unfit judges of his counsels and actions, yet God knows man exactly. He knoweth that every man in the world is guilty of much vanity and folly, and therefore seeth sufficient reason for his severity against the best men. He seeth wickedness also—He perceiveth the wickedness of evil men, though it be covered with the veil of religion. Will he not then consider—Shall he only see it as an idle spectator, and not observe it as a judge to punish it?

Verse 12. For, or, yet, vain man would be wise—Man, who since the fall is void of all true wisdom, pretends to be wise, and able to pass a censure upon all God's ways and works. Born like a wild ass's colt—Ignorant, and dull, and stupid, as to divine things, and yet heady and untractable. Such is man by his birth; this evil is now natural and hereditary, and therefore common to all men: of consequence it is not strange, if Job partake of the common disorder.

Verse 13. If thou prepare thy heart—Thy business, O Job, is not to quarrel with thy Maker, or his works; but to address thyself to him by prayer and supplication, sincerely repenting of all thy hard speeches, and other sins against God, and seeking him with a pure and upright heart; without which thy prayers will be in vain.

out spot; yea, thou shalt be steadfast, A. M. 2484.
and shalt not fear: B. C. 1520.

16 Because thou shalt ^m forget thy misery, and remember it as waters that pass away;

17 And thine age ^r shall ⁿ be clearer than the noon-day: thou shalt shine forth, thou shalt be as the morning.

18 And thou shalt be secure, because there is hope; yea, thou shalt dig about thee, and ^o thou shalt take thy rest in safety.

19 Also thou shalt lie down, and none shall

^m Psa. ci. 3.—^r Gen. iv. 5; Chap. xxii. 26; Psalm cxix. 6; 1 John iii. 21.—ⁿ Isa. lxx. 16.—^o Heb. *shall arise above the noon-day.*—^o Psa. xxxvii. 6; cxii. 4; Isa. lviii. 8, 10.—^o Lev. xxvi. 5; Psa. iii. 5; iv. 8; Prov. iii. 24.

Verse 14. If iniquity be in thy hand—If thou hast in thy hand, or possession, any goods gotten by injustice or oppression, as it seems they supposed he had; or, he means, more generally, if thou allowest thyself in any sinful practices, the hand being put for action, whereof it is the instrument; put it far away—Keep thyself at a great distance, not only from such actions, but also from the very occasions and appearances of them. Let not wickedness dwell in thy tabernacles—That is, in thy habitation, either in thyself or in thy family; whose sins Job was obliged, as far as he could, to prevent or reform, as it seems he had done, chap. i. 5. He saith, tabernacles, because anciently the habitations of great men consisted of several tents or tabernacles.

Verse 15. For then shalt thou lift up thy face—With cheerfulness and holy boldness. Without spot—Having a clear and unspotted conscience. Yea, thou shalt be steadfast—Shalt have a strong and comfortable assurance of God's favour, and shalt be settled, without any fear of losing thy happiness.

Verse 16. Because thou shalt forget thy misery—Thy happiness shall be so great that it shall blot out the remembrance of thy past miseries; and remember it as waters that pass away—Thou shalt remember it no more than men remember either a land-flood, which, as it comes, so it goes away suddenly, and leaves few or no marks or memorials behind it; or the waters of a river, which pass by in constant succession.

Verse 17. And thine age shall be clearer than the noon-day—The remainder of thy life in this world shall be more glorious than the sun at noon. Hebrew, יָקוּם, *jakum, shall arise above the noon-day*, or above the sun at noon-day, when it is at its greatest height, as well as in its greatest glory. Thou shalt shine forth—Thy light shall arise out of obscurity, and thou shalt be prosperous and happy; thou shalt be as the morning—Thy night of trouble shall certainly and speedily be followed with the morning of deliverance and comfort, which, like the morning light, shall shine brighter and brighter till the perfect day. Light, in the Scripture, commonly signifies prosperity and glory.

Verses 18, 19. Thou shalt be secure, because there

A. M. 2484. make thee afraid; yea, many shall
B. C. 1520. ⁹ make suit unto thee.

20 But ⁹ the eyes of the wicked shall fail, and

⁹ Heb. *entreat thy face*, Psa. xlv. 12.—⁹ Lev. xxvi. 16; Deut. xxviii. 65.

is hope—Thy mind shall be quiet and free from terrors, because thou shalt have a firm and well-grounded confidence in God. *Thou shalt dig*—Either to fix thy tents, which, after the manner of the Arabians, were removed from place to place; or, to plough thy ground, as he had done, chap. i. 14, or to make a fence about thy dwelling. *Thou shalt take thy rest in safety*—Free from dangers and the fear of them; because of God's fatherly providence watching over thee, when thou canst not watch over thyself. *And none shall make thee afraid*—Thou shalt be in perfect peace, and none shall disquiet thee; yea, many shall make suit unto thee—Desiring thy favour and friendship, because of thy great power and riches, and eminent felicity.

Verse 20. *The eyes of the wicked shall fail*—Either through grief and tears for their sore calamities, or with long looking for what they shall never attain. *Failing of the eyes* is one of those expressions in Scripture to be admired for its beautiful simplicity. It represents a very eager and passionate desire to obtain that which we are in pursuit of; and, at the same time, the great uneasiness which must unavoidably follow from a disappointment. One of the appeals which Job makes, in vindication of his integrity, is, that he had not caused the eyes of the widow to fail, chap. xxxi. 16; that he had not

⁹ they shall not escape, and ⁹ their hope shall be as ¹⁰ the giving up of the ghost.

⁹ Heb. *flight shall perish from them*.—⁹ Chap. viii. 14; xviii. 14; Prov. xi. 7.—¹⁰ Or, a puff of breath.

frustrated her expectations when she applied to him for relief and assistance in her distress. The psalmist writes, *Mine eyes fail while I wait for my God*, Psa. lxix. 3. *They shall not escape*—Hebrew, כָּסוּת אָבָד, *manos abad*, flight perishes from them, or safety leaves them. This is another of those elegant Scripture phrases which suggests to us the strongest efforts made by a guilty person to escape punishment; but fainting and sinking by the way, through fatigue and weariness, and failing of attaining his purpose. The Prophet Jeremiah uses the same phraseology with regard to the shepherds, or principal men among the Jews, chap. xxv. 35; which is literally, *Flight shall perish from the shepherds*. Compare Amos ii. 14, where the exact and literal translation of the Hebrew is given: *Flight shall perish from the swift. Their hope shall be as the giving up of the ghost*—Shall be as vain and desperate as the hope of life is in a man when he is at the very point of death. Shall be as a puff of breath, as the margin reads it; gone in a moment without any hope of recovery. Or their hope shall perish, as a man doth with respect to this world, when he gives up the ghost; it will fail them when they have most need of it; and, when they expected the accomplishment of it, it will die away and leave them in utter confusion.

CHAPTER XII.

Job blames his friends for their self-conceit and unkind behaviour, 1-5. Shows that the wicked often prosper, 6-11. Confirms and enlarges upon what had been said of the wisdom, power, and providence of God, 12-25.

A. M. 2484. AND Job answered and said,
B. C. 1520. 2 No doubt but ye are the peo-

ple, and wisdom shall die with you. A. M. 2484. B. C. 1520.

NOTES ON CHAPTER XII.

Verse 1. *And Job answered*—Greatly vexed that his friends should entertain so firm an opinion of his being a wicked man, and that they should press him so hard with their maxim, "that affliction was a demonstration of guilt," he can no longer refrain from answering them with great sharpness. He taxes them with self-conceit; their maxims he treats as mean and poor, the contrary of which was evident to all observing persons; good men were frequently in distress, while robbers and public plunderers enjoyed their ill-gotten wealth in perfect security, verses 2-6. This was so notorious, that it was impossible it could have escaped their observation, verse 7. This was indeed the work of Jehovah, who was all-wise and all-powerful, and no one could call him to account. All this he was as sensible of as they could be, for which reason he was the more de-

sirous to argue the point with God, chap. xiii. 1-10. And, as for them, if they would pretend to be judges, they should take great care to be upright ones; since God would by no means excuse corruption of judgment, though it should be in his own behalf; and his all-seeing eye would penetrate their motives, though ever so closely concealed from human view; and in his sight all their maxims of wisdom, on which they seemed so much to value themselves, would be regarded as dross and dung. That he was not in the least apprehensive of bringing his cause to an issue; because he was satisfied that the Almighty, far from oppressing him by dint of power, would rather afford him strength to go through his defence; and he was persuaded the issue would be favourable to him, verses 11-19. He, therefore, challenges any one among them to declare himself the accuser; secure enough as to that point, as he was sensible they could

A. M. 2484. 3 But ^a I have ¹ understanding as well as you; ² I am not inferior to you: yea, ³ who knoweth not such things as these?

4 ^b I am as one mocked of his neighbour, who

^a Chap. xiii. 2.—¹ Heb. *a heart*.—² Heb. *I fall not lower than you*.—³ Heb. *With whom are not such as these?*

not make good their charge. He again ends with a tender expostulation with the Almighty, begging he might have, before his death, an opportunity of publicly vindicating his innocence, since afterward he could have no hope of doing it, verse 20 to the end of chap. xiv.—Heath.

Verse 2. *No doubt but ye are the people*—You, of all people, are the most eminent for wisdom; the only men living of distinguished knowledge and prudence. You have engrossed all the reason of mankind, and each of you has as much wisdom as a whole people put together. *And wisdom shall die with you*—All the wisdom which is in the world lives in you, and will be utterly lost when you die. When wise and good men die, it is a comfort to think that wisdom and goodness do not die with them: it is folly to think that there will be a great, irreparable loss of us when we are gone, since God has the residue of the Spirit, and can raise up others more fit to do his work.

Verse 3. *But I have an understanding*—Hebrew, *a heart*, which is often put for the *understanding*: God hath given me also the knowledge and ability to judge of these matters. *I am not inferior to you*—In these things; which he speaks, not in a way of boasting, but for the just vindication both of himself and of that cause of God, which, for the substance of it, he maintained rightly, as God himself attests, chap. xlii. 6. *Who knoweth not such things*—The truth is, neither you nor I have any reason to be puffed up with our knowledge of these things; for the most barbarous nations know that God is infinite in wisdom, and power, and justice. But this is not the question between you and me.

Verse 4. *I am as one mocked of his neighbour*—שחוק לרעהו אחיה, *sechok teregnehu ehjeh*, literally, *a jest to his friend, I am*. Thus Jeremiah complains, *I was a derision to all my people*, Lam. iii. 14. *Who calleth upon God, and he answereth him*—This is applied by Sol. Jarchi, and the commentators in general, to Job's neighbour or friend; intimating that such a one, addressing himself to God, received a favourable answer; when Job himself had no satisfactory return paid to his loud cries and importunate complaints. But the words are capable of a very different construction if we refer them to Job, and not to his friend, and as containing the mocking words thrown out against him: Thus, *He calleth (say they) upon God; but doth he answer him?*—He is loud and importunate in protesting his innocence; in clearing and vindicating himself; in appealing to the tribunal of Heaven. But to what purpose? Are his importunities and clamours received, his solemn protestations heard or admitted? His

^c calleth upon God, and he answereth him: the just upright man is laughed to scorn.

5 ^d He that is ready to slip with his feet is as a lamp despised in the thought of him that is at ease.

^b Chap. xvi. 10; xvii. 2, 6; xxi. 3; xxx. 1.—^c Psalm xci. 15. ^d Prov. xiv. 2.

trust and confidence (he would have us to believe) are entirely on God; but is he eased of his troubles; is he delivered from his miseries? Thus the Jews mocked our Lord Jesus: "He trusted in God; (said they;) let him deliver him now, if he will have him." "This man calleth for Elias; let us see whether Elias will come and save him." *The just upright man is laughed to scorn*—The words have a peculiar beauty, being spoken with much religious concern and modesty; for Job does not say, *I, a just and upright man, am made a laughing-stock*; but he delivers himself in general terms; the just and upright man, &c. His meaning however is, that, notwithstanding all their hard censures and reproaches, he must still believe himself to be, through God's grace, a just and upright man; and must say that, as such, he was derided by them.

Verse 5. *He that is ready to slip with his feet*—The just man, last mentioned, who is ready to fall, or has already fallen into trouble; *is as a lamp despised*—That is, like a lamp or torch, which, while it shines clearly in a dark night, is very useful and comfortable; but when it is almost extinct, or when the light of the morning approaches, is neglected and despised, as that which is unnecessary, troublesome, and offensive. So the same man, who, while his feet stood fast in a prosperous condition, was magnified and honoured by all, and he shone as a lamp; when he appears to be ready to slip with his feet, and to fall into adversity and trouble, is looked upon as a lamp going out, or as the snuff of a candle, which we throw to the ground and tread upon: *Despised in the thought of him that is at ease*—That is, in the opinion of a man that lives in great ease and outward happiness; which generally make people forget and despise those who are in affliction. Heath interprets the verse thus: *In calamity contempt is ready in the thought of the insolent, for those whose feet are tottering*. The words being transposed in the English version, Chappelow thinks, if they be taken in the order in which they occur in the Hebrew, their meaning becomes more manifest. It is thus: A lamp, despised in the opinion of an indolent man, is prepared for the slips of the foot: that is, who is a lamp or light to enlighten and instruct other people, though despised by those who are indolent, as if they wanted no instruction, is prepared for the several accidents of life, (the trials or troubles,) which are as natural and common to man as it is natural for him sometimes to stumble or slip with his foot. Here also Job's words are general, without a particular application to himself, though doubtless he spoke them with reference to his own distressed circumstances.

A. M. 2484. 6 * The tabernacles of robbers prosper, and they that provoke God are secure; into whose hand God bringeth abundantly.

7 But ask now the beasts, and they shall teach thee; and the fowls of the air, and they shall tell thee:

8 Or speak to the earth, and it shall teach thee; and the fishes of the sea shall declare unto thee.

* Chap. xxi. 7; Psa. xxxvii. 1, 35; lxxiii. 11; xcii. 7; Jer. xii. 1; Mal. iii. 25.—† Num. xvi. 22; Dan. v. 23; Acts xvii. 28.

Verse 6. *The tabernacles of robbers prosper*—Job's friends had all supposed that wicked men cannot prosper long in the world. This Job opposes, and maintains that God herein acts as sovereign, and reserves that exact distribution of rewards and punishments for the other world. As if he had said, Thy opinion, O Zophar, (see chap. xi. 14, &c.,) is confuted by daily experience; which shows that very wicked, injurious, and impudent oppressors, tyrants, and robbers, are so far from always meeting with those disappointments and miseries of which thou speakest as being their certain portion, that they frequently succeed in their iniquitous and daring enterprises, flourish in wealth and glory, and fill their houses with the goods of others, which they violently took away; of which the Chaldeans and Sabeans (chap. i. 15, 17) are a present and striking evidence. *And they that provoke God are secure*—They, whose common practice it is to despise and provoke God, are confident and safe, apparently living without danger or fear. *Into whose hands God bringeth abundantly*—So far is God from crushing such persons, that he seems to favour them with wonderful success; by his providence, puts into their hands the opportunities which they seek, of enriching themselves by injustice and oppression, and the persons and goods of other more righteous men, for which they lie in wait.

Verse 7. *Ask now the beasts, and they shall teach thee*—If thou observest the beasts, and their properties, actions, and events, from them thou mayest learn this lesson: namely, that which Zophar had uttered with so much pomp and gravity, (chap. xi. 7-9.) concerning God's unsearchable wisdom, almighty power, and absolute sovereignty: thou dost not need, says Job, to go into heaven or hell to know it; but thou mayest learn it even from the brute creatures. The beasts of the earth, the fowls of the air, the fishes of the sea, all animals, and even plants, fruits, and flowers, are daily and hourly evidences to us, of the being and infinite perfections of God. The wonderful contrivance and admirable mechanism manifested in their formation, the preparation made for their wants, the exact adaptation of their organs to the particular mode of life for which they are intended; the wonderful regularity observed in their propagation: these things as plainly tell us, they are the work of God, as if they all had intelligible voices and declared it to us. Some commentators suppose that Job referred here to the

9 Who knoweth not in all these that the hand of the LORD hath wrought this? A. M. 2484. B. C. 1520.

10 ^f In whose hand is the ^e soul of every living thing, and the breath of ^b all mankind.

11 ^e Doth not the ear try words? and the ^e mouth taste his meat?

12 ^b With the ancient is wisdom; and in length of days understanding.

* Or, life.—^e Hebrew, all flesh of man.—^f Chapter xxxiv. 3. ^b Heb. palate, Chap. vi. 30.—^c Chap. xxxii. 7.

greater and stronger brute creatures, preying on the lesser and weaker, as a fact illustrative of his argument respecting the power and prosperity of robbers, oppressors, and tyrants; and to the inferior animals in general, ministering to the pride, luxury, and indulgence of ungodly men; the earth and its richest produce being their property, and all nature drudging, as it were, to gratify their lusts. But the following verses seem rather to lead to the interpretation first mentioned, which certainly is the more instructive use of the words.

Verse 9. *Who knoweth not in all these*—Or, by all these brute creatures; that the hand of the Lord hath wrought this—That God, by his power and wisdom, hath created and ordered all that is in them, or that is done by and among them. Job meant in these verses to express his firm opinion that all animate and inanimate nature clearly bore testimony to the creating power and overruling providence of God: see Neh. ix. 6. This is the only time that we meet with the name Jehovah in all the discourses between Job and his friends. For God in that age was more known by the name of *Shaddai, the Almighty*.

Verse 10. *In whose hand is the soul*—That is, the life, or the principle of life; of every living thing—That is, of all irrational animals, of which he spake, verse 7, opposed to man in the last words of this verse. He means, in whose absolute power it is to give life or to take it away, when and how it seemeth good to him; and the breath of all mankind—Or, the spirit, as the word רוּחַ, *ruach*, here used, commonly means; that is, the immortal soul, which is no less a creature, and in God's power to dispose of it, than the animal soul or life of brutes.

Verse 11. *Doth not the ear try words? &c.*—Doth not the mind distinguish truth from falsehood, and wisdom from folly, as exactly as the palate distinguishes a sweet from a bitter taste? These words may either be considered as the conclusion of the foregoing discourse, or as a preface to the following. And he thereby demands from his friends the liberty of judging for himself of what they had said, and invites them to use the same liberty with respect to what he had advanced; wishing them to hear and judge of his words candidly and impartially, that they and he might agree in disavowing what should appear to be false or foolish, and in owning what was true and important.

Verse 12. *With the ancient is wisdom*—These

A. M. 2484. 13 ⁷ With ⁱ him is wisdom and
B. C. 1520. strength, he hath counsel and under-
standing.

14 Behold, ^k he breaketh down, and it cannot
be built again: he ^lshutteth ^a up a man, and
there can be no opening.

15 Behold, he ^m withholdeth the waters, and
they dry up; also he ⁿ sendeth them out, and
they overturn the earth.

16 ^o With him is strength and wisdom: the

⁷ That is, *With God*.—ⁱ Chap. ix. 4; xxxvi. 5.—^k Chap. xi. 10.—^l Isa. xxii. 22; Revelation iii. 7.—^a Hebrew, *upon*.
^m 1 Kings viii. 35; xvii. 1.—ⁿ Gen. vii. 11, &c.

words contain a concession of what Bildad had said, (chap. viii. 8, 9,) and a joining with him in that appeal; but withal, an intimation that this wisdom was but imperfect, and liable to many mistakes; and indeed mere ignorance and folly, if compared with the divine wisdom, of which he speaks in the following verses. And therefore that antiquity ought not to be received against the truths of the most wise God.

Verse 13. *With him is wisdom*—That is, with God. Perfect wisdom is only in him, and all wisdom in the world cometh from him, who giveth to young and old as it pleaseth him. The ancients were not wise without his gift and grace, and with that a younger man may be wiser than the ancients. *He hath counsel*—Practical wisdom to guide and govern all the affairs of the world; *and understanding*—A perfect knowledge of all persons and things. "Job shows, in the following verses, that the affairs of the world, and the fortunes of men, are subject to such variety of changes, that all human reason and wisdom must be silent with respect to them; since the same calamities involve the good and the wicked, and seem rather to flow from the supreme dominion and unsearchable will of God, than to be distributed according to the rule of exact justice."—Schultens and Dodd.

Verse 14. *Behold, he breaketh down*—Houses, castles, cities; *and it cannot be built again*—It is not in the power of any creature to repair what he designs utterly to destroy. *He shutteth up a man*—In prison, or in straits and troubles; *and there can be no opening*—Without his permission and providence. Yea, he shuts up in the grave, and none can break open those sealed doors. He shuts up in hell, in chains of darkness, and none can pass that great gulf.

Verse 15. *He withholdeth the waters*—Which are reserved in the clouds, that they may not fall upon the earth; *and they dry up*—Namely, the waters upon the earth, springs, brooks, and rivers dry up, as after the general deluge, to which here is a manifest allusion.

Verse 16. *With him is strength, &c.*—He doth the things mentioned in the foregoing and following verses so *powerfully*, that no creature can resist him and hinder his operations; and so wisely, that none can prevent him or frustrate his counsels. He had said the same thing before, (verse 13,) but he repeats

deceived and the deceiver are his. A. M. 2484

17 He leadeth counsellors away
spoiled, and ^p maketh the judges fools. B. C. 1520.

18 He looseth the bond of kings, and girdeth
their loins with a girdle.

19 He leadeth princes away spoiled, and over-
throweth the mighty.

20 ^q He removeth away ^r the speech of the
trusty, and taketh away the understanding of
the aged.

^o Verse 13.—^p 2 Samuel xv. 31; xvii. 14, 23; Isa. xix. 12; xxix. 14; 1 Cor. i. 19.—^q Chapter xxxii. 9; Isaiah iii. 1, 3.
^r Heb. *the lip of the faithful*.

it here to prepare the way for the following events, which are eminent instances both of his power and wisdom. *The deceived and the deceiver are his*—Wholly subject to his disposal. He governs the deceiver, and sets bounds to his deceits, how far they shall extend: he also overrules all this to his own glory, and the accomplishment of his righteous designs of trying the good and punishing wicked men, by giving them up to believe lies. Yet God is not the author of any error or sin, but only the wise and holy governor of it.

Verse 17. *He leadeth counsellors away spoiled*—The wise counsellors, or statesmen, by whom the affairs of kings and kingdoms are ordered, he leadeth away as captives in triumph, being spoiled either of that wisdom which they had, or seemed to have; or of that power and dignity which they had enjoyed. *And maketh the judges fools*—By discovering their folly, and by insatuating their minds, and turning their own counsels to their ruin.

Verse 18. *He looseth the bond of kings*—He takes from them the power and authority wherewith they ruled their subjects; ruled them with rigour, perhaps tyrannised over and enslaved them: and he divests them of that majesty which he had stamped upon them, and by which they kept their people in awe. These God can, and often does, take away from them, and thereby free the people from their bonds, of which we have abundance of instances in the history of different nations; *and girdeth their loins with a girdle*—He reduces them to a mean and servile condition; which is thus expressed, because servants used to gird up their garments, (which, after the manner of those parts of the world, were loose and long,) that they might be fitter for attendance upon their masters: he not only deposes them from their thrones, but brings them into slavery.

Verse 20. *He removeth away the speech of the trusty*—Of those wise and experienced counsellors that were trusted by the greatest princes. He either, 1st, Takes away from them the gift of utterance, or restrains them in the use of it; so that they are not able to express their thoughts with such clearness and force as they used to do. Or, 2d, He brings the affairs of their employers into such straits and difficulties, that they know not what to say or advise. Or, 3d, He takes away their understanding, which

A. M. 2494. 21 ^r He poureth contempt upon prin-
B. C. 1520. ces, and ¹⁰ weakeneth the strength of
the mighty.

22 ^a He discovereth deep things out of dark-
ness, and bringeth out to light the shadow of
death.

23 ^b He increaseth the nations, and destroyeth

^r Psa. cvii. 40; Dan. ii. 21.—¹⁰ Or, *looseth the girdle of the strong.*
^a Dan. ii. 22; Matt. x. 26; 1 Cor. iv. 5.—^b Psa. cvii. 38; Isa. ix.

should suggest and direct their speech, as it here follows. Or, 4th, He permits them to betray their trust, and either not to speak when they ought, or to speak otherwise than they ought, and to use their understanding and eloquence, not to direct, but to deceive, and so to destroy their princes and other superiors.

Verses 21, 22. *He poureth contempt upon princes*—That is, he makes them contemptible to their subjects and others; and *weakeneth the strength of the mighty*—The word כִּוִּיחַ, *meziach*, here rendered strength, occurs also Psa. cix. 19, where it is translated *girdle*. The clause might here have been rendered, *He looseth the girdle of the mighty*, a phrase which signifies weakness, Isa. v. 27; as the *girding of the girdle* denotes strength and power, Isa. xxii. 21, and xlv. 5. Both these phrases are taken from the quality of their garments, which, being loose and long, disabled a man for walking or working. *He discovereth deep things out of darkness*—That is, the most secret and crafty counsels of princes, which are contrived and carried on in the dark.

Verses 23-25. *He increaseth the nations, &c.*—What he had hitherto said of princes, he now applies to nations and people, whom God either increases

them: he enlargeth the nations, and A. M. 2494.
¹¹ straiteneth them again. B. C. 1520.

24 He taketh away the heart of the chief of the people of the earth, and ^a causeth them to wander in a wilderness *where there is no way*.

25 ^r They grope in the dark without light, and he maketh them to ¹² stagger ^r like a drunken man.

3; xxvii. 15.—¹¹ Heb. *leadeth in.*—^a Psa. cvii. 4, 40.—^r Deut. xxviii. 29; Chap. v. 14.—¹² Heb. *wander.*—^r Psa. cvii. 27.

or diminishes as he pleases. *He enlargeth the nations*—He multiplies them so that they are forced to send forth colonies into other lands; and *straiteneth them again*—Diminishes them by war, famine, or pestilence: or, as כָּנַח, *janchem*, more properly signifies, leadeth them in, or bringeth them back, namely, into their own land, and confineth them there. So that whole nations, as well as their princes, are perfectly under his power, and he enlarges their bounds, or reduces them into more narrow limits, as he pleaseth. *He taketh away the heart of the chief of the people*—Deprives them both of courage and judgment, and causeth them to wander in a wilderness; that is, fills them with confusion, uncertainty, and perplexity of mind, so that they know not which way to turn themselves. *They grope in the dark*—Like men that cannot see their way. *And he maketh them to stagger like a drunken man*—Who reels hither and thither without any certainty. So they sometimes take one course, and sometimes another, as resolving to try all experiments, and indeed not knowing what to do. All their counsels and motions are as unsteady and fluctuating as those of a man intoxicated

CHAPTER XIII.

Job sharply reproves his friends, 1-18. Professes his faith, 14-16. Desires to be heard, 17-19. Expostulates with God, 20-28.

A. M. 2494. **L**O, mine eye hath seen all *this*,
B. C. 1520. mine ear hath heard and understood it.

2 ^a What ye know, *the same* do I know also: I am not inferior unto you.

^a Chap. xii. 3.—^b Chap. xxiii. 3; xxxi. 35.

NOTES ON CHAPTER XIII.

Verse 1. *Lo, mine eye hath seen all this*—All this which either you or I have discoursed concerning the infinite power and wisdom of God, I know, both by seeing it, by my own observation and experience, and by hearing it from my ancestors.

Verse 3. *Surely I would speak to the Almighty*—I had rather debate the matter with God than with you. I am not afraid of presenting my person and cause before him, who is a witness of my integrity,

3 ^b Surely I would speak to the A. M. 2494.
Almighty, and I desire to reason with B. C. 1520.
God.

4 But ye are forgers of lies, ^c ye are all physicians of no value.

^c Chap. vi. 21; xvi. 2.

and would not deal so unmercifully with me as you do.

Verses 4, 5. *Ye are forgers of lies*—That is, authors of false doctrine, namely, that great afflictions are peculiar to hypocrites and wicked men. *All physicians of no value*—Unfaithful and unskilful; prescribing bad remedies, and misapplying good ones. *O that ye would altogether hold your peace*—The best proof of your wisdom would be never to say a word more of these matters; for then your

A. M. 2484. 5 O that ye would altogether hold
B. C. 1520. your peace; and ^d it should be your wisdom.

6 Hear now my reasoning, and hearken to the pleadings of my lips.

7 * Will ye speak wickedly for God? and talk deceitfully for him?

8 Will ye accept his person? will ye contend for God?

9 Is it good that he should search you out? or as one man mocketh another, do ye so mock him?

^d Prov. xvii. 28.—Chapter xvii. 5; xxxii. 21; xxxvi. 4.
^{*} Heb. *Be silent from me.*

ignorance and folly would be concealed, which are now made manifest by your speaking concerning what you do not understand. Thus Solomon, Prov. xvii. 28, "Even a fool, when he holdeth his peace, is counted wise: and he that shutteth his lips is esteemed a man of understanding."

Verses 6-8. *Hear now my reasoning*—Attend to it, and consider it more seriously than you have done; and *hearken to the pleadings of my lips*—That is, to the arguments which I shall produce. *Will ye speak wickedly for God?*—Will you utter falsehoods upon pretence of pleasing God, or of maintaining God's honour or righteousness? Doth he need such defences? *Will ye accept his person?*—Not judging according to the right of the cause, but the quality of the person, as corrupt judges do. *Will ye contend with God?*—Or, *will ye plead*, as the word, תריבון, *teribun*, is rendered, Judges vi. 31. He means, is his cause so bad as to call for your assistance to defend it? Will you plead for him, as one person pleads for another, making use of little arts and subtle contrivances in his defence? He wants no such crafty, unprincipled advocates. "Job here convicts his friends of wickedness, in taking upon them to defend God in an improper manner, as if he needed their rash censures to vindicate the ways of his providence. This was such a fault, as they had but too much reason to fear might one time or other draw down his severe chastisements on their own heads." See Peters.

Verses 9, 10. *Is it good that he should search you out?*—Will it be to your credit and comfort, that he should narrowly examine your hearts and discourses, whether you have uttered truth or falsehood, and whether your speeches have proceeded from true zeal for the glory of God, or from your own prejudices and passions? *Do ye so mock him?*—By covering your uncharitableness and corrupt affections with pretences of piety, as if God could not discern your artifices; or, by pleading his cause with weak and foolish arguments, which is a kind of mockery of him, and an injury to his cause; or, by seeking to flatter him with false praises, as if he distributed the things of this world with exact justice, prospering only the good, and severely afflicting none but wicked men. *He will surely reprove you*—Hebrew, הוכיח, *hocheach, jocheach, redarguendo redarguet, in confuting, he will confute you*; that is, he

10 He will surely reprove you, if ye
do secretly accept persons. A. M. 2484.
B. C. 1520.

11 Shall not his excellency make you afraid? and his dread fall upon you?

12 Your remembrances are like unto ashes, your bodies to bodies of clay.

13 ¹ Hold your peace, let me alone, that I may speak, and let come on me what will.

14 Wherefore ^f do I take my flesh in my teeth, and ^g put my life in my hand?

^f Chapter xviii. 4.—^g 1 Samuel xxviii. 21; Psalm cxix.
109.

will surely confute, or punish you, as the word often means. "He will severely chastise you, for designing to gratify him by condemning me."—Bishop Patrick. *If ye do secretly accept persons*—Though it be concealed in your own breasts, and no eye see it; yea, though your own minds and consciences, through ignorance or inadvertency, do not perceive it; yet he, who is greater than your consciences, sees and knows it.

Verses 11, 12. *Shall not his excellency*—His infinite wisdom, which sees your secret falsehood, and his justice and power, which can and will punish you for it; *make you afraid?*—Of speaking rashly or falsely of his ways and counsels. *Your remembrances*—Hebrew, זכרונות, *zichronechem*, your memorials; or, as Chappelow translates it, *memorabilia vestra*, your remarkable things, your discourses, and arguments, and memorable actions; *are like unto ashes*—Contemptible and unprofitable, Hebrew, כשלי אפר, *mishe epher*, are parables or speeches of dust or ashes, mouldering, as it were, and coming to nothing. All that is most excellent and memorable in you; your wealth, and dignity, and wit, and reputation, or whatsoever it is for which you expect to be remembered, it is all but poor despicable dust and ashes; for, *your bodies are like to bodies of clay*—Though they be not full of sores and biles as mine is, yet they are but dust, and to dust they shall return, as well as mine. The consideration of our mortality should make us afraid of offending God.

Verse 13. *Hold your peace*—Do not now interrupt me in my discourse; which, peradventure, he observed by their gestures, some of them were now attempting; *let me alone, that I may speak*—That I may freely utter my whole mind; *let come on me what will*—Whatever the event may be, I am determined to speak in my own defence. My friends may put an unfavourable construction upon it, and think the worse of me for it; but I hope God will not make my necessary defence to be my offence, as they do: he will justify me, (verse 18,) and then nothing can come amiss to me. Those that are upright, and have the assurance of their uprightness, may cheerfully welcome every event. Come what will, they are ready for it.

Verse 14. *Wherefore do I take my flesh in my teeth, &c.*—The sense, according to some comment-

A. M. 2484. 15 ^b Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him: ¹ but I will ² maintain mine own ways before him.

16 He also *shall be* my salvation: for a hypocrite shall not come before him.

17 Hear diligently my speech, and my declaration with your ears.

18 Behold, now, I have ordered *my* cause; I know that I shall be justified.

^b Psa. xxiii. 4; Prov. xiv. 32.—ⁱ Chapter xxvii. 5.—² Heb. *prove, or, argue.*

ators, is, Why do I torment myself? Why do I grieve so immoderately, like those persons who, in their afflictions, rend their garments, and are ready to tear their very flesh? But Bishop Patrick's paraphrase seems to accord better with the context, namely, "I am so conscious to myself of my innocence, that I must still wonder why I suffer such enraging miseries, and am exposed to so many dangers." Henry speaks to nearly the same purpose: "Why do I suffer such agonies? I cannot but wonder that God should lay so much upon me, when he knows I am not a wicked man. He was ready, not only to rend his clothes, but even to tear his flesh, through the greatness of his affliction; and saw himself at the brink of death, and his life in his hand; yet his friends could not charge him with any enormous crime, nor could he himself discover any; no marvel then he was in such confusion." The phrase of having *his life in his hand*, denotes a condition extremely dangerous. Thus Jephthah tells the Ephraimites, *I put my life in my hands and passed over against the children of Ammon*, Judg. xii. 3. That is, I exposed my life to the greatest danger. Thus Jonathan speaks of David: *He put his life in his hand, and slew the Philistine*, 1 Sam. xix. 5. The words, says Poole, may imply "a reason of his ardent desire of liberty of speech, because he could hold his tongue no longer, but must needs tear himself to pieces, if he had not some vent for his grief." In which sense the LXX. seem to have understood him.

Verse 15. *Though he slay me*—But though God should yet more and more increase my torments, so that I could bear them no longer, but should perceive myself to be at the point of death, without any hope of recovery; *yet will I trust in him*—Or, more exactly according to the Hebrew text, *Shall I not trust in him? Shall I despair? No; I will not, I know he is a just, a faithful, and merciful God; and he knows that my heart is upright before him, and that I am no hypocrite. But I will maintain mine own ways*—Though I trust in him, yet I will humbly expostulate the matter with him. Hebrew, *I will argue, prove, or demonstrate my ways*; that is, I will make a free and full confession of the whole course of my life, and I will boldly, though submissively, assert my own integrity, which he also, I doubt not, will acknowledge. And, what I have done amiss, I will as freely confess, and make supplication to my Judge for the pardon of it. *Before him*—Hebrew,

19 ^k Who is he *that* will plead with me? for now, if I hold my tongue, I shall give up the ghost.

20 ^l Only do not two *things* unto me: then will I not hide myself from thee.

21 ^m Withdraw thy hand far from me: and let not thy dread make me afraid.

22 Then call thou, and I will answer: or let me speak, and answer thou me.

^k Chapter xxxiii. 6; Isaiah l. 8.—^l Chapter ix. 34; xxxiii. 7. ^m Psa. xxxix. 10.

פניו אל, *el panav*, before his face, in his presence, or before his tribunal, for I desire no other judge but him.

Verse 16. *He also shall be my salvation*—I rest assured that he will save me out of these miseries, sooner or later, one way or other, if not with a temporal, yet with an eternal salvation after death; of which he speaks chap. xix. 25. *For a hypocrite*—Or, rather, *But a hypocrite shall not come before him*—If I were a hypocrite, as you allege, I durst not present myself before him to plead my cause with him, as now I desire to do, nor could I hope for any salvation from or with him in heaven.

Verse 17. *Hear diligently my speech*—This he desired before, (verse 6,) and now repeats, either, because they manifested some dislike of his speech, and some desire to interrupt him; or, because he now comes more closely to the question; the foregoing verses being mostly in the way of preface to it. *And my declaration*—That is, the words whereby I declare my mind.

Verses 18, 19. *Behold, now, I have ordered my cause*—Namely, in my own mind. I have seriously considered the state of my case, what can be said, either for me or against me, and am ready to plead my cause. *I know that I shall be justified*—Acquitted by God of that hypocrisy and wickedness wherewith you charge me, and declared a righteous person, human infirmities excepted. *Who is he that will plead with me?*—Let who will come and accuse me, I am ready to answer. *If I hold my tongue, I shall give up the ghost*—My grief would break my heart, if I did not give vent to it.

Verses 20–22. Let me only beg, O great Judge of all, that thou wilt forbear to make use of two things against me. *Then will I not hide myself from thee*—Then will I appear confidently to plead my cause before thee. *Withdraw thy hand from me*—Suspend my torments during the time of my pleading with thee, that my mind may be at liberty. *And let not thy dread make me afraid*—Do not present thyself to me in terrible majesty, neither deal with me in rigorous justice. *Then call thou, and I will answer*—Then choose thy own method: either do thou charge me with hypocrisy, or more than common guilt, and I will defend myself. *Or let me speak, &c.*—I will argue with thee concerning thy extraordinary severity toward me; and do thou show me the reasons of it. This proposal savours of self-confidence, and of irreverence toward God; for

A. M. 2484. 23 How many *are* mine iniquities
B. C. 1520. and sins? make me to know my
transgression and my sin.

24 ^a Wherefore hidest thou thy face, and
^b holdest me for thine enemy?

25 ^c Wilt thou break a leaf driven to and fro?
and wilt thou pursue the dry stubble?

26 For thou writest bitter things against me,

^a Deut. xxxii. 20; Psa. xlii. 1; xlv. 24; lxxxviii. 14; Isa. viii. 17.—^b Deut. xxxii. 42; Ruth i. 21; Chap. xvi. 9; xix. 11; xxxiii.

and ^d makest me to possess the iniqui- A. M. 2484.
ties of my youth. B. C. 1520.

27 ^e Thou puttest my feet also in the stocks,
and ^f lookest narrowly unto all my paths;
thou settest a print upon the ^g heels of my
feet.

28 And he, as a rotten thing, consumeth, as a
garment that is moth-eaten.

10; Lam. ii. 5.—^f Isa. xlii. 3.—^g Chap. xx. 11; Psa. xxv. 7.
^h Chap. xxxiii. 11.—ⁱ Heb. *observest*.—^j Heb. *roots*.

which, and the like speeches, he is reproved by God,
chap. xxxviii. 2, 3; xl. 2.

Verses 23, 24. *How many are my sins?*—That I
am a sinner, I confess; but not that I am guilty of
such crimes as my friends suppose; if it be so, do
thou, O Lord, discover it. *Wherefore hidest thou
thy face?*—Withdrawest thy favour and help, which
thou hast been wont to afford me; and *holdest me
for thine enemy?*—That is, dealest as sharply with
me as if I were thy professed enemy.

Verse 25. *Wilt thou break a leaf? &c.*—Doth it
become thy infinite and excellent majesty to use thy
might to crush such a poor, impotent, and frail creature
as I am, that can no more resist thy power than
a leaf or a little dry straw can resist the fury of the
wind or fire? Thus, whatever was irreverent or
unbecoming in Job's expressions, as recorded in
verse 22, is greatly alleviated, as Dr. Dodd has ob-
served, from Peters, by the humility and self-abase-
ment manifested in these last three verses. Scarcely
ever were the feelings of the human heart, burdened
with an extraordinary load of grief, expressed in a
more natural, or less blameable way. He first wishes
that God would discover to him the particular sins,
if there were any, for which he thus afflicted him,
intimating his readiness to deplore them, and to cor-
rect his errors for the future. Secondly, he accounts
it the greatest of his calamities, that God should hide
his face from him, and deal with him as an enemy;
on whose friendship and favour he had always set
the highest value; had endeavoured to preserve it by
the integrity of his life, and was resolved never to
depart from that integrity. Lastly, he confesses his
own meanness, or rather nothingness, in comparison
of God; and that in a manner so ingenuous and
simple, as to show that his complaints, however pas-
sionate and moving, did not proceed from pride or
stubbornness of spirit.

Verse 26. *For thou writest*—That is, thou appoint-
est; *bitter things against me*—A terrible sentence,

or most grievous punishments. It is a metaphor
taken from the custom of princes or judges, who an-
ciently used to write their sentences, or decrees,
concerning persons or causes brought before them.
And makest me to possess the iniquities of my youth
—Dost now, at once, bring upon me the punishment
of all my sins, not excepting those of my youth,
which were committed before I well knew what I did.

Verse 27. *Thou puttest my feet also in the stocks*
—Thou encompassed me with thy judgments, so
that I have no way or possibility to escape. *And
lookest narrowly unto all my paths*—Makest a strict
and diligent search into all the actions of my life,
that thou mayest find matter for which to condemn
me. *Thou settest a print upon the heels of my feet*
—Thou followest me close at the heels, either to ob-
serve my actions, or to pursue me with thy judg-
ments; insomuch, that thou dost often, as it were,
tread upon my heels, and leave the prints of thy
footsteps upon them. Bishop Patrick's paraphrase
here is, "I can no more escape than a malefactor,
whose feet are in the stocks, who is encompassed
with a vigilant guard, and cannot stir a foot from the
place where he is." Heath thinks there is an allu-
sion, in these words, to the custom of putting a clog
on the feet of fugitive slaves, that they might be
tracked and found.

Verse 28. *And he, as a rotten thing*—That is, man,
as some commentators suppose, thinking that Job
speaks of himself in the third person, and that the
sense is, this poor frail creature, this carcass, or body
of mine; *consumeth*—Or wasteth away, and is de-
stroyed; *as a garment eaten by moths*—Others,
however, interpret the words thus: *He*, that is, God,
consumeth me (understanding the verb יבלה *jiblee*,
actively) *as rottenness consumeth* that in which it is,
or, *as a rotten thing is consumed, &c.* Houbigant's
translation of the verse is, *So that I am become like
a thing consumed with rottenness; like a garment
eaten up by the moth.*

CHAPTER XIV.

Job proceeds to plead with God for some mitigation of his miseries, from the consideration of the shortness of life, and the trouble that naturally belongs to it, 1-6. Especially considering, that when he was once dead, he could not revive as the plants, or come into the world again to receive the marks of God's favour, 7-12. Various wishes and complaints, 13-22.

A. M. 2484.
B. C. 1520.

MAN *that is born of a woman is*
1 of few days, and 2 full of
trouble.

2 ^b He cometh forth like a flower, and is cut
down: he fleeth also as a shadow, and continu-
eth not,

3 And ^c dost thou open thine eyes upon such

¹ Heb. *short of days.*—^a Chap. v. 7; Eccles. ii. 23.—^b Chap. viii. 9; Psa. xc. 5, 9; cii. 11; ciii. 15; cxliv. 4; Isaiah xl. 6; James i. 10, 11; iv. 14; 1 Pet. i. 24.

NOTES ON CHAPTER XIV.

Verse 1. *Man that is born of a woman*—A weak creature; and, withal, corrupt and sinful, and of that sex by which sin and all other calamities were brought into the world. *Is of few days*—Few at the most, in comparison with the days of the first patriarchs, much more in comparison with the days of eternity. Man is now a short-lived creature in himself, and withers so soon of his own accord, that he needs no violent hand to cut him off. *And full of trouble*—Liable to a variety of miseries. He is not only troubled, but full of trouble, Hebrew, כבוע רגז, *sebang rogez, satur trepidæ corporis et animi commotionis, full of disquietude and commotion in mind and body*; exposed to labour and toil, affliction and pain, grief and fear: a day seldom passing without some cause of vexation and distress, some disorder, some calamity or other. And, therefore, Job intimates, man is a fitter object for God's compassion than for his anger or severity.

Verse 2. *He cometh forth like a flower*—Tender and delicate, fair and beautiful, his faculties and members opening and expanding themselves by degrees; and is cut down—By the scythe of some spreading malady; or cropped by the rude hand of some ruthless distemper; or nipped and withered by the frost of some wasting weakness and decay. *He fleeth also as a shadow*—Which, being caused by the sun, follows its motions, and is in perpetual variation, until, at last, it quite vanishes and disappears. "The flower," says Henry, "is fading, and all its beauty soon withers and is gone. The shadow is fleeting, and its very being will soon be lost in the shadows of night. Of neither do we make any account, in neither do we put any confidence."

Verse 3. *And dost thou open thine eyes on such a one?*—Dost thou, the infinite Jehovah, the self-existent, independent, and supreme Lord of all, the Almighty, open thine eyes on such an insignificant and helpless creature? Dost thou, the immutable, the eternal God, behold and take account of such a frail, changeable, and short-lived being? Dost thou, ever-blessed and most holy, regard such an infirm, polluted, and miserable object? Dost thou take any thought or care about him? Is he not infinitely beneath thy notice? And dost thou stoop so low as even to observe his ways, yea, all his ways? *And bringest me into judgment with thee*—Pleadedst with me by thy judgments, and thereby, in a manner, forcest me to plead with thee. Dost thou bring me, such a worthless worm as I am, into judgment with

a one, and ^d bringest me into judgment ^e with thee? A. M. 2484.
B. C. 1520.

4 ² Who ^o can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? not one.

5 ^f Seeing his days are determined, the number of his months are with thee, thou hast appointed his bounds that he cannot pass;

^c Psa. cxliv. 3.—^d Psa. cxliii. 2.—^e Heb. *Who will give?* ^f Gen. v. 3; Psa. li. 5; John iii. 6; Romans v. 12; Eph. ii. 3. ¹ Chap. vii. 1.

thee, who art so quick-sighted to discover the least failing, so holy to hate it, so just to condemn it, so mighty to punish it? The consideration of our inability to contend with God, of our own sinfulness and weakness, should engage us to pray, *Lord, enter not into judgment with thy servant.*

Verse 4. *Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean?*—I confess I am an unclean creature, and therefore liable to be abhorred by thy holiness, and condemned by thy justice, if thou wilt deal rigorously with me. But, remember, this is not my peculiar case, but the common lot of every man, who descended from sinful parents, and, being infected with original corruption, must unavoidably be unclean. Why, then, dost thou inflict such peculiar and extraordinary judgments upon me for that which is common to all men? And although my natural corruption do not excuse my actual sins, yet I hope it may procure some mitigation of my punishment, and move thy divine pity to deal less severely with me. Observe, reader, clean children can no more come from unclean parents, nor clean performances from an unclean principle, than pure streams can proceed from an impure spring, or grapes from thorns. Our habitual corruption is derived, with our nature, from our progenitors, and is therefore bred in the bone: and our blood is not only tainted by a legal conviction, but tainted with an hereditary disease. And hence flow all actual transgressions, which are the natural product of habitual corruption. This holy Job here laments, as all that are sanctified do, tracing the streams up to the fountain. The Chaldee paraphrase reads this verse, *Who can make a man clean that is polluted with sin? Cannot one? that is, God: or, who but God, who is one, and will spare him?* God can change the skin of the Ethiopian, and to him we ought to direct our prayer, saying, It is the prerogative of thy grace to bring a clean thing out of an unclean, and that grace I humbly implore.

Verses 5, 6. *Seeing his days are determined*—Limited to a certain period. *The number of his months is with thee*—Exactly known to thee, and in thy power and disposal. *Thou hast appointed his bounds, &c.*—Thou hast appointed a certain end of his days, beyond which he cannot prolong his life. *Turn from him, that he may rest*—Withdraw thine afflicting hand from him, that he may have some present ease and comfort. *Till he shall accomplish, as a hireling, his day*—Give him some respite till he finish his course, and come to the period of his

A. M. 2484. 6 * Turn from him, that he may
B. C. 1520. ³ rest, till he shall accomplish, ^h as a
hiring, his day.

7 For there is hope of a tree, if it be cut down,
ⁱ that it will sprout again, and that the tender
branch thereof will not cease.

8 Though the root thereof wax old in the
earth, and the stock thereof die in the ground ;

9 Yet through the scent of water it will bud,
and bring forth boughs like a plant.

* Chap. vii. 16, 19 ; x. 20 ; Psa. xxxix. 13.—³ Hebrew, *cease*.
^h Chap. vii. 1.—ⁱ Verse 14.—⁴ Heb. *is weakened, or, cut off*.

life, which thou hast allotted him, as a man appoints
a set time to a hired servant ; which period will be
as welcome to him as the end of his day of labour
and toil is to the hiring. This idea is implied in
the word יִצְחֵק, *jertzeh*, here rendered, *he shall ac-*
complish. Which properly means, *he shall be*
pleased, or delighted. And the sense seems to be,
As the poor mercenary rests and rejoices when he
has finished the work of the day, and received his
wages ; so must that be an acceptable and joyful
time, which puts a period to the life and sufferings
of a man sinking under the burden of numerous and
heavy troubles, and which introduces him into a
state of perfect rest and endless felicity.

Verses 7-10. *For there is hope of a tree, if it be cut down*—If the body of a tree be cut down, and
only the stem or stump be left in the ground, yet
there is hope ; *that it will sprout again*—Hebrew,
יִצְחֵק, *jachalip*, will yet renew itself, will revive and
flourish as the spring comes on. *Though the root wax old*—Begin to wither and decay ; *and the stock thereof die*—Namely, in outward appearance ; *yet, through the scent of water*—By means of water ; scent or smell being here figuratively ascribed to a tree. The moisture of the earth, and the rain of heaven, have sufficient influence upon it to revive it, and cause it to bud ; *and bring forth boughs like a plant*—As if it were a tree newly planted. *But man dieth and wasteth away*—Man, though a far nobler creature, is in a much worse condition, as to this world, for when once he loseth his present life he never recovers it. Two words are here used for man, גִּבּוֹר, *geber*, a mighty man : though mighty, he dies : אָדָם, *adam*, a man of earth : being made of earth, he returns to it. *He dieth and wasteth away* : before death he is dying daily, continually wasting away ; in death he gives up the ghost : the spirit leaves the body and returns to God, the Father of spirits, who gave it. After death, *where is he?*—Not where he was ; his place knows him no more : his body, all that is visible of him, is rotting away in the grave. But where is the thinking, intelligent principle, the self-conscious being, the proper man ? Is this nowhere ? Yes, it is somewhere ; and it is a very awful consideration to think where they are that have given up the ghost, and where we shall be when we give it up. It is gone into the world of spirits ; gone into eternity, gone to return no more to this world.

10 But man dieth, and ⁴ wasteth away : yea, man giveth up the ghost,
and where is he ?

11 As the waters fail from the sea, and the flood decayeth and drieth up :

12 So man lieth down, and riseth not : ^h till the heavens be no more, they shall not awake, nor be raised out of their sleep.

13 O that thou wouldest hide me in the grave,
that thou wouldest keep me secret, until thy

* Psa. cii. 26 ; Isa. li. 6 ; lxxv. 17 ; lxxvi. 22 ; Acts iii. 21 ; Rom. viii. 20 ; 2 Pet. iii. 7, 10 ; Rev. xx. 12 ; xxi. 1.

Verse 11. *As the waters fail from the sea*—This may mean, either, 1st, *As the waters go, or flow out from the sea*, and return not thither again, Eccles. i. 7 : or, 2d, *As waters*, that is, some portion of the waters, are exhaled from the sea by the sun, or are received and sunk into the dry and thirsty earth : or, 3d, *As the waters of the sea fail*, when the sea forsakes the place into which it used to flow ; *and the flood decayeth and drieth up*—As a flood, or a river, or a pond (for the word signifies any considerable confluence of waters) in a great drought decayeth, and is dried up, in which cases the same waters never return to their former places, so it is with man ; when once the fountain of his life is dried up he dies, and never revives again as to the present life.

Verse 12. *So man lieth down*—In his bed the grave, sleeping the sleep of death. *And riseth not till the heavens be no more*—That is, until the time of the general resurrection and restitution of all things, when these visible heavens shall pass away, and be no more, at least in the same form in which they are now. This whole paragraph is interpreted in a somewhat different way by a late writer. "After a tree is cut down, we see, nevertheless, the old stock flourish again, and send forth new branches ; and shall man then, when he once expires, be extinct for ever ? Is there no hope that he shall revive, and be raised again hereafter ? Yes, there is, according to the doctrine delivered to us by our ancestors : but then they inform us, at the same time, that this resurrection shall not be but with the dissolution and renovation of the world, verses 11, 12. *The waters go off from the sea, and the flood (the river) will decay and dry up. And man lieth down and riseth not till the heavens be no more ; (till then) they shall not awake nor be raised out of their sleep.*" The meaning seems to be, that as we see every thing in flux, and subject to change, so the whole shall one day be changed. The sea itself will at length be quite absorbed ; and the running rivers, which now flow perpetually, as if supplied by everlasting springs, will nevertheless, in time, quite cease and disappear. This visible frame of things shall be dissolved, and the present heavens themselves shall be no more : and then, and not before, comes the resurrection and general judgment.

Verse 13. *O that thou wouldest hide me in the grave*—The grave is not only a resting-place, but

A. M. 24²⁴. wrath be past, that thou wouldest appoint me a set time, and remember me!
B. C. 1520.

14 If a man die, shall he live *again*? all the days of my appointed time ¹ will I wait, ² till my change come.

15 ² Thou shalt call, and I will answer thee :

¹ Chap. xiii. 15.—² Verse 7.—³ Chap. xiii. 22.—⁴ Chap. x. 6, 14; xiii. 27; xxxi. 4; xxxiv. 21; Psa. lvi. 8; cxxxix. 1, 2;

a *hiding-place* to the children of God: Christ has the key of the grave to open and let in now, and to let out at the resurrection. God hides his people in the grave as we hide our treasure in a place of secrecy and safety; and he that hides will find what he has hid, and nothing shall be lost. O that thou wouldest hide me, not only from the storms and troubles of this life, but for the bliss and glory of a better life; let me lie in the grave reserved for immortality, in secret from all the world, but not from thee, not from those eyes which saw my substance when first curiously wrought in the *lowest parts of the earth*, Psa. cxxxix. 15, 16. Thus, it was not only in a passionate weariness of this life that he wished to die, but in a pious assurance of a better life, to which at length he should arise. *Until thy wrath be past*—As long as our bodies lie in the grave there are some effects of God's wrath against sin, but when the body is raised, that wrath is wholly past, and death, the last enemy, is totally destroyed. *That thou wouldest appoint me a set time*—Not only fix a time when thou wilt end my sufferings and my life, but when thou wilt remember my flesh lodged in the grave, as thou didst remember *Noah* and *every living thing* in the ark, Gen. viii. 1. The bodies of the saints shall not be forgotten in the dust; there is a time appointed, a set time, for their being inquired after.

Verse 14. *If a man die, shall he live again?*—He shall not in this world, but he shall in another and better; and, therefore, *all the days of my appointed time will I wait*—Hebrew, צְבַאי, *tschai*, of my warfare, namely, with my spiritual enemies, or of my service and suffering, or of the station and place God has assigned me. The idea which the word conveys is partly, at least, that of a *post* or *station* given a man by God to maintain, till he be released from it, and called to a better state; as if Job had said, Whatever station or condition God shall please to appoint me, either here or in the intermediate state, I shall still wait in earnest expectation for the future renovation and resurrection; here evidently intended by the *change* which he expected to come. "I must insist upon it," says Mr. Peters, "that Job, in this verse, declares very clearly his hope of a future resurrection. I know it is a common opinion, that by the *change* here mentioned, is meant the change of death; but the sense above given suits best with the context, as also with the Hebrew word חֲלִיפָה, *chalipah*, which properly signifies a change for the better, a *renewal*." Houbigant renders the beginning of this verse, *For though a man die, yet he shall revive again; and,*

thou wilt have a desire to the work of thy hands.
A. M. 2484.
B. C. 1520.

16 ^o For now thou numberest my steps: dost thou not watch over my sin?

17 ^p My transgression is sealed up in a bag, and thou sewest up mine iniquity.

Prov. v. 21 · Jer. xxxii. 19.—^p Deuteronomy xxxii. 34; Hos xiii. 12.

therefore, I will wait, &c., observing, in agreement with Mr. Peters, that nothing can be so absurd as to suppose the words contain any doubt of a future life.

Verse 15. *Thou shalt call and I will answer thee*—1st, At death, thou shalt call my body to the grave and my soul to thyself, and I will cheerfully answer, *Here I am*. Gracious souls readily answer death's summons, and appear to his writ. Their spirits are not forcibly *required of them*, as was that of the rich man, Luke xii. 20, but willingly resigned by them, and the earthly tabernacle not violently pulled down, but voluntarily laid down. 2d, At the resurrection thou shalt call me out of the grave by the voice of the archangel, and I will answer and come at thy call. *For thou wilt have a desire to the work of thy hands*—A love for the *soul*, which thou hast made, and new-made by thy grace; and for the *body*, which is also the work of thy hands, and to which thou wilt have a desire, having prepared glory for it in a world of glory.

Verses 16, 17. *For now*—Or rather, *But now*, for this seems to be added by way of opposition, as if he had said, I believe thou wilt pity, help, and deliver me, and even wonderfully change my person, state, and place; but, for the present, it is far otherwise with me. Thus Job returns to his complaints; and, though he is not without hope of future felicity, he finds it hard to get over his present grievances. *Thou numberest my steps*—Thou makest a strict inquiry into all my actions, that thou mayest find out all my errors. *Dost thou not watch over my sin?*—The Hebrew should rather be rendered, *Do not watch over*, or take notice of, *my sin*, as the Chaldee paraphrast writes. Thus the vulgar Latin, *Parce peccatis meis, Spare my sins*; that is, forbear to punish me for them. He longed to go hence, to that world where God's wrath would be past, because now he was under the continual tokens of it; as a child, under the severe discipline of the rod, longs to be of age! As if he had said, O that my change were come! for now thou seemest to number my steps, and *watch over my sin*, and *seal it up in a bag*, verse 17, as writings, or other choice things are preserved, that they may be all brought forth upon occasion, and not one of them forgotten; or, as bills of indictment are kept safe to be produced against the prisoner. Thou keepest all my sins in thy memory. But herein Job speaks rashly; or, rather, this verse ought to be rendered, in conformity with what was observed concerning a clause of the last, *Do not seal up my transgressions in a bag, nor note my iniquities in thy register.*

A. M. 2484. 18 And surely the mountain falling
B. C. 1520. ⁵ cometh to naught, and the rock is removed out of his place.

19 The waters wear the stones: thou ⁶ wastest away the things which grow out of the dust of the earth; and thou destroyest the hope of man.

20 Thou prevailest for ever against him, and

⁵ Heb. *fadeth*.—⁶ Heb. *overflowest*.

Verses 18, 19. *As the mountain falling cometh to naught, &c.*—As when a great mountain falls, by an earthquake or inundation, it moulders away like a fading leaf, (as the Hebrew word signifies,) and as the rock, when, by the violence of winds or earthquakes, it is removed out of its place, and thrown down, is never readvanced; and as the waters, by continual droppings, wear away the stones, so that they can never be made whole again; and as thou wastest away, by a great and violent inundation, the things which grow out of the dust of the earth, herba, and fruits, and plants, which once washed away are irrecoverably lost; in like manner thou destroyest the hope of man: when man dies, all hope of his living again in this world is lost. Thus, as before he declared the hopelessness of man's restoration from death to this animal life, by way of opposition to such things as did, in a manner, rise from death to life, verses 7-10; so now he declares the same thing, by way of similitude to such things as, being once lost and gone, are past all hopes of recovery.

Verse 20. *Thou prevailest for ever against him*—When once thou takest away this life, it is gone for ever; for he speaks not here of man's future and eternal life in another world. *And he passeth*—That is, he dieth: man's death is often called a passage or a going, to intimate that it is not an annihilation, but only a translation of him into another place and state. *Thou changest his countenance*—That is, his visage, which, by death and its harbingers, is quite altered, both in colour and shape. When a man has been a few days sick, how apparent is the change in his countenance! and much more when he has been a few minutes dead! The countenance that was majestic and awful, becomes mean and despicable; that which was lovely and amiable, becomes ghastly and frightful! Where then is the admired beauty? Nay, the approach of

he passeth: thou changest his countenance, and sendest him away. A. M. 2484. B. C. 1520.

21 His sons come to honour, and ⁹ he knoweth it not; and they are brought low, but he perceiveth it not of them.

22 But his flesh upon him shall have pain, and his soul within him shall mourn.

⁹ Eccles. ix. 5; Isa. lxiii. 16.

death will frequently, through discomposing the mind, make the strongest and stoutest to change countenance: it will make the most cheerful and smiling countenance to look grave and serious, and the most bold and daring to look pale and timorous. By changing his countenance, may also be meant changing the face and state of his affairs, as to worldly riches, pleasures, and honours; all which he leaves behind him. *Thou sendest him away*—To his long home, by death.

Verse 21. *His sons come to honour*—Heb. יִבְרֹוּ *jibbedu*: increase either in number or in greatness. The LXX. render it, πολλων δε γενομενων, *become many*; and the word ויִצְרְרוּ *vejitzgnaru*, and they are brought low, they interpret in the opposite sense, εαν δε ολιγοι γωννται, *if they be diminished, or become few*. *He knoweth it not, &c.*—Either, 1st, He is ignorant of all such events; or, 2d, Is not concerned nor affected with them. A dead or dying man minds not these things. The consideration of this should moderate our cares concerning our children and families. God will know what becomes of them or happens to them, when we are gone. To him, therefore, let us commit them: with him let us leave them; and not burden ourselves with needless, fruitless cares concerning them.

Verse 22. *But his flesh upon him shall have pain*—Or, *while his flesh is upon him; and his soul within him*—While the soul is clothed with, or united to, the body, he feels sharp pains in his body, and bitter grief in his soul. Dying work is generally hard work; dying pangs sore pangs. It is folly, therefore, for men to defer their repentance to a death-bed, and to have that to do, which is the one thing needful, when they are really unfit to do any thing. But it is true wisdom, by making our peace with God in Christ, and keeping a good conscience, to treasure up comforts, which will support and relieve us against the pains and sorrows of a dying hour.

CHAPTER XV.

Eliphaz reproves Job for justifying himself, 1-13. Persuades him to humble himself before God, 14-16. Describes the misery of wicked men, 17-35.

A. M. 2494. B. C. 1520. **THEN** answered Eliphaz the Temanite, and said,

2 Should a wise man utter ¹ vain knowledge, and fill his belly with the east wind?

3 Should he reason with unprofitable talk? or with speeches wherewith he can do no good?

4 Yea, ² thou castest off fear, and restrainest ³ prayer before God.

5 For thy mouth ⁴ uttereth thine iniquity, and thou chooseth the tongue of the crafty.

¹ Heb. knowledge of wind.—² Heb. thou makest void.—³ Or, speech.—⁴ Heb. teacheth.—⁵ Luke xix. 22.

NOTES ON CHAPTER XV.

Verse 1. *Then answered Eliphaz*—Eliphaz, not a little incensed that Job should pay no regard to his advice, and should dare to challenge the Almighty to argue the point with him, charges him home with self-conceit in entertaining too high an opinion of his own knowledge; with arrogance in undervaluing the arguments drawn from their experience, whose age was a sufficient voucher for their wisdom; and with impiety, in thus rudely challenging the Almighty to answer for his conduct in afflicting him. He presses home the same argument upon him a second time, to which he adds that of universal tradition; insinuating, that he had yet worse to expect unless he prevented it by a contrary conduct: and then presents him with a picture of the final state of a wicked man; in which he so works up the circumstances as to make it resemble Job and his condition as much as possible; intimating thereby, that he imagined him to be that very wicked man he had been describing, and that he had by that means drawn down God's judgments on himself: that, therefore, his imaginations of innocence were an illusion; but one, however, of the worst kind; he had deceived himself.—Heath.

Verse 2. *Should a wise man*—Such as thou pretendest to be, *utter vain knowledge*—Heb. דעת רוח, *dagnath, ruach, knowledge of wind*; that is, empty words, without any sense or solidity in them; *and fill his belly*—Satisfy his mind and conscience; *with the east wind*—With notions and speeches, which are not only unsubstantial and unprofitable, but also hasty, impetuous, and pernicious; and full as hurtful to the peace of his own mind, and the quiet and comfort of others, as the boisterous, scorching east wind is to fruits and herbs of every kind. The Hebrew is literally, *And should the east wind fill his belly*—his vain and useless knowledge puff him up with pride and self-conceit?

Verse 3. *Should he reason with unprofitable talk?*—Of what consequence are all his arguments? *Do they carry any weight with them? Do they convince and satisfy those with whom he contends? No: they are no better than unprofitable talk. With speeches wherewith he can do no good?*—Either to himself or others, but will do much hurt.

Verse 4. *Yea, thou castest off fear*—Hebrew, *Thou*

6 ^a Thine own mouth condemneth thee, and not I: yea, thine own lips testify against thee.

7 *Art thou the first man that was born?* ^b or wast thou made before the hills?

8 ^c Hast thou heard the secret of God? and dost thou restrain wisdom to thyself?

9 ^d What knowest thou that we know not? *what understandest thou, which is not in us?*

10 ^e With us are both the gray-headed and very aged men, much elder than thy father.

^b Psal. xc. 2; Prov. viii. 25.—^c Romans xi. 34; 1 Cor. ii. 11. ^d Chap. xiii. 2.—^e Chap. xxxii. 6.

makest void fear; the fear of God, piety, and religion, by thy unworthy speeches of God, and by those false and pernicious principles, that God makes no difference between good and bad in the course of his providence, but equally prospers or afflicts both: thou dost that which tends to the subversion of the fear and worship of God. *And restrainest prayer*—Thou dost, by thy words and principles, as far as in thee lies, banish prayer out of the world, by making it useless and unprofitable to men. Houbigant's translation of the verse is, *Truly, thou loosest the bonds of religion; thou preventest the groans or prayers which are sent up to God.* Thy speeches, says Bishop Patrick, "destroy all religion, and discourage men from pouring out their complaint in prayer to God."

Verses 5, 6. *Thy mouth uttereth thine iniquity*—Thy words discover the naughtiness of thy heart, and justify my charge against thee, that thou castest off fear, &c. *Thou chooseth the tongue of the crafty*—Thou speakest wickedly and craftily: thou coverest thy impious principles with fair pretences of piety and respect for God, wherewith thou endeavourest to deceive men. *Thine own mouth condemneth thee*—My condemnation of thee is grounded on thy own words.

Verses 7-10. *Art thou the first man that was born?*—Hast thou lived ever since the creation of the world, and treasured up the experiences of all ages in thy own breast, that thou speakest so arrogantly and magisterially, and with such contempt of other men? *Art thou the most ancient and the wisest of all mortal men?* Whom dost thou make thyself? S. Jarchi's comment is, "What, wast thou born before Adam? *Wast thou made before the hills?*—As wisdom herself was, Prov. viii. 23. Didst thou exist before the earth was created, and distinguished into mountains and valleys? *Hast thou heard the secret of God?*—Hath God acquainted thee with all his secret counsels, whereby he governs the world, that thou dost pass so bold a censure upon his designs and actions? *Dost thou restrain wisdom to thyself?*—Art thou the only wise man in the world, and we and all others but fools? *What knowest thou that we know not?*—He retorts upon Job his own expressions, chap. xii. 3, and xiii. 2. *With us are both the gray-headed,*

A. M. 2484. 11 Are the consolations of God small
B. C. 1520. with thee? is there any secret thing
with thee?

12 Why doth thy heart carry thee away? and
what do thine eyes wink at,

13 That thou turnest thy spirit against God,
and lettest *such* words go out of thy mouth?

14 ^f What *is* man, that he should be clean?

^f 1 Kings viii. 46; 2 Chron. vi. 36; Chap. xiv. 4; Psa. xiv. 3; Prov. xx. 9; Eccles. vii. 20; 1 John i. 8, 10.

&c.—That is, *among us*; meaning either some of them, or some others with whom they had conversed, and who were of their opinion in this matter. And this they oppose to what Job had expressed, chap. xii. 12. *Very aged men, much elder than thy father*—Perhaps all these three friends of Job were elder than he, and therefore they thought he was bound to acknowledge them to be wiser. And many think themselves wiser than others for a similar reason, and are confident they know more, because they have lived more years!

Verse 11. *Are the consolations of God small with thee?*—Are those blessings which we have propounded to thee, on condition of thy repentance, small and inconsiderable in thine eyes? He takes it ill that Job did not value the comforts which he and his friends administered to him, more than, it seems, he did, and that he did not welcome every word they said as the truth of God. And he represents this as a slight put upon divine consolations in general, as if they were of small account with him; whereas, really, they were not: if Job had not highly valued them he could not have borne up as he did under his sufferings. It is true Job's friends had said some very good things, but in their application of them to him they were miserable comforters. *Is there any secret thing with thee?*—Hast thou any secret and peculiar way of obtaining comfort, which is unknown to us, and to all other men? some cordial to support thee, that no body else can pretend to, or knows any thing of? Or, perhaps he means, *Is there some secret sin harboured and indulged in thy bosom, which hinders thy reception of divine comforts?* None disesteem divine consolations but those that secretly, if not openly, are attached to the world, and live after the flesh.

Verses 12, 13. *Why doth thy heart carry thee away?*—Why dost thou suffer thyself to be transported by the pride of thy heart, to use such unworthy and unbecoming expressions, both concerning us and concerning God and his providence? *And what do thine eyes wink at?*—Why dost thou look with such an angry, supercilious, and disdainful look? But Buxtorf translates the words, *Quid colli-mant oculi tui? What are thine eyes taking aim at? Or, Quid innunt? Quorsum spectant? What do they intimate? Or, Whither, what way, or toward what, do they look?* The Hebrew, רדמו, *jirzemun*, properly signifies to wink with one eye

and *he which is born of a woman*, A. M. 2484.
that he should be righteous? B. C. 1520.

15 ^a Behold, he putteth no trust in his saints; yea, the heavens are not clean in his sight.

16 ^b How much more abominable and filthy *is* man, ⁱ which drinketh iniquity like water?

17 I will show thee, hear me; and that *which* I have seen, I will declare;

^a Chap. iv. 18; xxv. 5.—^b Chap. iv. 19; Psa. xiv. 3; liii. 3.
ⁱ Chap. xxxiv. 7; Prov. xix. 28.

as those that aim at a mark. *That thou turnest thy spirit against God?*—Opposest thyself to him, and art become his enemy. He thought Job's spirit was soured against God, and exasperated at his dealings with him, and so was turned from what it had been: and that this was evident from his letting such words go out of his mouth as reflected on God, and his justice and goodness. But Eliphaz wanted candour and charity, otherwise he would not have put such a harsh construction on the speeches of one that had such a settled reputation for piety, and was now sorely assaulted with temptation. This was, in effect, to give the cause on Satan's side, and to own that Job had done as Satan said he would, *curse God to his face*.

Verses 14, 15. *What is man?*—Hebrew, אנוש *enosh*, frail, weak, imperfect man; *that he should be clean?*—That is, that he should pretend to be so; or, that any should expect to find him so: *and he that is born of a woman*—A sinful woman, from whom he has derived infirmity, corruption, and guilt; *that he should be righteous?*—Just and holy in his own eyes, or in the eyes of others, and especially that he should be such in the sight of the just and holy God? *Behold, he putteth no trust in his saints*—That is, in his angels, (see chap. iv. 18.) who are called his saints or holy ones, Deut. xxxiii. 2; Dan. iv. 13, 23. Who, though they were created holy, yet many of them fell. *Yea, the heavens are not clean in his sight*—The angels that dwell in heaven; heaven being put for its inhabitants. None of these are pure, simply, and perfectly, and comparatively to God. The angels are pure from corruption, but not from imperfection.

Verse 16. *How much more abominable and filthy is man*—If saints are not to be trusted, much less sinners. If the heavens are not pure; if heavenly beings, who maintained their allegiance to their Maker, are not free from imperfection, when compared with God, much less is man, who is degenerated, and has rebelled against him. *Which drinketh iniquity like water*—Who, besides his natural proneness to sin, has contracted habits of sinning; and sins as freely, as greedily, and delightfully, as men, especially in those hot countries, drink up water.

Verses 17, 18. *I will show thee, hear me*—I will prove what I have affirmed, namely, that such strokes as thine are peculiar to hypocrites and wicked men. *And that which I have seen I will declare*—I will not speak from hearsay, but only from my own

A. M. 2484. 18 Which wise men have told ^h from
B. C. 1520. their fathers, and have not hid it:

19 Unto whom alone the earth was given, and
^l no stranger passed among them.

20 The wicked man travaileth with pain all
his days, ^m and the number of years is hidden to
the oppressor.

21 ⁵ A dreadful sound is in his ears: ⁿ in
prosperity the destroyer shall come upon him.

22 He believeth not that he shall return out

^h Chap. viii. 8.—^j Joel iii. 17.—^k Psa. xc. 12.—^l Heb.
a sound of fears.

observation and experience. *Which wise men have told*—Who are most able to be witnesses and judges in these matters; *from their fathers*—Or, ancestors; who diligently observed this, and carefully transmitted their own judgment and experience successively to their posterity. *And have not hid it*—They judged it to be so certain and important a truth, that they would not conceal it in their own breasts.

Verse 19. *Unto whom alone the earth was given*—By the gracious gift of God: this he alleges to make their testimony more considerable, because these were no obscure men, but the most worthy and famous men in their ages; and to confute what Job had said, chap. ix. 24, that *the earth was given into the hand of the wicked*. By *the earth* he means the dominion and possession of it. *No stranger passed among them*—No person of a strange nation and disposition, or religion, passed through their land, so as to disturb or spoil them, as the Sabaeans and Chaldeans did thee. God watched over those holy men so that no enemy could invade them; and so he would have done over thee, if thou hadst been such a one. It seems evident, that Noah and his sons, Melchizedeck, Abraham, and others of the patriarchs, who lived before Job, are here intended.

Verse 20. *The wicked man travaileth with pain*—That is, lives a life of care, and fear, and grief, by reason of God's wrath, the torments of his own mind, and his outward calamities. *The number of his years is hidden*—He knows not how short the time of his life is, and therefore lives in continual fear of losing it. *To the oppressor*—To the wicked man: he names this one sort of them, because he supposed Job to be guilty of this sin; and in opposition to what Job had affirmed of the safety of such persons, chap. xii. 6, and because such are apt to promise themselves a longer and happier life than other men.

Verses 21, 22. *A dreadful sound is in his ears*—Even when he feels no evil, he is tormented with perpetual fears and expectations of it, from a consciousness of his own guilt, and a sense of God's all-seeing eye and righteous judgment. *In prosperity the destroyer shall come upon him*—In the most peaceable and prosperous time, he is not in safety, nor does he think himself to be so, but he is always fearing some one or other will injure him as he has injured others; and that some enemy will invade and

of darkness, and he is waited for of ^{A. M. 2484.}
the sword. ^{B. C. 1520.}

23 He ^o wandereth abroad for bread, *saying*,
Where is it? he knoweth that ^p the day of
darkness is ready at his hand.

24 Trouble and anguish shall make him
afraid; they shall prevail against him, as a
king ready to the battle.

25 For he stretcheth out his hand against God,
and strengtheneth himself against the Almighty.

^o 1 Thessalonians v. 3.—^p Psalm lix. 15; cix. 10.—^q Chap.
xviii. 12.

destroy him suddenly and unexpectedly. He knows both heaven and earth are incensed against him; and that he has done nothing to make his peace with either, and, therefore, thinks *every one that meets him will slay him*. A guilty conscience represents to the sinner a *flaming sword turning every way*, and himself inevitably running upon it. *He believeth not that he shall return out of darkness*—When he falls into trouble he despairs of deliverance, by reason of his guilty conscience. *And he is waited for of the sword*—Besides the calamity which is upon him, he is in constant expectation of greater. *The sword* is used for any grievous affliction.

Verse 23. *He wandereth abroad for bread*—His poverty is so great, that he is forced to wander hither and thither to seek for bread, and cannot find it, a just punishment for him that took away the bread and substance of others by violence. *He knoweth that the day of darkness is ready at his hand*—He is assured, from his own guilty conscience, that the time of his total, and irrecoverable, and everlasting destruction is ready to seize upon him, and arrest him, as an officer of justice arrests a criminal; that it is appointed to him and cannot be put by, that it is hastening on and cannot be put off. The Hebrew נִכְוֶה בְיָדוֹ, *nachon bejado*, may be properly rendered, *Is prepared by his own hand*, that is, by his works or actions. So the sense is, He is conscious to himself that, by his wicked life, he hath prepared and treasured up calamities and destruction for himself. This day of darkness is something beyond death; it is that day of the Lord which, to all the wicked, will be darkness and not light, and in which they will be doomed to utter, endless darkness.

Verse 24. *Trouble and anguish shall make him afraid*—When trouble comes, instead of trusting and hoping, and comforting himself in God, as good men do in such cases, 1 Sam. xxx. 6, he is full of torment, dreading the issue of it, and concluding it will end in his utter ruin, as he has great reason to do. *They shall prevail against him*—Though he would fain shake off his fears, and uses many expedients to free himself from them, he is not able; they overpower him, *as a king ready to the battle*—With forces too strong to be resisted. He that would keep his peace must keep a good conscience.

Verse 25. *For he stretcheth out his hand against*

A. M. 2484. 26 He runneth upon him, even on
B. C. 1520. his neck, upon the thick bosses of his
bucklers :

27 ^a Because he covereth his face with his
fatness, and maketh collops of fat on his flanks.

28 And he dwelleth in desolate cities, and
in houses which no man inhabiteth, which are
ready to become heaps.

^a Chap. xvii. 10.—Chap. iv. 9.

God—He sinned against him with a high and out-
stretched hand; that is, boldly and presumptuously,
as one that neither desired his favour, nor feared his
anger. Thus he gives the reason of the fore-men-
tioned calamities that befell him, which was his great
wickedness in the time of his peace and prosperity.
And strengthened himself against the Almighty—
Putteth his forces in array, as if he would fight with
him who is almighty, and therefore irresistible.
This aggravates the madness of this weak and con-
temptible worm, that he should dare to fight against
the omnipotent God!

Verse 26. *He runneth upon him*—That is, the
wicked man (of whom, and of whose sin and misery,
he speaks in the whole context, both preceding and
following) assaults God, and, as it were, rushes swiftly
and furiously upon him, as the same phrase, *רץ
לאלהים jarats eelain*, signifies, Dan. viii. 6. In the
former verse he was represented as preparing for the
battle, and here as actually and impudently fighting
with him. *Even on his neck*—As a stout warrior
who cometh close to his adversary and grapples with
him. He acts in flat opposition to God, both to his
precepts and providences. *Upon the thick bosses of
his bucklers*—Even where his enemy is strongest.
He is not discouraged with his enemy's thick, and
strong, and eminent shields, but boldly ventures to
rush upon them, though to his own certain destruc-
tion. Every sinner departs, or runs, rather, from
God: but the presumptuous sinner, who sins with
a high hand, runs upon him, fights against him,
and bids defiance to him; and it is easy to foretel
what will be the issue.

Verse 27. *He covereth his face with his fatness*—
This is mentioned as the reason of his insolent car-
riage toward God, because he was fat, rich, potent,
and successful, as that expression signifies, Deut.
xxxii. 15; Psa. lxxviii. 31; Jer. xlvi. 21. His great
prosperity made him proud and secure, and regard-
less of God and men. *Maketh collops of fat on his
flanks*—His only care is to pamper and please him-
self, and satisfy his own lusts, and in defence and
pursuance of them he contends with God.

Verses 28, 29. *And he dwelleth*—It should rather
be translated, *But he dwelleth in desolate places*.
This is fitly opposed to the prosperity last men-
tioned, and is the beginning of the description of his
misery, which is continued in the following verses.
Which are ready to become heaps—Which are
ready to fall, and to be turned into heaps of stones.
He shall not be rich—He shall not remain rich, but

A. M. 2484. 29 He shall not be rich, neither shall
B. C. 1520. his substance continue, neither shall he
prolong the perfection thereof upon the earth.

30 He shall not depart out of darkness; the
flame shall dry up his branches, and ^r by the
breath of his mouth shall he go away.

31 Let not him that is deceived ^a trust in va-
nity: for vanity shall be his recompense.

^a Isa. lix. 4.

shall become poor. *Neither shall his substance
continue*—He shall lose what he had gotten. *Neither
shall he prolong the perfection thereof*—The per-
fection of his substance, or that complete estate and
glory which he had attained, shall not be continued
to him and his posterity. Or, *neither shall their
perfection* (that is, that prosperity, wealth, and
power, wherein they placed their perfection or hap-
piness) *spread itself, or be spread abroad*; but
shall be diminished and taken away. It is a me-
taphor from a tree. See chap. viii. 16.

Verse 30. *He shall not depart out of darkness*—
His misery shall have no end. *The flame*—God's
anger and judgment upon him. *Shall dry up his
branches*—His wealth, and power, and glory, where-
with he was encompassed, as trees are with their
branches. *By the breath of his mouth, &c.*—This
expression intimates, with how much ease God sub-
dueth his enemies: his word, his blast, one act of his
will, is sufficient. *Shall he go away*—Hebrew, *go
back*: that is, run away from God faster than he ran
upon him, verse 26. So it is a continuation of the
former metaphor of a conflict between two per-
sons.

Verse 31. *Let not him that is deceived trust in
vanity*—That is, in the vain and deceitful things of
this world, such as power, riches, honour, &c., of
which, and of the loss of them, he had been dis-
cussing largely; and now he subjoins a general
caution to all men to take heed of running into the
same error and mischief with the fore-mentioned
persons: and, withal, he secretly intimates what, he
judged, had been Job's great sin, and the cause of
his ruin, namely, his carnal confidence in those vain
things, his wealth and glory, and the children which
God had given him: from which crime Job, there-
fore, vindicates himself hereafter. *For vanity*—
Disappointment, dissatisfaction, and the loss of all
his imaginary felicity; the same word vanity being
elegantly repeated in another sense, as is usual in the
Scripture, and all authors. *Shall be his recompense*
—Hebrew, *תמורתו, temuratho, permutatio vel com-
mutatio ejus*; his exchange, Lev. xxvii. 33; he shall
exchange one vanity for another, a pleasing vanity
for a vexatious vanity. This verse however may
be rendered otherwise, thus: *He that is deceived
with vanity* (that is, with the vain things of this
world, wherewith most men are deceived and be-
witched) *will not believe that vanity* (namely, emp-
tiness, disappointment, and misery) *shall be his
recompense*. And thus this is an aggravation of

A. M. 2484. 32 It shall be ⁶accomplished ⁷before
B. C. 1520. his time, and his branch shall not be
green.

33 He shall shake off his unripe grape as the
vine, and shall cast off his flower as the olive.

⁶ Or, cut off.—⁷ Chap. xxii. 16; Psa. lv. 23.

his calamity, that it surprised him when he was confident, and secure from all fears of such an event.

Verses 32, 33. *It shall be accomplished*—Namely, that which was last mentioned, that *vanity should be his recompense: before his time*—When, by the course of nature, and common providence, he might have continued and flourished much longer. *And his branch*—His glory and prosperity, or his children; *shall not be green*—Shall not continue to flourish as heretofore. *He shall shake off his unripe grapes*—The wicked man, who, by his sins, is the author of his own ruin, shall be deprived of his fruit, of his children, and other comforts, before their time; *as the vine*—Which either of itself drops its tender grapes, or loses them when they are plucked off by a violent hand; *and shall cast off his flower as the olive*—Which flourishes much about the same time with the vine, and commonly suffers similar injuries.

Verses 34, 35. *For the congregation of hypocrites*—Their children, servants, friends, and dependants; *shall be desolate*—That is, utterly destroyed; *and fire*—Some eminent and terrible judgment of God, often expressed by fire: see Isa. ix. 19, and xxvi. 11; *shall consume the tabernacles of bribery*—Which were either built or maintained by extortion and

34 For the congregation of hypocrites A. M. 2484.
B. C. 1520. shall be desolate, and fire shall consume the tabernacles of bribery.

35 ⁸ They conceive mischief, and bring forth
⁷ vanity, and their belly prepareth deceit.

⁸ Psa. vii. 14; Isa. lix. 4; Hos. x. 13.—⁷ Or, iniquity.

bribery, or such unrighteous practises, of which they thought Job guilty, chap. xxii. 8. *They conceive mischief*—They devise and contrive pernicious enterprises against others; *and bring forth vanity*—They execute what they had contrived. They produce iniquity, injury, or trouble, either to others, or rather to themselves: for the mischief they designed for others falls upon their own heads, and they reap what they sowed. *And their belly*—That is, their inward parts, their hearts and minds; *prepareth deceit*—For others, whom they design to cheat; and especially for themselves, who, while they seek to deceive others, shall find that they themselves are most deceived, as being deprived of all their desires and hopes wherewith they fed themselves, and cast into all those calamities which they thought to prevent by these artifices. This whole description is evidently pointed at the situation of Job. His prosperity was become vanity; his children were all cut off before their time; his family become solitary; and his hopes, to all appearance, an illusion. All the fine prospect with which the wicked man entertained himself, and for which he endured all the anguish here described, produced only a deceit. He hath imposed on himself.

CHAPTER XVI.

Job upbraids his friends with unkindness, 1-5. Bemoans himself, 6-16. Appeals from their censure to the righteous judgment of God, 17-22.

A. M. 2484. **THEN** Job answered and said,
B. C. 1520. 2 I have heard many such

¹ Or, troublesome.

NOTES ON CHAPTER XVI.

Verse 1. *Then Job answered and said*—“Job, above measure grieved that his friends should treat him in this cruel manner, expostulates very tenderly with them on the subject. He tells them he should, in the like circumstances, have behaved to them in a very different way, verse 2. That he, as well as every one about him, was in the utmost astonishment, to find a man, whom he imagined his friend, accuse him falsely, and give him worse treatment than even his greatest enemies would have done. But that he plainly saw God was pleased to add this to the rest of his calamities; that he should not only be deprived of the comfort and assistance he might have expected from his friends, but that he should be used by them in a most relentless way, verses

things: ¹ miserable ² comforters are A. M. 2484.
ye all. B. C. 1520.

² Chap. xiii. 4.

7-14. That he had voluntarily taken on him all the marks of humility used by the guilty, though he was really innocent; that God above knew his innocence, though his friends so slanderously traduced him, verses 15-22. That he was sensible he was nigh his dissolution, otherwise he could return their own with interest, chap. xvii. 1-3. That he made no doubt, whenever the cause came to a decision, the event would prove favourable to him. In the mean time, they would do well to consider what effect this their treatment of him must have on all mankind, and how great a discouragement it must be to the lovers of virtue, to see a man, whose character was yet unstained, on bare suspicion, dealt with so cruelly by persons pretending to virtue and goodness, verses 4-9. Would they but give them-

A. M. 2484. 3 Shall ² vain words have an end?
B. C. 1520. or what imboldeneth thee that thou answerest?

4 I also could speak as ye *do*: if your soul were in my soul's stead, I could heap up words against you, and ^b shake my head at you.

^a Heb. words of wind.—^b Psa. xxii. 7; cix. 25; Lam. ii. 15.

selves time to reflect, they must see that he could have no motive to hypocrisy; since all his schemes and hopes, with regard to life, were at an end, and, as he expected nothing but death, with what view could he play the hypocrite?" verse 10, to the end.—Heath.

Verse 2. *I have heard many such things*—Both from you and divers others; and though you please yourselves with them, as if you had some great and important discoveries, they are but vulgar and trivial things. *Miserable comforters are ye all*—Instead of giving me those comforts which you pretend to do, or offering any thing to alleviate my affliction, you only add to it, and make it yet more grievous. What Job says here of his friends is true of all creatures in comparison with God; at one time or other, we shall be made to see and acknowledge, that miserable comforters are they all. To a soul under deep conviction of sin, or the arrests of death, nothing but a manifestation of the favour of God, and the consolatory influences of his Spirit, can yield effectual comfort.

Verse 3. *Shall vain words have an end?*—When wilt thou put an end to these impertinent discourses? He retorts upon him his charge, chap. xv. 2, 3. *And what imboldeneth thee that thou answerest*—Namely, in such a manner, so censoriously, opprobriously, and peremptorily. What secret grounds hast thou for thy confidence? Thy arguments are weak; if thou hast any stronger, produce them. It is a great piece of confidence to charge men, as Eliphaz did Job, with those crimes which we cannot prove upon them; to pass a judgment on men's spiritual state, upon the view of their outward condition, and to advance those objections which have been again and again answered.

Verse 4. *I could also speak as ye do*—It is an easy thing to trample upon those that are down, and to find fault with what those say who are in extremity of pain and affliction. *If your soul were in my soul's stead*—If our conditions were changed, and you were in misery like me, and I at ease like you; *I could heap up words against you*—As you do against me; that is, I could multiply accusations and reproaches against you, and how would you like it? how would you bear it? *and shake my head at you*—In a way of derision, as this phrase is commonly used. Heath renders these clauses interrogatively, thus: *If your soul were in my soul's stead, would I accumulate sentences against you? would I shake my head at you?* Which rendering gives the verse a very pathetic turn.

Verse 5. *But I would strengthen you with my mouth*—I would endeavour to direct, support, and

5 *But I would strengthen you with* A. M. 2484.
my mouth, and the moving of my B. C. 1520.
lips should assuage *your grief*.

6 *Though I speak, my grief is not assuaged; and though I forbear, ³ what am I eased?*

7 *But now he hath made me weary: thou*

³ Heb. what goeth from me.

comfort you, and say all I could to assuage your grief, but nothing to aggravate it. It is natural to sufferers to think what they would do if the tables were turned; but, perhaps, our hearts may deceive us; we know not what we would do; we find it easier to discern the reasonableness and importance of a command, when we have occasion to claim the benefit of it, than when we have occasion to do the duty of it. We ought, however, to say and do all we can to strengthen our brethren in affliction, suggesting to them such considerations as are proper to encourage their confidence in God, and to support their sinking spirits. *Faith* and *patience*, we should remember, are the strength of the afflicted, and what helps these graces, confirms the feeble knees. The reader will observe, there is nothing in the Hebrew for the words *your grief*, in the latter clause of this verse, which are therefore printed in Italic letters. Our translators supposed that there is an *ellipsis* in the Hebrew text, and that these, or some words of the same import, were necessary to complete the sense. But the word, נִיד, *nid*, here rendered *moving*, (being derived from נוּד, *nud*, which sometimes means to condole,) may be translated, *compassion*, and then, without supposing any defect in the text, the sense of the clause will be, *Compassion should restrain, or, govern my lips*; namely, that they should avoid all speeches which might vex you, and speak only what might be to your *comfort* and benefit; whereas you let your tongues loose to speak whatsoever pleaseth you, although it does not profit, but only torment me. Chappelow proposes yet another version of the words, which he thinks the true one, namely, *I could be stronger than you with my mouth; but he [God] restrains the motion of my lips*.

Verse 6. *Though I speak*—To God by prayer, or to you in the way of discourse; *my grief is not assuaged*—I find no relief or comfort. Job, having reproved his friends for their unkind behaviour toward him, and aggravated it by contrasting there-with his resolutions to have acted in a more friendly manner toward them, if they had been in his case; now returns to his main business, namely, to describe his miseries, in order that, if possible, he might move his friends to pity and comfort him. *Though I forbear, what am I eased?*—What portion of my grief departs from me? I receive not one grain of ease or comfort. Neither speech nor silence does me any good.

Verse 7. *But now he*—Namely, God; *hath made me weary*—Either of complaining, or of my life "He hath long since quite tired me with one trouble upon another."—Bishop Patrick. *Thou hast made desolate all my company*—"Thou hast not ceased,

A. M. 2484. hast made desolate all my company.
B. C. 1520.

8 And thou hast filled me with wrinkles, which is a witness against me: and my leanness rising up in me beareth witness to my face.

9 ° He teareth me in his wrath, who hateth me: he gnasheth upon me with his teeth;

* Chap. x. 16.—^d Chap. xiii. 24.—^e Psa. xxii. 13.—^f Lam. iii. 30; Mic. v. 1.

O God, till thou hast left me neither goods nor children, no, nor a friend to comfort me." He speaks in the second person, to God, as in the former clause in the third person, of God: such a change of persons is very usual in Scripture, and "is esteemed," says Chappelow, "a singular ornament in poetry."

Verse 8. *Thou hast filled me with wrinkles*—By consuming my flesh and reducing my body; *which is a witness*—Of the reality and greatness, and just cause of my sorrows. Or, *which is made a witness*; that is, produced by my friends as a proof of God's anger and my hypocrisy and impiety. *And my leanness rising up in me*—Or, *against me*; as witnesses are wont to rise and stand up against a guilty person to accuse him; *beareth witness to my face*—Namely, openly and evidently, as witnesses accuse a person to his face; or, so that any, who look on my face, may plainly discern it. Bishop Patrick's paraphrase is, "The furrows in my face (which is not old) show the greatness of my affliction, which is extremely augmented by him who rises up with false accusations to take away mine honour, as this consumption will do my life."

Verse 9. *He teareth me in his wrath*—Hebrew, אָפַן טָרַף, *appo tarap*, His wrath teareth me in pieces, properly, as a lion or other savage beast tears his prey, of which the word *tarap* is peculiarly used; *who hateth me*—וַיִּשְׂטֵנֵנִי, *vajistemeni*, rather, and *hateth me*; that is, pursues me with hatred, or as if he hated me. Some render it, *adversatus est mihi*, is hostile to me; or, *acts as mine enemy*. *He gnasheth upon me with his teeth*—A strong figurative expression, denoting extreme anger; *mine enemy sharpeneth his eyes upon me*—That is, looks upon me with a fierce and sparkling eye, as enraged persons are wont to look on those who have provoked them. It is a great question among commentators what enemy Job meant. Sol. Jarchi writes, *Hasatan hu ha-tzar*: Satan, he is the enemy. Certainly Satan was Job's greatest enemy, and, by the divine permission, had brought all his sufferings upon him, and perhaps now frequently terrified him with apparitions. "It is not improbable," says Henry, "that this is the enemy he means." Many think that Eliphaz, who spoke last, and to whose speech Job is now replying, is intended. He had showed himself very much exasperated against Job; and might express himself with such marks of indignation as are here mentioned, rending Job's good name, as Bishop Patrick expresses himself, and preaching nothing but terror against him. His eyes

^d mine enemy sharpeneth his eyes upon me. A. M. 2484 B. C. 1520.

10 They have ° gaped upon me with their mouth; they † have smitten me upon the cheek reproachfully; they have ‡ gathered themselves together against me.

11 God † hath ‡ delivered me to the ungodly, and turned me over into the hands of the wicked.

§ Psalm xxxv. 15.—^h Chap. i. 15, 17.—ⁱ Hebrew, *hath shut me up*.

might be said to be sharpened to spy out matter of reproach against him, and very unkindly, yea, cruelly, both he and his friends had used him. Others, however, think that the expressions, though harsh, and apparently unbecoming to be applied to God, were, nevertheless, intended of him by Job, and are capable of being so interpreted as not to imply any reflection on the divine perfections. "The expressions," says Chappelow, "are really not stronger than those which we read in other places, particularly in the eleventh and four following verses; as also chap. xix. 11, 30, 31." The reader must observe, that the melancholy state of Job's mind, and his dreadful sufferings under the chastising hand of God, which his friends never ceased to represent as the effects of divine wrath, had caused him to entertain distressing ideas of God's terrors, and to view him, if not as an enemy, yet as a severe and inexorable judge, who was extreme to mark all his iniquities and failings.

Verse 10. *They—My friends, the instruments of God's anger; have gaped upon me with their mouth*—Have opened their mouths wide against me; either, 1st, To devour and destroy me, as a lion which falls upon its prey with open mouth: see Psa. xxii. 13, 14, where these very expressions are used in the prediction of Christ's sufferings, of whom, in all this, Job was an eminent type. Or, 2d, To scoff and deride me, as it follows, and as this phrase is most commonly used: see Psa. xxii. 8, and xxxv. 21. *They have smitten me upon the cheek reproachfully*—Hebrew, בְּחַרְפָּה, *becherpeh*, by reproach; or in a way of scorn and contempt, of which smiting on the cheek was a sign: see Lam. iii. 30; Mic. v. 1. The meaning is, they have despised and derided me, the sign being put for the thing signified. *They have gathered themselves together against me*—They are come from several places, and have met together here, not for me, or to comfort me, as they pretended; but really against me, and to grieve and torment me.

Verse 11. *God hath delivered me to the ungodly*—Either, 1st, To my friends, who act the part of the wicked in censuring and condemning the righteous, whom God approveth, and in pleading for a false and wicked cause. Or, rather, to the Chaldeans and Sabeans, who were a most ungodly and wicked people, living in gross contempt of God, and injurious to all sorts of men. This seems best to suit both with the first clause of the next verse, which shows that Job speaks of his first afflictions which befell him

A. M. 2494. 12 I was at ease, but he hath broken
B. C. 1520. me asunder: he hath also taken me
by my neck, and shaken me to pieces, and ⁱ set
me up for his mark.

13 His archers compass me round about; he
cleaveth my reins asunder, and doth not spare;
he poureth out my gall upon the ground.

14 He breaketh me with breach upon breach,
he runneth upon me like a giant.

15 I have sewed sackcloth upon my skin, and
^k defiled my horn in the dust.

^l Chap. vii. 20.—^k Chap. xxx. 19; Psa. vii. 5.—^j Chap. xxvii.
9; Psa. lxvii. 18.

when he was at ease, and with his principal design, which was to prove that both eminent prosperity and affliction did indifferently happen both to good and bad men, which indeed was evident from this example: because holy Job was ruined at the very time when this wicked people were most victorious and successful.

Verse 12. *I was at ease*—I lived in great peace and prosperity, and was contented and happy in the comfortable enjoyment of the gifts of God's bounty, not fretful and uneasy, as some are, in the midst of the blessings of providence, who thereby provoke God to take these blessings from them; *but he hath broken me asunder*—Hath broken my spirit with the sense of his anger, and my body with loathsome ulcers; and all my hopes and prospects, as to the present life, by the destruction of all my children and property. *He hath also taken me by the neck*—And thrown me down from an eminent condition into one most despicable; *and shaken me to pieces*—As a mighty man acts with some young stripling when he wrestles with him; *and set me up for his mark*—That he may shoot all his arrows into me, and wound me with one calamity after another.

Verses 13, 14. *His archers compass me round about*—His plagues or judgments, elsewhere compared to arrows, and here to archers, surround me on all sides, and assault me from every quarter. Whoever are our enemies, we must look on them as God's archers, and see him directing the arrow. *He cleaveth my reins asunder*—He wounds me inwardly, mortally, and incurably; which is also signified by *pouring out the gall*; such wounds being deadly. "The metaphor," says Heath, "is here taken from huntsmen. First they surround the beast; then he is shot dead; his entrails are next taken out; and then his body is divided limb from limb." *He breaketh me with breach upon breach*—My indignities and miseries have no interruption, but one immediately succeeds another; *he runneth upon me like a giant*—Who falls upon his enemy with all his might, that he may overthrow and kill him. He assaults me in so violent and powerful a manner, that I can make no more resistance than a dwarf against a giant.

Verses 15, 16. *I have sewed sackcloth upon my skin*—I have put on sackcloth, not upon my other garments, but next to my skin; as was done in great

16 My face is foul with weeping, A. M. 2494.
and on my eyelids is the shadow of B. C. 1520.
death;

17 Not for *any* injustice in my hands: also
my prayer is pure.

18 O earth, cover not thou my blood, and ^l let
my cry have no place.

19 Also now, behold, ^m my witness is in hea-
ven, and my record is on ⁿ high.

20 My friends ^o scorn me: *but* mine eye pour-
eth out tears unto God.

^m Rom. i. 9.—ⁿ Heb. in the high places.—^o Hebrew, are my
scorners.

calamities. So far am I from *stretching out my hands against God*, whereof I am accused, (chap. xv. 25,) that I have humbled myself deeply under his hand, and I have even sewed sackcloth on me, as being resolved to continue my humiliation as long as my affliction continues. *And defiled my horn in the dust*—I have willingly parted with all my wealth, and power, and glory, (as the horn often signifies in Scripture,) and have been content to lie in the dust, and to endure the contempt which God hath brought upon me. "This phrase of defiling one's horn in the dust," says Chappelow, "is expressive of the greatest ignominy and contempt that a person can suffer, especially after he had been exalted to a high station." *My face is foul*—The author of the Vulgate renders it, *intumuit, hath swelled with weeping*. *And on my eyelids is the shadow of death*—That is, a gross and terrible darkness. My sight is very dim, as is usual in case of sore diseases, or excessive grief and weeping, and especially in the approach of death.

Verses 17, 18. *Not for any injustice in my hands*—And all this is not come upon me for any injurious dealing, but for other reasons, known to God only; *also my prayer is pure*—I do not cast off God's fear and service, chap. xv. 4. I do still pray and worship God, and my prayer is accompanied with a sincere heart. *O earth, cover not thou my blood*—The earth is said to cover that blood which lies undiscovered and unrevenged: of which see on Gen. iv. 10, 11; and Isa. xxvi. 21. But, says Job, if I be guilty of destroying any one man by murder, or oppression, as I am traduced, O Lord, let the earth disclose it; let it be brought to light, that I may suffer condign punishment for it. *And let my cry have no place*—That is, either, 1st, Let the cries and groans which I have forced from others by my oppressions, have no place to hide them. Or, rather, 2d, Let the cry of my complaints to men, or prayers to God, find no place in the ears or hearts of God or men, if this be true.

Verses 19, 20. *Behold, my witness is in heaven*—Besides the witness of men, and of my own conscience, God is witness of my integrity. The witness of men, and even that in our own bosoms for us, will stand us in little stead if we have not a witness in heaven for us also: for God is greater than our own hearts, and than the hearts of all men: nei-

A. M. 2484. B. C. 1520. **21** ^a O that one might plead for a man with God, as a man *pleadeth* for his ⁷ neighbour!

^a Chap. xxxi. 35; Eccles. vi. 10; Isa. xlv. 9; Rom. ix. 20.

ther are we to judge ourselves, nor are men to be our judges. This therefore was Job's triumph, that he had a witness in heaven, and could appeal to God's omniscience concerning his integrity. *My friends scorn me*—Who ought to defend me from the scorns and injuries of others; but *mine eye poureth out tears unto God*—I pour forth my prayers and tears to him, that he would judge me according to my innocence, and plead my righteous cause against those that accuse and condemn me.

Verse 21. *O that one might plead for a man with God*—O that either I or some faithful advocate might be admitted to plead my cause, either with God, or rather with you before God's tribunal, God being witness and judge between us. A different translation of this verse is proposed by some, a translation which the Hebrew text will very well bear, namely, *And he will plead* (that is, there is one that will plead) *for man with God, even the Son of man, for his friend or neighbour*. Those who pour out tears before God, though they cannot plead for themselves by reason of their distance and defects, have a friend to plead for them, even the Son of man; and on this we must ground all our hopes of acceptance with God.

A. M. 2484. B. C. 1520. **22** When ^a a few years are come, then I shall ^o go the way *whence* I shall not return.

⁷ Or, friend.—^a Heb. years of number.—^o Eccles. xii. 5.

Verse 22. *When a few years are come*—The number of years which is determined and appointed to me; *then I shall go the way whence I shall not return*—Namely, to the state and place of the dead, whence men cannot return to this life. The meaning is, my death hastens, and therefore I earnestly desire that the cause depending between me and my friends may be determined, that if I be guilty of these things, I may bear the shame of it before all men; and, if I be innocent, that I may see my own integrity and the credit of religion (which suffers upon this occasion) vindicated, that so I may die in peace with God, and may leave the savour of a good name behind me. Observe, reader, to die is to go *the way whence we shall not return*. It is to go a journey, a long journey, a journey for good and all; to remove from this to another country, from the world of sense to the world of spirits! It is a journey to our long home; there will be no coming back to our state in this world, nor any change of our state in the other world. We must all of us very certainly, and very shortly, go this journey; and it is comfortable to those who keep a good conscience to think of it; for it is the crown of their integrity.

CHAPTER XVII.

Job still bemoans himself, 1-7. Encourages good men to hold on their way, 8, 9. Declares he looks for no ease but in the grave, 10-18. Job in this chapter suddenly passes from one thing to another, as is usual for men in much trouble.

A. M. 2484. B. C. 1520. **MY** ¹ breath is corrupt, my days are extinct, ^a the graves are ready for me.

¹ Or, spirit is spent.—^a Psa. xviii. 3.

NOTES ON CHAPTER XVII.

Verse 1. *My breath is corrupt*—Is offensive to those around me, through my disease. But, as the word חבולה, *chubbalah*, here rendered corrupt, may signify bound, straitened, or distressed with pain, as a woman in travail, Chappelow thinks the phrase had better be rendered, *Spiritus meus constringitur, rel, cum dolore emititur*; that is, I have such an oppression, that I can hardly breathe. The reading of the margin, however, is not to be overlooked, *My spirit is spent, or lost*, that is, my vital spirits and animal powers are wasted; my soul is ready to leave the body: I am a gone man. *My days are extinct*—The lamp of my life is far spent, and upon the point of going out. *The graves are ready for me*—That is, the grave; the plural number being put for the singular. Or, he speaks of the sepulchres of his fathers, to which he was to be gathered. Sol.

A. M. 2484. B. C. 1520. **2** Are there not mockers with me? and doth not mine eye ² continue in their ^b provocation?

^a Heb. lodge.—^b 1 Sam. i. 6.

Jarchi's comment is, "I am ready for the grave." The text is only קברים לי, *kebarim li, sepulchra mihi*: *The grave for me, or, I have the grave*. Any addition seems to spoil that elegance of expression which consists in a sudden, quick turn of thought; as if Job had said, *My breath is gone; my days extinct; I have a grave*. Thus the Vulgate, *Solum mihi superest sepulchrum*, The grave only remains for me. Wherever we go there is but a step between us and the grave. The sepulchres where our fathers are laid are ready for us also. Whatever is unready, the grave is ready. It is a bed soon made. And, if the grave be ready for us, it concerns us to be ready for the grave.

Verse 2. *Are there not mockers with me?*—Do not my friends, instead of comforting, mock and abuse me, as if I had made use of religion only as a cloak to cover my wickedness? Thus he returns

A. M. 2454. 3 Lay down now, put me in a surety
B. C. 1520. with thee: who is he *that* ° will strike
hands with me?

4 For thou hast hid their heart from understanding; therefore shalt thou not exalt *them*.

5 He that speaketh flattery to his friends,

° Prov. vi. 1; xvii. 18; xxii. 26.—^d Chap. xxx. 9.

to what he had said chap. xvi. 20, and intimates the necessity and justice of his following appeal, which otherwise might have been thought too bold. *And doth not mine eye continue in their provocation?*—That is, doth not their provocation continue in mine eye? Do not I still behold them provoking me to my face? Or he may speak of the eye of his mind, and then the meaning is, Their provoking scoffs and reproaches do not only molest me in the day-time, when they are with me, but lodge with me (for the word תָּלַח, *talach*, here rendered *continue*, signifies to lodge) in the night, and are continually in my thoughts.

Verse 3. *Lay down now*—Some earnest or pledge. *Put me in a surety with thee*—Let me have an assurance that God will take the hearing and determining of the cause into his own hands, and I desire no more. *Who is he that will strike hands with me?*—That is, agree and promise, or be surety to me, whereof striking or joining hands was the usual sign. But, probably, we ought rather to consider Job addressing God in these words, and then we must understand them as containing an humble desire that he would be his surety, or would appoint him a surety, who should maintain his righteous cause against his opposers. “Our English annotations,” says Henry, “give this reading of the verse; *Appoint, I pray thee, my surety with thee*, namely, Christ, who is with thee in heaven, and hath undertaken to be my surety: let him plead my cause, and stand up for me, and who is he then that will strike upon my hand? that is, who dares then contend with me? Who shall lay any thing to my charge, if Christ be an advocate for me? Rom. viii. 32, 33. Christ is the surety of the better testament, (Heb. vii. 22,) a surety of God’s appointing; and if he undertake for us we need not fear what can be done against us.”

Verse 4. *Thou hast hid their heart from understanding*—Rather, *thou hast hid understanding from their heart*. The minds of my friends are so blinded, that they cannot see those truths which are most plain and evident to all men of sense and experience. Hence, I desire a more wise and able judge. *Therefore shalt thou not exalt them*—Thou wilt not give them the victory over me in this contest, but wilt give sentence for me, and make them ashamed of their confidence in affirming falsehoods of thee, and wilt punish them severely for their misconduct.

Verse 5. *He that speaketh flattery to his friends*—“The Hebrew of this verse,” says Peters, “literally, runs thus: *He shall reckon friends for a portion, or inheritance, and the eyes of his children shall fail;*

even the eyes of his children shall fail. A. M. 2484.
B. C. 1520.

6 He hath made me also ^d a by-word of the people: and ³ aforesome I was as a tabret.

7 ° Mine eye also is dim by reason of sorrow, and all ⁴ my members are as a shadow.

³ Or, before them.—^d Psa. vi. 7; xxxi. 9.—⁴ Or, my thoughts.

that is, with expectation. They may look their eyes out before they receive any benefit or assistance from these friends. The expression is proverbial, intimating how liable men are to be disappointed, who depend upon the constancy of human friendships. And nothing could be more apposite to Job’s purpose.” Heath renders the words, “*Whoso becometh the accuser of his friends, the eyes of his children will fail*; that is, not only he, but his sons after him may look till they be weary, before they get more.” Bishop Patrick’s paraphrase on this and the two preceding verses appears to be perfectly consistent with the context, and is certainly well deserving of the reader’s attention. *Lay down now, &c.* Verse 3. “Once more, therefore, I beseech thee, O God, to assure me that thou wilt judge my cause thyself; let somebody undertake for thee; who is it, that on thy behalf will engage to do me right? Verse 4. Not these friends of mine, for they comprehend nothing of the way of thy judgments: therefore thou shalt not confer this honour on them who talk so absurdly. Verse 5. I must speak the truth of them, (though it displease them,) and not sooth them up in their errors: for he that flatters his friends, when he should reprove them, may look long enough before either he, or his children, find one that will deal sincerely with them.” We add also the following interpretation of this verse, proposed by Poole. “*He that uttereth, or declareth his mind, or thoughts, with flattery, or to flatter, or deceive another, he shall be severely punished, not only in his person, but even in his children, whose eyes shall fail with vain expectations of relief, and deliverance out of those calamities which shall come upon them for this sin of their parents.*”

Verse 6. *He*—That is, God, who is generally designed by this pronoun in this book; *hath made me also a by-word of the people*—Or, a proverb, or subject of common talk. My miseries are so great and unprecedented that they fill all people with discourse, and are become proverbial to express extreme misery. *And, or rather, but, or although, aforesome I was as a tabret*—That is, I was the people’s delight and darling, the matter of their praise, and received by them with applauses, and, as it were, with instruments of music. Thus he aggravates his present misery by the mention of his former prosperity.

Verse 7. *Mine eye also is dim by reason of sorrow*—Through excessive weeping and decay of spirits, which cause a dimness of the sight. *And all my members are as a shadow*—My body is so reduced, and I am grown so poor and thin, and my colour so wan and ghastly, that I look more like a ghost or a shadow than a man.

A. M. 2484. 8 Upright *men* shall be astonished
B. C. 1520. at this, and the innocent shall stir up
himself against the hypocrite.

9 The righteous also shall hold on his way,
and he that hath ^fclean hands ⁶shall be
stronger and stronger.

10 But as for you all, ⁸do ye return, and
come now: for I cannot find *one wise man*
among you.

11 ^bMy days are past, my purposes are

^f Psa. xxiv. 4. — ⁶ Heb. shall add strength. — ⁸ Chap. vi. 29.
^b Chap. vii. 6; ix. 25.

Verse 8. *Upright men shall be astonished at this*—Wise and good men, when they shall see me, and consider my calamities, will not be so forward to censure and condemn me as you are, but will rather stand and wonder at the depth and mysteriousness of God's judgments, which fall so heavily upon innocent men, while the worst of men prosper. *And, or, rather, but, or yet, the innocent shall stir himself up against the hypocrite*—Notwithstanding all these sufferings of good men, and the astonishment which they cause, he shall be so far from joining his opinions, counsels, and interest with those profane men, who take occasion from thence to censure afflicted persons, and desert, condemn, and reproach the profession and practice of godliness, that he will the more zealously oppose those hypocrites who make these strange providences of God an objection to religion, and will prefer afflicted piety to prosperous iniquity.

Verse 9. *The righteous shall hold on his way*—Shall persevere in that good way upon which he hath entered, and not be turned from it by any afflictions which may befall himself, or any other good men; nor by any contempt or reproach cast upon them by the ungodly, by reason thereof. *And he that hath clean hands*—Whose life, and the course of whose actions, is righteous and holy; which is a sign that his heart also is upright and pure from the love of sin; *shall be stronger and stronger*—Shall not be shaken and discouraged by the afflictions and distresses of the godly, nor by the bitter censures and reproaches of hypocrites or wicked men; but will be confirmed thereby, and made more constant and resolute in cleaving to God, his ways, and people.

Verse 10. *But as for you all*—Who have charged me so heavily. *Do you return and come now*—Recollect yourselves: reflect on what I have said, and consider my cause again; peradventure your second thoughts may be wiser. *For I cannot find one wise man among you*—Namely, as to this matter. None of you judge truly of my case; nor speak like wise and good men; but, like rash and inconsiderate persons, you censure me as a hypocrite, judge erroneously of God's ways, and condemn the generation of his children on false grounds and frivolous pretences.

Verse 11. *My days are past*—The days of my

broken off, *even* ⁶the thoughts of my heart. A. M. 2484. B. C. 1520.

12 They change the night into day: the light *is* ⁷short because of darkness.

13 If I wait, the grave *is* my house: I have made my bed in the darkness.

14 I have ⁸said to corruption, Thou *art* my father: to the worm, *Thou art* my mother, and my sister.

15 And where *is* now my hope? as

⁶ Heb. the possessions. — ⁷ Heb. near. — ⁸ Hebrew, cried, or, called.

life. I am a dying man, and therefore the hopes you give me of the bettering of my condition are vain. *My purposes are broken off*—Or the designs and expectations which I had in my prosperous days concerning myself and children, and the continuance of my happiness. *Even the thoughts of my heart*—Hebrew, מורשתי, *morashei*; the possessions of my heart; that is, those counsels and intentions which in a great measure possessed my heart, and were natural and familiar to me. All these are disappointed and come to nothing.

Verse 12. *They change the night into day*—My distressing thoughts, griefs, and fears, so incessantly pursue and disturb me, that I can no more sleep in the night than in the day. *The light is short*—The day-light, which often gives some comfort to men in misery, seems to be gone and fled as soon as it is begun; *because of darkness*—Because of my grievous pains and torments, which follow me by day as well as by night.

Verse 13. *If I wait, the grave is my house*—Hebrew, אקוה אים, *im akaveh*, If I eagerly desire and expect any thing now, it is the grave, the only habitation I can promise myself; and which I am just entering. There I am going to rest in a bed where I shall not be disturbed, for which therefore I am preparing myself. In all situations, and amidst all changes, we should keep the grave in view, the bed in which we are shortly to lie, and, by preparation for it, should endeavour to make it easy, namely, by securing peace with God, by keeping our consciences pure, by seeing Christ lying in this bed, and so turning it into a bed of spices, and by looking beyond it to the resurrection.

Verses 14, 15. *I have said to corruption*—Hebrew, קראתי, *karati*, I have called to corruption; to the grave, where the body will be dissolved and become corrupt. *Thou art my father*—I am near akin to thee, being formed out of thee, and thou wilt receive and embrace me, and keep me in thy house as parents do their children. *To the worm, Thou art my mother and my sister*—A near relation, being of the same origin, and because of the most strict and intimate union between us. *And where is now my hope?*—What then is become of that hope which you advised me to entertain? *As for my hope*—Or the happiness which you would have me expect; *who shall see it?*—No man shall see it, it shall never be. The hap-

A. M. 2484. for my hope, who shall see it?
B. C. 1520. 16 They shall go down ¹ to the bars

¹ Chap. xviii. 13.

piness I expect is out of sight, consisting in the enjoyment, not of things that are seen, which are temporal, but of those which are unseen, which are eternal.

Verse 16. *They shall go down to the bars of the pit*—They that would see my hope must go down into the grave, or rather into the invisible world, to behold it. Or, he means, My hope shall go down, of which he spake in the singular number, verse 15, and which he here changes into the plural, as is usual in these poetical books. Thus Houbigant renders this clause: *It, namely, my hope, shall de-*

of the pit, when *our* ^k rest together is
in the dust. A. M. 2484
B. C. 1520.

^k Chap. iii. 17, 19.

scend together with me into the grave: it shall rest with me in the dust. My hopes of temporal good are dying, and will be buried in my grave, where I and they, and I and my friends, shall lie together. Remember, reader, we must all shortly lie in the dust, under the bars of the pit; held fast there, till the general resurrection. And all good men, if, like Job and his friends, they cannot agree now, will there rest together. Let the foresight of this cool the heat of all contenders, and moderate the disputers of this world.

CHAPTER XVIII.

Bildad sharply reproves Job, as proud and impatient, 1-4; and enlarges on the misery of the wicked, 5-31.

A. M. 2484. **T**HEN answered Bildad the Shu-
B. C. 1520. hite, and said,

2 How long *will it be ere ye* make an end of words? mark, and afterward we will speak.

^a Psa. lxxiii. 22.—^b Chap. xiii. 14.

NOTES ON CHAPTER XVIII.

Verse 1. *Then answered Bildad the Shuhite*—Bildad, irritated to the last degree that Job should treat their advice with so much contempt, is no longer able to keep his passions within the bounds of decency. He proceeds to downright abuse; and, finding little attention given by Job to his arguments, he tries to terrify him into a compliance. To that end he draws a yet more terrible picture of the final end of a wicked man than any preceding; throwing in all the circumstances of Job's calamities, that he might plainly perceive the resemblance; and, at the same time, insinuating that he had much worse still to expect, unless he prevented it by a speedy change of behaviour. That it was the highest arrogance in him to suppose that he was of consequence enough to be the cause of altering the general rules of providence. And that it was much more expedient for the good of the whole, that he, by his example, should deter others from treading in the same path of wickedness and folly.—Heath.

Verse 2. *How long will it be ere you make an end*—How long shall we continue this dispute? Why do not you, my brethren, give over discoursing with Job, who is so transported by his passions, as not to be fit to be discoursed with? At least, forbear to proceed till both you and he shall better understand the subject? For, if Bildad be considered as addressing himself to his two companions, he must have meant to reprove them for making use of too long discourses, and to advise them first to consider the subject well, and then to speak directly to the purpose. But many

3 Wherefore are we counted ^a as beasts, A. M. 2484.
and reputed vile in your sight? B. C. 1520.

4 ^b He teareth ¹ himself in his anger: shall the earth be forsaken for thee? and shall the rock be removed out of his place?

¹ Heb. *his soul*.

commentators understand him as addressing Job; using here, as also verse 3, the plural number, according to the common idiom of the eastern language, which was to speak thus to, or of one person, especially if he were of great eminence. In this case he must have intended to censure Job for puzzling the cause with cavils and exceptions, and to call upon him to produce a plain instance, in which a righteous man was known to have had punishment inflicted on him, or else to own the truth of the established maxim, that punishment was a sure mark of wickedness. *Mark, and afterward we will speak*—Consider the matter better, and then we shall speak concerning it to more advantage. Or, *inform us*: Hebrew תכיני *tabinu*, *make us to understand*. Seeing thou lookest upon us as ignorant and brutish men, as it follows, verse 3, do thou instruct and inform us. Cease cavilling, and produce thy strong reasons, that we may consider and yield to their weight, or answer them.

Verses 3, 4. *Wherefore are we counted as beasts?*—That is, ignorant and stupid men, chap. xvii. 4, 10; *and reputed vile in your sight*—Hebrew, נטמניו, *nitmeinu*, *polluted or unclean*; that is, not fit to be conversed with, or contemptible, as such things are. *He teareth himself in his anger*—That is, Job does, as if he had said, O thou that *tearest thyself*, thou complainest of us for vexing thee with our speeches, when, in truth, thou art thy own greatest tormentor. *Shall the earth be forsaken for thee?*—Shall God, for thy sake, or to prevent thy complaints and clamours, give over the government of the earth,

^A M. 2484. ^B C. 1520. 5 Yea, ^c the light of the wicked shall be put out, and the spark of his fire shall not shine.

6 The light shall be dark in his tabernacle, and his ² candle shall be put out with him.

7 The steps of his strength shall be straitened, and ^o his own counsel shall cast him down.

8 For ^f he is cast into a net by his own feet, and he walketh upon a snare.

9 The gin shall take *him* by the heel, and ^r the robber shall prevail against him.

^c Prov. xiii. 9; xx. 20; xxiv. 20.—^d Chap. xxi. 17; Psa. xviii. 28.—^e Or, lamp.—^f Chap. v. 13.—^g Chap. xxii. 10; Psa. ix. 15; xxxv. 8.—^h Chap. v. 5.—ⁱ Heb. hidden.

and men and things in it, and suffer all things to fall out by chance and promiscuously, to good and bad men, without any regard to his truth, wisdom, or justice? *And shall the rock be removed out of its place?*—Shall the counsels of God, which are more firm and immoveable than rocks, and the whole course of his providence, be altered to comply with thy fancies or humours?

Verses 5-7. *Yea*—Depend upon it, the thing is true and certain, notwithstanding thy dissatisfaction and opposition to it; *the light of the wicked shall be put out*—All their glory and felicity shall perish: *and the spark of his fire shall not shine*—His light is but a spark, which shines briskly for a moment, and is soon extinguished. *The light shall be dark in his tabernacle*—That is, in his family. Instead of his former splendour, both he and his children shall fall into extreme contempt and misery. *And his candle shall be put out with him*—His glory shall not descend to his posterity, as he designed and hoped it should, but die with him. *The steps of his strength*—His strong steps, by a vulgar Hebraism: his attempts and actions; such of them as seem to be contrived with the greatest strength of understanding, and carried on with the greatest resolution; *shall be straitened*—Shall be hindered and entangled. He shall be cast into difficulties and perplexities, so that he shall not be able to proceed, and to accomplish his enterprises. *And his own counsel shall cast him down*—He shall be undone by his own contrivances; either because God will give him up to dangerous and destructive mistakes, or because he will oppose him and turn his own devices against him.

Verse 8. *He is cast into a net by his own feet*—By his own choice, design, and actions. *And he walketh upon a snare*—Or, as the words may be rendered, *runneth to and fro on the toils*, and therefore must needs be entangled and destroyed. “The metaphor,” says Heath, “is taken from a beast, which the hunters have driven into the toils. He runs hither and thither, striving to find a way out, but the net entangles him more and more, till at length it fastens upon him.”

Verses 9, 10. *The gin shall take him by the heel*

10 The snare *is* ³ laid for him in the ground, and a trap for him in the way. ^A M. 2484. ^B C. 1520.

11 ^h Terrors shall make him afraid on every side, and shall ⁴ drive him to his feet.

12 His strength shall be hunger-bitten, and ⁱ destruction shall be ready at his side.

13 It shall devour the ^o strength of his skin: *even* the firstborn of death shall devour his strength.

14 ^k His confidence shall be rooted out of his tabernacle, and it shall bring him to the king of terrors.

^h Chap. xv. 21; xx. 25; Jer. vi. 25; xx. 3; xlv. 5; xlix. 29. ⁱ Heb. scatter him.—^j Chap. xv. 23.—^k Heb. bars.—^l Chap. viii. 14; xi. 20; Psa. cxii. 10; Prov. x. 28.

—That is, take fast hold on him, so as to keep him in those distresses. *And the robber shall prevail against him*—Hebrew, צממim, *tsammim*, the horrible or terrible man, the huntsman that laid the snare for him shall come upon him, when he is insnared, take and spoil or kill him. *The snare is laid for him in the ground*—Where he did not discern nor expect it. The former snare he laid for himself, but this was laid for him by another.

Verses 11, 12. *Terrors shall make him afraid*—Both from men and from God, and also from his own unquiet mind and guilty conscience. *And drive him to his feet*—Shall force him to flee different ways, being safe nowhere, but pursued by terrors from place to place, which, as Houbigant renders it, *shall be spread around his feet*. *His strength*—Either his children, who are, and are called a man's strength, Gen. xlix. 3; Psa. cxxvii. 4, or rather, his wealth, power, and prosperity; *shall be hunger-bitten*—Or *famished*, that is, utterly consumed. The Vulgate renders it, *His strength shall be eaten by famine*. *And destruction shall be ready at his side*—Shall attend him as a constant companion, or follow him at the heels as a diligent servant. Or, he may allude to an arrow fitted to a string, and ready to be discharged at him.

Verse 13. *It shall devour, &c.*—“*Filthy ulcers shall consume his skin; an untimely death shall destroy his children*—Heath and Houbigant. This sarcasm was peculiarly adapted to the case of Job, whose skin was thus consumed, and whose children had been destroyed in this manner. The reader must have had occasion frequently to remark, in this book, how often, amidst the sublimity of the eastern metaphors, the author drops the metaphor and treats of his subject simply; as in the present case, having spoken of the wicked man under the metaphor of a wild beast caught in a snare, in this verse he considers him no longer in that view, but speaks of him immediately in his own character.”—Dodd.

Verse 14. *His confidence*—That is, all the matter of his confidence, his riches, children, &c.; *shall be rooted out of his tabernacle*—That is, out of his habitation. *And it*—Namely, the loss of his confidence; *shall bring him to the king of terrors*—

A. M. 2484. B. C. 1520. 15 It shall dwell in his tabernacle, because *it is none of his*: brimstone shall be scattered upon his habitation.

16 ¹ His roots shall be dried up beneath, and above shall his branch be cut off.

17 ^m His remembrance shall perish from the earth, and he shall have no name in the street.

18 ⁶ He shall be driven from light into darkness, and chased out of the world.

¹ Chap. xxix. 19; Isa. v. 24; Amos ii. 9; Mal. iv. 1.—^m Psa. xxiv. 16; cix. 13; Prov. ii. 22; x. 7.—⁶ Heb. *They shall drive him.*—² Isa. xiv. 22; Jer. xxii. 30.

Either, 1st, Into extreme fears and horrors of mind; or, 2d, To death, which even Aristotle called *the most terrible of all terribles*. And this it will do, either because it will expose him to his enemies, who will kill him; or, because the sense of his disappointments, and losses, and dangers, will break his heart.

Verse 15. *It shall dwell in his tabernacle*—Destruction, expressed verse 12, shall fix its abode with him. *Because it is none of his*—Because it is none of his own, being got from others by deceit or violence. *Brimstone shall be scattered on his habitation*—It shall be utterly destroyed, as it were, by fire and brimstone. He seems to allude both to the destruction of Sodom, which happened not long before these times, and to the judgment which befell Job, chap. i. 16. When the stranger hath taken and rifled his dwelling, he shall forsake it as an accursed place, and shall burn it with fire and brimstone, that there may be no monument of so vile a person left upon the earth. Heath's interpretation of this verse is, "*They shall take up their habitation in his tent, because he hath no survivor: brimstone shall be sprinkled upon his habitation. As much as to say, 'Since he hath no one to survive him, his posterity is utterly exterminated: horror takes possession of his habitation, and it is sprinkled with brimstone, that no person may ever after inhabit it; but that it may remain an object of terror to future ages.'*" The image is grand, and worthy of the tragic style."

Verses 16-19. *His roots shall be dried up, &c.*—That is, he shall be destroyed, both root and branch; both himself and his posterity. *His remembrance shall perish*—Instead of that honour and renown which he designed and expected to have, both while he lived, and after his death, he shall not be so much as remembered, unless it be with contempt and reproach. *He shall be driven from light into darkness, &c.*—From a prosperous state to disgrace and misery, and to the grave, the land of darkness. *He shall neither have son nor nephew, &c.*—But if any such survive, they shall be in the hands and power of strangers, or rather of their enemies, and not among his own people.

Verses 20, 21. *They that come after him*—And

A. M. 2484. B. C. 1520. 19 ^a He shall neither have son nor nephew among his people, nor any remaining in his dwellings.

20 They that come after *him* shall be astonished at ^o his day, as they that ⁷ went before ⁸ were affrighted.

21 Surely such *are* the dwellings of the wicked, and this *is* the place of *him that* ^p knoweth not God.

^o Psalm xxxvii. 13; 1 Thess. iv. 5.—⁷ Or, *lived with him.* ⁸ Heb. *laid hold on horror.*—^p Jer. ix. 3; x. 25; 1 Thess. iv. 5; 2 Thess. i. 8; Tit. i. 16.

hear the report of it, *shall be astonished at his day*—The day of his destruction. They shall be amazed at the suddenness and dreadfulfulness of it. *As they that went before were affrighted*—As his elders (so Heath renders it) *were seized with horror*; namely, those who lived in the time and place where this judgment was inflicted. Hebrew, אַחָזוּ שֹׁרֵר, *achazu sagnar, apprehenderunt horrorem, they took hold on horror*, a beautiful metonymy, as if they took hold on their hair, which, by reason of the terror they were in, stood upright. Or, *They were filled with horror*, partly through humanity and compassion, and partly for fear lest the judgment should overtake them also. "The plain meaning of the verse seems to be, His elders, who saw so signal an instance of divine vengeance, were seized with horror; and whoever, in after times, should hear his story related, would be in amazement at it."—Heath. *Surely such are the dwellings of the wicked*—This is a just description of their miserable condition at last, and thus shall those who dishonour God be abased. Such, according to Eliphaz, was the unanimous sense of the patriarchal age, grounded on their knowledge of God and the many observations which they had made on the dispensations of his providence. *And this is the place of him that knoweth not God*—Who is not truly acquainted with him, and reconciled to him; who does not know him experimentally and practically, so as truly to fear, love, and serve him, or who, professing to know him, by works denies him. Here then we see what is the beginning and what is the end of the wickedness of mankind. The beginning of it is ignorance of God, which ignorance is *wilful*, for God has made to all men those discoveries of himself which are sufficient to render those of them for ever inexcusable who live and die ignorant of him and disobedient to him. The end of it is utter destruction. *Such, so miserable, are the dwellings of the wicked*. Vengeance will be taken on them that know not God, and obey not his revealed will, 2 Thess. i. 8. Let us therefore *stand in awe, and not sin*, for it will certainly be bitterness in the latter end: nay, let us *acquaint ourselves with him and be at peace; for thereby good will come unto us*, in time and in eternity.

CHAPTER XIX.

Job complains of the unkind usage of his friends, 1-7. Of the shyness and strangeness of his relations and intimates, 8-19. Pleads for pity, 20-22. Testifies his firm belief of the resurrection, 23-27. Cautions his friends against persisting in their hard censures, 28, 29.

A. M. 2484. **T**HEN Job answered and said,
B. C. 1520.

2 How long will ye vex my soul, and break me in pieces with words?

3 These ^a ten times have ye reproached me: ye are not ashamed *that* ye ¹ make yourselves strange to me.

4 And be it indeed *that* I have erred, mine error remaineth with myself.

5 If indeed ye will ^b magnify yourselves against me, and plead against me my reproach:

^a Genesis xxxi. 7; Lev. xxvi. 26.—^c Or, *harden yourselves against me.*

NOTES ON CHAPTER XIX.

Verse 1. *Then Job answered and said*—"Tired with the little regard paid by the three friends to his defence, and finding them still insisting on their general maxims, Job desires them calmly to consider his case; to reflect that his failings, whatever they were, had not been at all prejudicial to them; but if, on the strength of their general principle, they thought themselves warranted from his sufferings to infer his guilt, he desires them to take notice that this was God's particular infliction, verses 2-7; that he insisted on his innocence, and desired nothing but to bring his cause to an issue, which was, as yet, denied him, verses 8-20; that God's inflictions were indeed very grievous; and, to excite their compassion, he makes here a very moving description of them; but tells them that should be a reason why they should pity him, and not add to the load by their unkind suspicions and cruel treatment, verses 21, 22; that he was so far from retracting his plea, that he was desirous it should remain for ever on record, verses 23, 24.—Heath. For he was assured a day was coming in which all his afflictions would be fully recompensed, and in which they would wish that they had treated him in a more friendly manner; though he questioned whether that would suffice to avert God's judgments from them."—Dodd.

Verses 2, 3. *And break me in pieces with words*—With mere empty words, void of sense or argument; with your impertinent and unedifying discourses and bitter reproaches. *These ten times have ye reproached me*—That is, many times, a certain number being put for an uncertain. *Ye make yourselves strange*—You carry yourselves like strangers to me, are not affected with my calamities, and condemn me as if you had never known my integrity and piety.

Verses 4, 5. *Be it that I have erred, &c.*—If I have sinned, I myself suffer for my sins, and therefore deserve your pity rather than your reproaches. *If you will magnify yourselves, &c.*—Use imperious and contemptuous speeches against me; or seek praise from others by outreasoning me: *and plead*

6 Know now that God hath over- A. M. 2484.
thrown me, and hath compassed me B. C. 1520.
with his net.

7 Behold, I cry out of ² wrong, but I am not heard: I cry aloud, but *there is* no judgment.

8 ^o He hath fenced up my way that I cannot pass, and he hath set darkness in my paths.

9 ^d He hath stripped me of my glory, and taken the crown from my head.

^b Psa. xxxviii. 16.—³ Or, *violence.*—^c Chap. iii. 23; Psalm lxxxviii. 8.—^d Psa. lxxxix. 44.

against me my reproach—Declaim against me, and allege my calamities, which have made me contemptible, as an argument to prove me a hypocrite, and condemn me as such.

Verses 6, 7. *Know now*—Consider well, *that God hath overthrown me*—Hath grievously afflicted me in various ways, and therefore it ill becomes you to aggravate my miseries. Hebrew, עִוְוֵתָנִי, *gnivetani*; *hath perverted me*; either my state and condition, as has now been said, or my right and cause. He oppresses me with power, and will not give me a fair hearing, as it follows, verse 7. This is a harsh reflection on God: but such thoughts and expressions have sometimes proceeded from good men when they have been under sore afflictions and temptations, which was now Job's case. *And hath compassed me with his net*—With afflictions on every side, so that I cannot escape, nor obtain freedom to plead with him as I desire. *Behold, I cry out of wrong*—Hebrew, אֶצְעֵק חַמָּס, *etsgnack chamas*, literally, *I cry out injury! violence!* namely, from my friends, who show me no pity, but condemn me without cause, and rob me of my good name; or from the Sabaeans and Chaldeans, who have plundered me of my substance. Perhaps he also meant to complain that God himself treated him with rigorous justice, and not according to the mercy and benignity which he was wont to show to upright and good men. *I cry aloud, but there is no judgment*—Neither God nor man relieves or pities me. God, for a time, may seem to turn away his ear from his people, to be angry at their prayers, and overlook their appeals to him, and they must be excused if in that case they complain bitterly. *Wo unto us if God be against us.*

Verses 8, 9. *He hath fenced up my way, &c.*—So that I can see no means or possibility of getting out of my troubles. *He hath set darkness in my paths*—So that I cannot discern what course I ought to take. *He hath stripped me of my glory*—That is, of my estate, and children, and authority, and all my comforts. *And taken the crown from my head*—All mine ornaments.

A. M. 2484. 10 He hath destroyed me on every
B. C. 1520. side, and I am gone: and my hope
hath he removed like a tree.

11 He hath also kindled his wrath against me, and * he counteth me unto him as *one* of his enemies.

12 His troops come together, and † raise up their way against me, and encamp round about my tabernacle.

13 † He hath put my brethren far from me, and mine acquaintance are verily estranged from me.

* Chap. xiii. 24; Lam. ii. 5.—† Chap. xxx. 12.—‡ Psa. xxxi.

Verse 10. *He hath destroyed me on every side*—In all respects, my person, and family, and estate. *And I am gone*—I am a lost and dead man. *My hope hath he removed*—All my hopes of the present life, but not of the life to come; *like a tree*—Which, being once plucked up by the roots, never grows again. Hope in this life is a perishing thing. But the hope of good men, when it is cut off from this world, is but removed like a tree, transplanted from this nursery to the garden of God.

Verse 12. *His troops come together*—My afflictions, which are but God's instruments and soldiers, marching under his conduct; *and raise up their way against me*—Cast up a bank, or make a trench about me, as an army besieging a place; or raise a causeway or path, as pioneers usually do, in low and marshy grounds, for the march of an army: that is, God removes all impediments out of the way, and lays me open to troubles and calamities of every kind.

Verse 13. *He hath put my brethren far from me, &c.*—I looked for some support and comfort from my kindred and friends, but they were so astonished at the number and dreadfulness of my calamities that they fled from me as a man accursed of God: and as for my neighbours, who formerly much courted my acquaintance, they keep aloof from me, as if they had never known me. As we must see the hand of God in all the injuries we receive from our enemies, so likewise in all the slights and unkindnesses we receive from our friends.

Verse 14. *My kinsfolk*—Whom nature inclined to love and befriend me; *have failed*—To perform the offices of humanity which they owed me: *and my familiar friends*—To whom I was united by a stronger bond than that of nature; *have forgotten me*—Have neglected and disregarded me as much as if they had quite forgotten the friendship there was between us.

Verses 15, 16. *They that dwell in my house*—Hebrew, גַּרֵי בֵּיתִי, *garei beethai, peregrini domus mee, the sojourners of my house*, that is, those that formerly were kindly entertained at my house, whether strangers, widows, or the fatherless; nay, the people of my family, even *my maids*, who, by reason of their sex, have commonly more tender and compassionate hearts than men, *count me for a stranger*—Have forgotten the respect they owe,

14 My kinsfolk have failed, and A. M. 2484.
my familiar friends have forgotten B. C. 1520.
me.

15 They that dwell in my house, and my maids, count me for a stranger: I am an alien in their sight.

16 I called my servant, and he gave me no answer; I entreated him with my mouth.

17 My breath is strange to my wife, though I entreated for the children's sake of † mine own body.

‡ Heb. my belly. 11; xxxviii. 11; lxi. 8; lxxxviii. 8, 18.—

and were wont to pay to me, and regard my commands and concerns no more than if I were a stranger to whom they had no relation. *I called my servant*—To do some servile office; *and he gave me no answer*—He regarded not what I said; no, not when I besought him, as if he had been my master.

Verse 17. *My breath is strange to my wife, &c.*—I am become so loathsome that my wife will not come near me, though I have conjured her to do it, by the dear memory of our children, those common pledges of our mutual love. Houbigant translates the verse, *My wife abhors even my breath: the children of my body fly far from my offensive smell*: and he observes, that “we are nowhere told that all the children of Job perished, but only such as were feasting in their eldest brother's house.” It must be observed, however, that when the messenger informed Job of the destruction of his family, the answer which he gave, namely, *Naked came I, &c.*, supposes that there were none who survived that calamity. Some are of opinion that those whom Job calls his children were grandchildren. The LXX. take them for the children of concubines. Sol. Jarchi supposes they were his domestics: but the Hebrew text here does not necessarily imply that there were any children of his then in existence. For there is nothing for the word sake; it is literally, *I entreated for the children of my body*, which may mean, as interpreted above, for, or by the memory of our children, namely, the children now dead. The general interpretation here supposes that Job's breath, by reason of his sores and ulcers, was so offensive that his wife could not bear to come near him; but the words do not necessarily imply that: for, as he had just said before, *I entreated my servant with my mouth*; so, when he immediately adds, *My breath is strange: &c.*, he might mean no more than that his breath or voice was strange also to his wife: that is, she had as little regard to what he said as the servant who gave him no answer when he was called. See Chappelow, who thus paraphrases the passage: “When my servant gave no attention, I called to my wife; but neither did she regard me, though I particularly mentioned to her (as an aggravation of my calamities, and to move her compassion) the loss of my children, whom I had begotten.”

A. M. 2484. 18 Yea, ^a young ^b children despised
B. C. 1520. me; I arose, and they spake against
me.

19 ⁱAll my ^sinward friends abhorred me:
and they whom I loved are turned against
me.

20 ^kMy bone cleaveth to my skin ^eand to
my flesh, and I am escaped with the skin of my
teeth.

^a Or, *the wicked*.—^b 2 Kings ii. 23.—ⁱ Psa. xli. 9; lv. 13, 20.
^e Heb. *the men of my secret*.—^k Chap. xxx. 30; Psa. cii. 5; Lam.

Verse 18. *Yea, young children despised me*—Or, the *wicked*, as in the margin; and as the word עוֹלֵי, also signifies, being derived from עוֹל, *gnivrel*, *inique egit, he acted unjustly*. Some render it, *fools*, reading אֵוִילִים, *evilim*, from אָוִל. If we take the word in any of these senses, we must think that Job had good reason to complain, whether he was despised by children, by wicked men, or by fools. *I arose, and they spake against me*—To show my respect to them, though they were my inferiors, *I rose* from my seat, or *I stood up*, as the word אָקַמָה, *akumah*, means. I did not disoblige, or provoke them, by any uncivil behaviour toward them; but was very courteous and condescending to them, and yet they made it their business to speak against me, and give me abusive words in return for my courtesy.

Verse 19. *All my inward friends abhorred me*—כִּתְיֵי סוּרֵי, *methei sodi*, The men of my secret, or council; my intimates and confidants, to whom I imparted all my thoughts, counsels, and concerns. *And they whom I loved*—Sincerely and fervently; *are turned against me*—So ill do they requite me. He does not say, *they who loved me*, for had their love been sincere it would have continued, and manifested itself toward him in his affliction as well as in his prosperity.

Verse 20. *My bone*—Or, *bones*, the singular collectively being put for the plural: *cleaveth to my skin*—Namely, immediately, the flesh next to the skin being consumed. The sense is, Afflictions have so wasted me, that I am little more than skin and bone. *And to my flesh*—Or, *As to my flesh*; as closely as it does to those remainders of my flesh, which are left in my inward parts. *And I am escaped with the skin of my teeth*—I am scarcely free from sores in any part of my skin, except that of my gums, which holdeth and covereth the roots of my teeth. Schultens says, that “it seems to be a proverbial expression, for those who lie beaten and covered with wounds from head to foot, and whose mouths also are broken with blows, so that, being half dead, they are scarcely able to breathe.” Heath and Le Clerc render the verse, *My bones pierce through my skin, and my flesh and my teeth slip out from my gums*.

Verse 21. *Have pity, have pity upon me, O ye my friends*—For such you have been, and still pretend to be; and, therefore, fulfil that relation; and, if you will not help me, yet, at least, pity me. “Nothing can be more pathetic,” says Dr. Dodd, “than

21 Have pity upon me, have pity A. M. 2484
upon me, O ye my friends; ¹ for the B. C. 1520.
hand of God hath touched me.

22 Why do ye ^mpersecute me as God, and
are not satisfied with my flesh?

23 ⁷O that my words were now written! O
that they were printed in a book!

24 That they were graven with an iron pen
and lead in the rock for ever!

iv. 8.—^a Or, *as*.—ⁱ Chap. i. 11; Psa. xxxviii. 2.—^m Psa.
lxi. 26.—⁷ Heb. *who will give, &c.*

the repetition in this passage, as well as the immediate application to his friends; as if he had said, ‘You, at least, with whom I have enjoyed so intimate and friendly a correspondence; you, who more especially should exert the tender office of consolation, do you have some pity upon me, since the hand of God hath so fearfully afflicted me.’”

Verse 22. *Why do you persecute me as God?*—As if you had the same infinite knowledge which God hath, whereby you could search my heart, and know my hypocrisy, and the same sovereign authority, to say and do what you please with me. *And are not satisfied with my flesh*—That is, with the consumption and torment of my whole body, but add to it the vexation of my spirit, by grievous censures and reproaches, and are like wolves and lions, which are not contented with devouring the flesh of their prey, but also break their bones.

Verses 23, 24. *O that my words were now written!*—Either, 1st, All his foregoing discourses with his friends, which he was so far from disowning or being ashamed of, that he was desirous all ages should know them, that they might judge between him and them, and decide whose cause was better, and whose arguments were stronger: or, rather, 2d, The words which he was now about to speak, containing a remarkable confession of his faith. *O that they were printed in a book!*—Or, rather, *inserted, or recorded* (as the word יָחַק, *jochaku*, signifies) *in a register*. The word *printed* is certainly used very improperly here, as being a term expressive of an art invented only about three hundred and fifty years ago; and, “especially as it does not, even by an improper expression,” as Dr. Dodd justly observes, “convey the idea of Job, which was the perpetuating his words; records, to which Job refers, being *written*, not *printed* among us. Observe, reader, that which Job wished for, God granted. His words are written in God’s book, are entered and preserved in the divine records. So that, wherever those records are read, there shall this glorious confession be declared for a memorial of him. *That they were graven with an iron pen*—Of which there is also mention Jer. xvii. 1; and *lead*—Job here alludes to the ancient custom of graving the letters on stone or marble, and then filling them up with lead, to render the inscription more legible and lasting. The LXX. however, do not seem to have understood Job thus, but rather to have supposed that he meant the recording of his words, by en-

A. M. 2484. 25 For I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that he shall

grave them on plates of lead. Their words are, *εν γραφειω σιδηρω και μολιβω η εν πετραις εγγλυθηναί, To be engraven with an iron pen and lead, (that is, upon lead,) or on the rocks.* And it is very probable it was customary in those times to engrave inscriptions on plates of lead as well as on stones. One of these ways of engraving must have been intended by Job; for it would be absurd to suppose, that he meant to have the inscription cut on stone with a leaden pen, which could make no impression on so hard a material.

Verse 25. *For I know, &c.*—Job proceeds now to assign the reason of his confidence in the goodness of his cause, and of his willingness to have the matter depending between him and his friends published and submitted to any trial. *I know that my Redeemer liveth*—I have no knowledge, nor confidence, nor hope of being restored to the prosperities of this life; yet this one thing I know, which is much more comfortable and considerable, and therein I rejoice, though I be now a dying man, and in a desperate condition for this life; I know that I have a living and powerful Redeemer to plead my cause, and vindicate my person from all severe and unjust censures, and to give sentence for me: a Redeemer, whom I call *mine*, because I have a particular interest in him, and he hath a particular care of me. Hebrew, *יִדְעָתִי גֹאֲלִי חַי, jadangti goali chai, I know my living Redeemer*; that is, My Redeemer is *living*, is *now* living, and I *know* him: I am acquainted, truly, experimentally, and savingly acquainted with him, because he hath revealed himself to me, and hath given me an understanding to know him. Remember, reader, this knowledge of him, this acquaintance with him, is absolutely necessary to thy salvation. But what Redeemer, and what deliverance, does Job speak of in this and the two following verses? *Answer*: Some late interpreters understand this passage metaphorically, of God's delivering Job out of his afflictions and troubles, and restoring him to his former splendour and happiness in this world; it being, they say, a usual thing in Scripture, to call eminent dangers and calamities *death*, and great and glorious deliverances a *quickening* or *resurrection*. But most interpreters, both ancient and modern, understand it of Christ, and of his resurrection, and of Job's resurrection to life by his power and goodness. And this seems most probable, for many reasons: 1st, Because a proper and literal interpretation of any passage of Scripture is always to be preferred before the metaphorical, where it suits with the text and with other passages. 2d, Because the Hebrew word, *גֹאֵל, goel*, here used, although sometimes used of God, absolutely or essentially considered, yet most properly agrees to Jesus Christ: for this word is primarily spoken of the next kinsman, whose office it was to redeem, by a price paid, the sold or mortgaged estate of his deceased kinsman, Lev. xxv. 25; and to revenge his death, Num. xxxv. 12, and to maintain his name and honour by raising up

stand at the latter day upon the earth: A. M. 2484. B. C. 1520.

a seed to him, Deut. xxv. 5. All which most fitly agrees to Christ, who is our nearest kinsman and brother, as having taken our nature upon him, Heb. ii. 11; who hath redeemed that everlasting inheritance which our first parents had utterly lost, by the price of his own blood; and hath revenged the death of mankind upon the contriver of it, the devil, by destroying him and his kingdom; and hath taken a course to preserve our name, and honour, and persons, to eternity. 3d, Because Job was so far from having a firm confidence, such as is here expressed, that he had not the least degree of hope of any such temporal restoration as that which his friends promised him, as we have often observed in his former discourses, as chap. xvi. 22, and xvii. 12, 13. And, therefore, that hope which every righteous man hath in his death, and which Job often professes that he had, must necessarily have been fixed on his happiness in a future life. 4th, Because this is a more lofty and spiritual strain than any in Job's former discourses; which generally savour of dejection and diffidence, and either declare or increase his grief; whereas, this puts him into another and much better temper. And, therefore, it is well observed, that after he uttered these expressions we meet not with any such impatient or despairing passages as we had before, which shows that he was now inspired with new life and comfort. 5th, Because this well agrees with several other passages in this book; wherein Job declares that, although he had no hope as to this life, and the comforts thereof, yet he had a hope beyond death, which made him profess, *Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him*, Job xiii. 15. *Trust in him* for what? Surely, for comfort and happiness. Where? Not in this life, for that he supposes to be lost; therefore it must have been in the next life. And this was one reason why he so vehemently desired death, because he knew it would bring him unto God, and unto true felicity. And this his hope and confidence in God, and in his favour to him, Job opposes to those foul and false aspersions which his friends had cast upon him, as if he had forsaken God, and cast off all fear of him, and hope in him. But it is objected, How is it credible, that Job, in those ancient times, and in that dark state of the church, should know these great mysteries of Christ's incarnation, and of the resurrection and life to come? *Answer*, 1st, The mystery of the Messiah's incarnation was revealed to Adam by that first and noted promise, that *the seed of the woman should bruise the serpent's head*, Gen. iii. 15; which, being the only foundation of his hopes, for the recovery and salvation of himself and of all his posterity, he would doubtless carefully and diligently explain, as need required, to those that descended from him. 2d, That the ancient patriarchs and prophets were generally acquainted with these doctrines is undeniably evident, from Heb. xi. and 1 Peter i. 9-12. 3d, Particularly Abraham, from whom Job is supposed to have descended, had the promise made to him, that Christ should come out of his loins, Gen. xii. 3; and

A. M. 2484. 26 ⁸ And though after my skin
B. C. 1520. worms destroy this body, yet ^a in my
flesh shall I see God :

⁸ Or, After I shall awake, though this body be destroyed, yet out of my flesh shall I see God.—^a Psa. xvii. 15; 1 Cor. xiii. 12;

is said to have seen Christ's day, and to have rejoiced to see it, John viii. 56; and had his hopes and desires fixed upon a divine and heavenly city and country, Heb. xi. 10, 16. And as Abraham knew and believed these things himself, so it is manifest that he taught them to his children and servants, Gen. xviii. 19, and to his kindred and others, as he had occasion; and, therefore, it cannot seem strange that Job professes his faith and hope in these things.

That my Redeemer liveth—I am a dying man, and my hopes as to this life are dying, but he liveth, and that for ever; and, therefore, though I die, yet he both can and will make me to live again in due time, though not in this world, yet in the other, which is much better. And, though I am now highly censured and condemned by my friends as a great dissembler and secret sinner, whom God's hand hath found out; yet there is a day coming wherein my cause shall be pleaded, and my name and honour vindicated from all these reproaches, and my integrity brought to light. *And that he shall stand in the latter day*—In the days of the Messiah, or of the gospel, which are often called the latter or last days, or times, as Isa. ii. 2; Hos. iii. 5; Joel ii. 28; compared with Acts ii. 17; 1 Tim. iv. 1; and 2 Tim. iii. 1; Heb. i. 1. Or at the day of the general resurrection and judgment, which, as those holy patriarchs well knew, and firmly believed, was to be at the end of the world; for this was the time when Job's resurrection, of which he here speaks, was to take place. So that, in these words, Job may either be considered as professing his faith in the incarnation of the Messiah; that, as certainly as he then lived, as God was in existence, and had been from eternity, he should, in due time, be made man, and stand in human nature upon the earth: or, that he should rise out of the dust, and stand up the first-fruits of them that sleep, by his resurrection. Or he may refer to the day of general resurrection and final judgment, which, as those holy patriarchs well knew and firmly believed, was to be at the end of the world; and which is often termed the *last day*: see John vi. 39-54, and xi. 24, and xii. 48; 1 Pet. i. 5. Then shall Christ appear and *stand upon the earth, or dust*, as פָּר, *gnaphar*, properly means; namely, the dust in which his saints and members lie or sleep, whom he will raise up out of it. And therefore he is fitly said to stand upon the dust, or the grave, or death; because then he will subdue and put that, among other enemies, under his feet, as it is expressed 1 Cor. xv. 25: or, as the Hebrew, וְאֶחָדָם עָלָיו יָקִים, *vaacharon gnal gnaphar jakum*, may properly be rendered, *The last, or he, the last, shall arise, or stand up against the dust*, and fight with it, and rescue the bodies of the saints, which are held in it as prisoners, from its dominion and territories.

Verse 26. *And though after my skin, &c.*—The

27 Whom I shall see for myself, and A. M. 2484.
mine eyes shall behold, and not ^a another; B. C. 1520.
¹⁰ though my reins be consumed ¹¹ within me.

1 John iii. 2.—⁹ Heb. a stranger.—¹⁰ Or, my reins within me are consumed with earnest desire [for that day].—¹¹ Heb. in my bosom.

style of this and other poetical books of the Scripture is concise and short, and therefore many words are to be understood in some places to complete the sense. The meaning here is, Though my skin be now, in a great measure, consumed by sores, and the rest of it, together with this body, shall be devoured by worms, which may seem to make my case quite desperate, yet in my flesh—Hebrew, מִבְּשָׂרִי, *mibbeshari*, out of my flesh, or, with my flesh, that is, with eyes of flesh, or bodily eyes; my flesh, or body, being raised from the grave and reunited to my soul: (which is very fitly added, to show that he did not speak of a mental or spiritual, but of a corporeal vision, and that after his death:) shall I see God—The same whom he called his Redeemer, (verse 25,) who having taken flesh, and appearing in his flesh or body, with and for Job upon the earth, might well be seen with his bodily eyes. Nor is this understood of a simple seeing of him, but of that glorious and beatifying vision of God which is promised to all God's people.

Verse 27. *Whom I shall see*—In the manner before and after expressed. No wonder that he repeats it again, because the meditation of it was most sweet to him; *for myself*—For my own benefit and comfort, as the phrase is often used. Or, which is of much the same importance, *on my behalf*, to plead my cause and vindicate me from all your reproaches. *Mine eyes shall behold, and not another*—Namely, for me, or in my stead. I shall not see God by another's eyes, but by my own, and by this self-same body which now I have. Hebrew, וְלֹא אֲנִי, *velo zar*, not a stranger, that is, this privilege shall be granted to me, and to all other sincere servants of God, but not to such as are strangers to God and his people, being alienated from him and his service. And, if I were such a one as you suppose me to be, I could never hope to enjoy that happiness. *Though my reins be consumed within me*—This I do confidently expect, though at present my case seems hopeless, my very inward parts being consumed with grief; and though, as I have said, the grave and the worms will consume my whole body. Or, without *though*, for which there is nothing in the Hebrew, *My reins are consumed within me*: which may be considered as a passionate exclamation, such as we find Gen. xviii. 18, and often in the book of Psalms, arising from his confident expectation of this his unspeakable happiness, and expressing his vehement desire and longing for that blessed time and state. The intelligent reader will be glad to see father Houbigant's translation of these three important verses, which is as follows: verse 25, *For I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that he shall hereafter arise over the dust*: verse 26, *And that even I, after my skin is consumed, shall behold my God in my flesh*: verse 27, *Yes, I shall behold him: my eyes, and not*

A. M. 2484. 28 But ye should say, ° Why perse-
B. C. 1520. cute we him, ¹² seeing the root of the
matter is found in me ?

° Verse 22.—¹² Or, and what root of

another's, shall see him. This my hope is reposed
in my bosom.

Verse 28. *But ye should say*—Therefore, because this is my case, and my faith and hope are in God, it would become you, and it is your duty on this account, to say, *Why persecute we him?*—We are blameworthy that we have persecuted him with such bitter invectives, and we will do so no more; *seeing the root of the matter*—Hebrew, דָּבָר, *dabar*, of the word; *is found in me*—That is, since my heart is sincere and upright before God, and the root, or foundation, of true religion *is in me*. *Cum veritas ipsa inveniat in me, since the truth itself is found in me.*—Vatablus. The root of all true religion is living faith in that Redeemer of whom Job had just spoken, and in the *truth* and *grace* of God in and through him; faith working by love, overcoming the world, and purifying the heart; faith disarming death of its sting, and inspiring us with a lively, patient, joyful, and grateful hope of eternal life, such as Job had just expressed. This is *the root of the matter*, other things are but leaves in comparison of it. This, which implies the whole of godliness and righteousness, is the one thing needful. Let us see to it that this be found in us. And, with respect to others, let us believe that many have this root of the matter in them, who are not in every thing of our mind, and who have their follies, weaknesses, and mistakes: and let us be aware that it is at our peril if we persecute any such. Wo be to him that offends or causes to stumble and fall one of these little ones. God will resent and revenge it. Job and his friends differed in their views concerning the methods of Divine Providence, but they agreed in the root of the matter; and, therefore, it was their duty not to have censured and persecuted, but to have lived in love with each other.

Verse 29. *Be ye afraid of the sword*—Of some considerable judgment to be inflicted on you, which is called the sword; as Deut. xxxii. 41, and else-

29 Be ye afraid of the sword: for wrath A. M. 2484.
B. C. 1520. bringeth the punishments of the sword,
° that ye may know there is a judgment.

matter is found in me?—Psa. lviii. 10, 11.

where. That is, if ye continue to persecute me. So Houbigant understands him, interpreting these words in connection with the preceding, thus: *But if ye shall say, Let us persecute him, and devise some cause of accusation against him: then be afraid for yourselves from the threatening sword.* Job may be considered, however, as threatening them with punishment on account of their past uncharitable and unrighteous judgment of him, and severe treatment of him. *For wrath bringeth the punishment of the sword*—That *wrath*, or *fury*, which is in your hearts, and breaks forth from your lips against me, deserves and will certainly bring upon you *the punishment of the sword*, that is, a dreadful judgment from God. The Hebrew word here rendered *punishment*, עֲוֹנוֹת, *gravonoth*, properly means *iniquities*, but is sometimes used, by a metonymy, for the punishment of *iniquities*, which our translators judged was its meaning here. The sense, however, is good, if the word be rendered literally, thus: *Wrath* (the sin of wrath, or anger against man, especially against one in affliction) *bringeth*, or implies, *iniquities of the sword*, that is, iniquities fit to be punished by the sword, or by some eminent judgment. Thus, chap. xxxi. 19, *An iniquity of the judges*, means *an iniquity to be punished by the judges*, as our translation has it. *That ye may know there is a judgment*—I give you this admonition, that you may know in time, and may seriously consider it for your good, that there will be a time of judgment, when God will call men to an account for all their hard speeches and miscarriages, and particularly for their rash and uncharitable censures of their brethren, Matt. vii. 1; Rom. xiv. 4; James iv. 11; either in this life, or at that last and dreadful day of the general resurrection and judgment, of which I have just spoken. God sees and observes, and will judge all your words and actions, and therefore do not flatter yourselves with vain hopes of impunity.

CHAPTER XX.

Zophar, after a short preface, asserts, that the prosperity of the wicked is short, and his ruin sure, 1-9. He describes his misery in many particulars, 10-29.

A. M. 2484. THEN answered Zophar the Naa-
B. C. 1520. mathite, and said,

¹ Heb. my

NOTES ON CHAPTER XX.

Verse 1. *Then answered Zophar*—Here Zophar, although he had nothing new to advance, hastily interrupts Job, being extremely provoked by his

2 Therefore do my thoughts cause me A. M. 2484.
to answer, and for this ¹ I make haste. B. C. 1520.

haste is in me.

threatening them with the judgments of God, and in his speech appears to be hurried by his passion beyond all bounds. He tells him it is in vain to tax their suspicions with unkindness; for it was of pub-

A. M. 2484. 3 I have heard the check of my re-
B. C. 1520. proach, and the spirit of my under-
standing causeth me to answer.

4 Knowest thou *not* this of old, since man
was placed upon earth,

5 * That the triumphing of the wicked is
short, and the joy of the hypocrite *but* for a
moment?

6 ^b Though his excellency mount up to the
heavens, and his head reach unto the ³ clouds;

7 Yet he shall perish for ever ^c like his own
dung: they which have seen him shall say,
Where is he?

* Psa. xxxvii. 35.—^b Heb. *from near*.—^b Isaiah xiv. 13;
Ovad. 3, 4.—^c Heb. *cloud*.—^c Psa. lxxxiii. 10.—^d Psalm
lxxiii. 20; xc. 5.

lic notoriety, agreeable to the universal experience
of mankind, ever since the creation, that suffering
was the portion of the wicked. He then, under
colour of describing the wicked man, and his desti-
ny, charges Job with the most enormous crimes, and
marks him out as a person in whom God had given
an example of the justice of his providence; and
concludes with a plain intimation, that he was thor-
oughly persuaded that Job was that very wicked
man, that oppressor of the poor, which they had
from the beginning suspected him to be.

Verse 2. *Therefore*—For this thy severe sentence;
do my thoughts cause me to answer—I thought to
have troubled myself and thee with no further dis-
courses, but these words of thine make my former
thoughts to return again, and so provoke me, that I
am not able any longer to forbear speaking.

Verse 3. *I have heard*—Or, *Shall I hear?* Name-
ly, with patience, and without a reply? Who can
endure it? *The check of my reproach*—That is, thy
shameful and opprobrious reproofs of us, as if we,
and all thy friends, were void of all humanity and
natural affection toward thee, and were haters and
persecutors of thee; and as if we were guilty of
very heinous crimes, and might expect God's ven-
geance upon us. *And the spirit of my understand-
ing*—That is, my soul or mind, *causeth me to an-
swer*—Constraineth me to speak. Or, the words
רוח ככניה, *ruach mibbinathi*, may be rendered, *my
spirit, or mind, because of my understanding*, that
is, out of, or because of, that certain knowledge which
I have of this matter from consideration and expe-
rience. I speak not from passion, but from certain
knowledge.

Verses 4, 5. *Knowest thou not this*—Which I am
now about to say; *of old*—From the experience of
all former ages; *since man was placed upon the
earth*—Since the world was made, and there were
any men to observe God's government of it; *that
the triumphing of the wicked is short*—Hebrew,
מיקרוב, *mikarob*, is *from near*, that is, from, or for a
little time; they have not long enjoyed it, and it will
shortly vanish. *And the joy of the hypocrite but for
a moment*—This he adds by way of reflection upon

8 He shall fly away ^d as a dream, A. M. 2484.
and shall not be found: yea, he shall B. C. 1520.
be chased away as a vision of the night.

9 * The eye also *which* saw him shall *see him*
no more; neither shall his place any more be-
hold him.

10 ^e His children shall seek to please the poor,
and his hands ^f shall restore their goods.

11 His bones are full of ^g *the sin* of his youth,
^h which shall lie down with him in the dust.

12 Though wickedness be sweet in his mouth,
though he hide it under his tongue;

13 *Though* he spare it, and forsake it

* Chap. vii. 8, 10; viii. 18; Psa. xxxvii. 36; ciii. 16.—^d Or,
The poor shall oppress his children.—^e Verse 18.—^f Chapter
xiii. 26; Psa. xxv. 7.—^g Chap. xxi. 26.

Job, who, though he cleared himself of gross wick-
edness, yet, he judged, was guilty of deep hypocrisy.

Verses 6-9. *Though his excellency mount up to
the heavens*—Though he be advanced to great dig-
nity and authority in the world. *He shall perish
like his own dung*—Which men cast away with con-
tempt and abhorrence. *They who have seen him*—
With admiration at his felicity; *shall say, Where
is he?*—He is nowhere to be found; he is utterly
gone and lost. *He shall fly away as a dream*—
Which, for the present, affects the fancy, but hath
nothing solid or permanent in it, for as soon as a man
awakes all vanishes, and the remembrance of it is
quickly lost. *Neither shall his place any more be-
hold him*—That is, it shall not acknowledge or con-
tain him. A figure called *prosopopœia*, as chap. vii.
10. Or, *neither shall it* (that is, the eye, last men-
tioned) *behold him any more in his place*.

Verse 10. *His children shall seek to please the
poor*—Either, 1st, To get some small relief from them
in their extreme necessity. Or, rather, 2d, Lest they
should revenge themselves on them for the great and
many injuries which their father did them, or should
seek to the magistrate for reparation. *His hands
shall restore their goods*—By the sentence of the
judge, to whom the oppressed poor will appeal, not-
withstanding all the endeavours of their oppressors to
dissuade them from so doing.

Verse 11. *His bones*—That is, his whole body,
even the strongest parts of it; *are full of the sin of
his youth*—Of the punishment of it. He shall feel
the sad effects of his youthful sins in his riper years,
as riotous sinners commonly do. *Which shall lie
down with him in the dust*—He shall carry his
diseases and pains, brought upon him by his sins, to
the grave: or, rather, they will carry him thither,
and prove the causes of his immature death; and
the very putrefying of his body in the grave is to
him the effect of sin, so that his iniquity is upon his
bones even there.

Verses 12-14. *Though wickedness be sweet in his
mouth*—Though it greatly please him while he is
committing it; *though he hide it under his tongue*—
As an epicure doth a sweet morsel, which he keeps

A. M. 2484. not; but keep it still ⁵ within his mouth: B. C. 1520.

14 Yet his meat in his bowels is turned, it is the gall of asps within him.

15 He hath swallowed down riches, and he shall vomit them up again: God shall cast them out of his belly.

16 He shall suck the poison of asps: the viper's tongue shall slay him.

17 He shall not see ¹ the rivers, ⁶ the floods, the brooks of honey and butter.

⁵ Heb. in the midst of his palate.—¹ Psa. xxxvi. 9; Jer. xvii. 6. ⁶ Or, streaming brooks.—¹ Verses 10, 15.—⁷ Heb. according to

and rolls about his mouth, that he may longer enjoy the pleasure of it. Though he be highly pleased with the gratification of his lusts, and cleave to his sinful pleasures in hearty love, resolving to hold them fast, and improve them to the greatest delight and advantage; though he spare it—Will not part with his sin, but gratifies and obeys his sinful inclinations, instead of subduing and mortifying them; but keeps it still within his mouth—That he may enjoy all the sweetness of it. Yet his meat in his bowels is turned—From sweet to bitter; it is the gall of asps within him—Exceeding bitter and pernicious. Gall is most bitter; the gall of serpents is full of poison; and the poison of asps is most dangerous, and, within a few hours, kills without remedy.

Verses 15, 16. He hath swallowed down riches—He hath got possession of them, and thought them to be as much his own as the meat he had eaten. But he is deceived. He shall vomit them up again—Shall be compelled to restore them: his own conscience perhaps may make him so uneasy in the keeping of what he has gotten, that, for the quiet of his own mind, he shall make restitution, and that not with the pleasure of a virtue, but with the utmost reluctancy, like the pain produced by an emetic. God shall cast them out of his belly—If he do not himself voluntarily refund what he has violently taken away, God, by his providence, shall force him to do it, and bring it about, one way or other, that his ill-gotten goods shall return to their right owners. If man's hand cannot reach him, God shall find him out. He shall suck the poison of asps—What he sucked so sweetly, and with so much pleasure, shall, in the issue, prove most ungrateful and destructive, as the poison, or head (for the Hebrew *רֹשׁ*, *rosh*, signifies both, and the poison lies in the head) of asps would be to one that sucked it. Such is sin; such especially will all unlawful gains be. The fawning tongue will prove the viper's tongue. All the charming graces that are thought to be in sin will turn, when the conscience is awakened, into so many raging furies.

Verse 17. He shall not see the rivers, the floods, &c.—“He shall not see them with any pleasure. The most delightful things of this world, and the greatest affluence and plenty of them, shall afford him no enjoyment.”—Dodd. Or, rather, he speaks

18 That which he laboured for ^k shall he restore, and shall not swallow it ^l down: ⁷ according to his substance shall the restitution be, and he shall not rejoice therein.

19 Because he hath ⁸ oppressed and hath forsaken the poor; because he hath violently taken away a house which he builded not;

20 ¹ Surely he shall not ⁹ feel quietness in his belly, he shall not save of that which he desired.

21 ¹⁰ There shall none of his meat be left;

the substance of his exchange.—⁸ Heb. crushed.—¹ Eccles. v. 13.—⁹ Heb. know.—¹⁰ Or, There shall be none left for his meat.

metaphorically, and means, he shall not enjoy that abundant satisfaction and comfort, which he promised himself from his great riches, or which good men, through God's blessing, commonly enjoy.

Verse 18. That which he laboured for shall he restore—Expressed in Hebrew by only two words, *מְשִׁיב יָגוֹן*, *meshib jagang*, literally, *restituens laborem, restoring labor*: that is, the goods which were gotten with labour, that of others, or his own. It may refer either to the goods of others, of which he had obtained possession, not without pains and difficulty; or to his own goods, honestly gotten by the sweat of his brow. And this may be intended as an aggravation of his misery, that he is compelled, not only to restore other men's goods, which were in his hands, but to part with his own also, to make reparation for damages. And shall not swallow it down—So as to hold it: he shall not possess it long, nor to any important purpose. According to his substance shall the restitution be—That is, he shall be forced to part with all his property to make compensation for his wrongs. And he shall not rejoice therein—He shall not enjoy what he had gotten, because it shall be taken from him. Houbigant's translation of this verse is, *He shall restore what he gained by his labour, and shall not consume it. His merchandise was abundant, but he shall not enjoy it.*

Verse 19. Because he hath oppressed and forsaken the poor—By his oppression he brought men to utter poverty, and then forsook them in that destitute state, affording them no mercy nor help. Or, the meaning is, He made some poor by his oppressions, and others, that were poor, he suffered to perish for want of that relief which he might have afforded them. He hath violently taken away a house, &c.—Namely, for his own use; which he builded not—Which was none of his.

Verse 20. Surely he shall not feel quietness, &c.—He shall have no peace nor satisfaction in his mind, in all his gains, partly because of his perpetual fears and expectations of the wrath of God and man, which his guilty conscience assures him he deserves, and partly because they shall be speedily taken away from him. He shall not save of that which he desired—That is, any part of his good and desirable things, but he shall forfeit and lose them all.

Verses 21, 22. There shall none of his meat be

A. M. 2484. therefore shall no man look for his
B. C. 1520. goods.

22 In the fulness of his sufficiency he shall be in straits: every hand of the ¹¹ wicked shall come upon him.

23 When he is about to fill his belly, God shall cast the fury of his wrath upon him, and shall rain it upon him ^m while he is eating.

24 ^a He shall flee from the iron weapon, and the bow of steel shall strike him through.

25 It is drawn, and cometh out of the body; yea, ^o the glittering sword cometh out

¹¹ Or, *troublesome*.—^m Num. xi. 33; Psa. lxxviii. 30.—^a Isa. xxiv. 18; Jer. xlviii. 43; Amos v. 19.

left, &c.—For his future use; but he shall be stripped of all, which being publicly known, none of his kindred or friends shall trouble themselves to seek for any relics of his estate. But the Hebrew, אין שריד לאכלו, *een shorid leachlo*, rather means, *There shall none be left for his meat*, that is, he shall leave no heir who shall possess or enjoy his goods. In the fulness of his sufficiency, &c.—In the height of his prosperity he shall be distressed. *Every hand of the wicked shall be upon him*—So his wickedness shall be punished by those as wicked as himself.

Verse 23. *When he is about to fill his belly*—That is, when he has enough to satisfy all his appetites, and shall design to indulge them in the pleasurable enjoyment of all his gains, and to spend his days in sensuality; *God shall cast the fury of his wrath upon him*—Some dreadful and destructive judgment. *And shall rain it upon him*—This phrase denotes both the author of his plagues, God, and the nature and quality of them, that they shall come upon him like rain, with great vehemence, so that he cannot prevent or avoid them; *while he is eating*—As it fell upon thy sons, chap. i. 18, 19.

Verses 24, 25. *He shall flee from the iron weapon*—That is, from the sword or spear; and so shall think himself out of danger. *The bow of steel*—Which is of great strength, and therefore sendeth forth the arrow with greater force; *shall strike him through*—Shall mortally wound him. He shall flee from one danger, but another, still greater, shall overtake him. *It is drawn*—Namely, the arrow which had entered into his body, and now is drawn out of it, either by himself or some other person. *Yea, the glittering sword*—Hebrew, וברק, *ubarak*, literally, the lightning, and thence a glittering weapon, the bright sword, or spear; as Deut. xxxii. 41. By this it is implied he was doubly wounded, first with the arrow, and then with the sword or spear: *cometh out of his gall*—Into which it had entered, and wherewith it was coloured. This shows that the wound was both deep and deadly, as wounds are in that part. It is probable he mentions this in reference to a similar expression of Job, chap. xvi. 13. *Terrors are upon him*—Namely, the terrors of death; because he per-

of his gall: ^p terrors are upon A. M. 2484
him. B. C. 1520

26 All darkness shall be hid in his secret places: ^q a fire not blown shall consume him; it shall go ill with him that is left in his tabernacle.

27 The heaven shall reveal his iniquity; and the earth shall rise up against him.

28 The increase of his house shall depart, and his goods shall flow away in the day of his wrath.

29 ^r This is the portion of a wicked man from God, and the heritage ¹² appointed unto him by God.

^o Chap. xvi. 13.—^p Chap. xviii. 11.—^q Psa. xxi. 9.—^r Chap. xxvii. 13; xxxi. 2.—¹² Heb. of his decree from God.

ceives, by the tincture of his gall upon the weapon, that his wound is incurable. Or horrors of conscience, because he cannot live, and dare not die.

Verse 26. *All darkness*—All sorts of miseries, of soul, and body, and estate; *shall be hid*—Or laid up by God for him. They are reserved and treasured up for him, and kept as in a sure place, and shall infallibly overtake him: *in his secret places*—In those places where he confidently hoped to hide and secure himself from all evils and enemies; yet even there God shall find him out. *A fire not blown*—By man, but kindled by God himself; *shall consume or destroy him*—He thinks, by his might and violence, to secure himself from men; but God, by his own immediate hand, or in some unknown and unexpected manner, will find him out. It may be understood of the fire of hell; see Isa. xxx. 33. *It shall go ill with him that is left in his tabernacle*—With his family, or posterity, who shall inherit his curse, as well as his estate. Heath translates this verse, *All manner of calamity is laid up in store for him: an unquenchable fire shall consume him: it shall devour all that remaineth in his stead*.

Verses 27, 28. *The heaven shall reveal his iniquity*—God shall be a swift witness against him by extraordinary judgments; still he reflects upon Job's case, and the fire from heaven. *And the earth shall rise up against him*—All creatures upon earth shall conspire to destroy him. If the God of heaven and earth be his enemy, neither heaven nor earth will show him any kindness, but all the hosts of both are, and will be, at war with him. *The increase of his house*—יבול, *jebul*, *proventus*, his income, revenue, or his estate got by the labour, and employed for the use of his family; *shall depart*—Shall be lost or taken away from him: *shall flow away*—Like waters, swiftly and strongly, and so as to return no more: *in the day of his wrath*—That is, of God's wrath; when God shall come to execute judgment upon him. *The abundance of his house*, Heath renders it, *shall roll away like the torrents in the day of his fury*.

Verse 29. *This is the portion of the wicked man from God*—Allotted to him, designed for him, as his

portion: and he will have it for a perpetuity; it is what he must abide by. *And the heritage appointed unto him by God*—Hebrew, נחלה אכרו, *nachalath imro*, the heritage of his word; that is, appointed by the word or sentence of God; and termed a *heritage*, to signify the stability and assurance of it; that it is as firm and certain to him as an inheritance to the right heir; and in opposition to that inheritance which he had gotten by fraud and violence. Though impenitent sinners do not always fall under such temporal judgments as are here described, and in that Zophar was mistaken; yet the wrath of God

abides upon them, and they are made miserable by spiritual judgments, which are much worse; their consciences being either, on the one hand, a terror to them, and then they are in continual amazement; or, on the other hand, seared and silenced, and then they are given up to a reprobate mind, and bound over to eternal ruin. "Never was any doctrine better explained," says Henry, "nor worse applied, than this here by Zophar: who intended by all this to prove Job to be a hypocrite. Let us receive the good explication, and make a better application, for warning to ourselves to stand in awe and not to sin."

CHAPTER XXI.

Job's preface to his answer, 1-8. He describes the prosperity of wicked men, 7-13. Hardening them in their impiety, 14-16. He foretels their final ruin, 17-21. He observes a great variety in the ways of God, 22-26. He shows, that though sinners are always punished in the other world, they often escape in this, 27-34.

A. M. 2484.
B. C. 1520.

BUT Job answered and said,
2 Hear diligently my speech, and
let this be your consolations.

3 Suffer me that I may speak; and after that
I have spoken, * mock on.

4 As for me, *is* my complaint to man? and

* Chap. xvi. 10; xvii. 2.—¹ Heb. *shortened*.—² Heb. *Look*

NOTES ON CHAPTER XXI.

Verse 1. *But Job answered and said*—It has been thought strange that Job should never resume the argument of a resurrection, which was so full of piety and conviction; but, when resuming the dispute with his friends, should stick to that he first set out with. Whether this be the case or not, we shall see in the course of our observations. But if it be, a very sufficient reason may be assigned for it. For, if one such appeal as this, made in the most solemn manner, would not convince them of his innocence, he had reason to think it would be much the same, if he had repeated it a second and a third time. He had, therefore, no other resource left, but to follow the argument with which he had begun; namely, to combat the false principle upon which they were so forward to condemn him: and this he does effectually throughout the present chapter, by showing that many wicked men live long and prosperously, and at last die in apparent peace, and are buried with great pomp; which shows that this life is not the proper state of retribution, but that men shall be judged and recompensed hereafter. See Peters and Dodd.

Verses 2, 3. *Hear diligently my speech*—If you have no other comfort to administer, at least afford me this: be so kind, so just, as to give me a patient hearing: *and let this be your consolations*—I shall accept of it instead of those consolations which you owed to me in this my distressed condition, and which I expected from you. And it will be a consolation to yourselves in the reflection, to have dealt tenderly with your afflicted friend. *Suffer me to*

if it were so, why should not my A. M. 2484.
spirit be ¹ troubled? B. C. 1520.

5 ² Mark me, and be astonished, ^b and lay
your hand upon *your* mouth.

6 Even when I remember I am afraid, and
trembling taketh hold on my flesh.

unto me.—^b Judg. xviii. 19; Ch. xxix. 9; xl. 4; Psa. xxxix. 9.

speak—Without such interruption as you have given me. *And after I have spoken, mock on*—If I do not defend my cause with solid and convincing arguments, go on in your scoffs.

Verse 4. *Is my complaint to man?*—No: if it were, I see it would be to little purpose to complain. I do not make my complaint to, or expect relief from you, or from any men; but from God only. I am pouring forth my complaints to him; to him I appeal. Let him be judge between you and me. Before him we stand upon equal terms, and, therefore, I have the privilege of being heard as well as you. *And if it were so*—If my complaint were to man; *why should not my spirit be troubled?*—Would I not have cause to be troubled? For they would not regard, nor even rightly understand me; but my complaint is to God, who will suffer me to speak, though you will not.

Verse 5. *Mark me, and be astonished*—Consider what I am about to say, concerning the wonderful prosperity of the worst of men, and the pressures of some good men; and it will fill you with astonishment at the mysterious conduct of Divine Providence herein. *And lay your hand upon your mouth*—Be silent: quietly wait the issue; and judge nothing before the time. *God's way is in the sea, and his path in the great waters*. When we cannot account for what he doth, in suffering the wicked to prosper, and the godly to be afflicted, nor fathom the depth of those proceedings, it becomes us to sit down and admire them. *Upright men shall be astonished at this*, chap. xvii. 8. Be you so.

Verse 6. *Even when I remember I am afraid,*

A. M. 2484. 7 ° Wherefore do the wicked live,
B. C. 1520. become old, yea, are mighty in power?

8 Their seed is established in their sight with them, and their offspring before their eyes.

9 Their houses ³are safe from fear, ⁴neither is the rod of God upon them.

10 Their bull gendereth, and faileth not: their cow calveth, and ⁵casteth not her calf.

11 They send forth their little ones like a flock, and their children dance.

^c Chap. xii. 6; Ps. xvii. 10, 14; lxxiii. 3, 12; Jer. xii. 1; Hab. i. 16.—² Heb. are peace from fear.—^d Psa. xxxiii. 5.—^e Exod. xxxiii. 26.

&c.—The very remembrance of what is past fills me with dread and horror. As Job well knew that the account he was about to give of the prosperity of wicked men, however necessary to his argument, would have something shocking in it to the ears of those to whom it was addressed, the delicacy with which he thus introduces it is inimitable.

Verse 7. *Wherefore do the wicked live?*—That is, long and happily: *become old?*—Namely, in their prosperous state: *yea, are mighty in power?*—Are preferred to places of authority and trust, and not only make a great figure, but bear a great sway? Now, if things be as you say, how comes this to pass? Wherefore does the righteous God distribute things so unequally? “The description, which follows, of a prosperous estate is such as might, indeed, justly create envy, were a wicked man, in any state, to be envied; for we have here the chief ingredients of human happiness, as it respects this life, brought together and described in terms exactly suiting the simplicity of manners, and the way of living in Job’s time and country, as, first, security and safety to themselves and families; verse 9. *Their houses are safe from fear*—Of the incursions of robbers, we may suppose, or the depredations of the neighbouring clans, so usual in those ancient times, and of which Job had felt the mischievous effects. Next health, or a freedom from diseases, called in the language of that age, the *rod of God*. See 1 Sam. xxvi. 10. To this is added plenty of cattle, the riches of those times; verse 10. Next comes a numerous and hopeful offspring; and what a rural picture has he drawn of them! verse 11. *They send forth their little ones like a flock*—Of sheep or goats, as the word signifies, in great numbers, and with sweet concord, which is a singular delight to them and their parents. They take the timbrel and harp, and rejoice at the sound of the pipe; verse 12. Lastly, and to crown all, after a prosperous and pleasant life comes an easy death. *They spend their days in wealth, and in a moment go down to the grave*—That is, their days pass on in a continual flow of prosperity, till they drop into the grave without a groan. As every thing in this divine poem is wonderful, there is scarce any thing more to be admired in it than the variety of descriptions which are given us of human life, in its most exalted prosperity, on the one hand, and its deepest distress on

12 They take the timbrel and harp, and rejoice at the sound of the organ. A. M. 2484. B. C. 1520.

13 They ^fspend their days ⁴in wealth, and in a moment go down to the grave.

14 ⁵Therefore they say unto God, Depart from us; for we desire not the knowledge of thy ways.

15 ^bWhat is the Almighty, that we should serve him? and ⁱwhat profit should we have if we pray unto him?

^f Chapter xxxvi. 11.—⁴ Or, in mirth.—⁵ Chapter xxii. 17. ^b Exodus v. 2; Chap. xxxiv. 9.—ⁱ Chap. xxxv. 3; Malachi iii. 14.

the other: for this is what their subject led them to enlarge upon on both sides; with this only difference, that the three friends were for limiting prosperity to the good, whereas Job insists upon a mixed distribution of things from the hand of Providence; but as all of them, in every speech almost, enlarge upon one or other of these topics, the variety of imagery and colouring in which they paint to us these different estates, all drawn from nature, and suiting the simplicity of those ancient times, is inexpressibly amusing and entertaining: then their being considered as the dispensations of Providence, and it being represented that we can receive neither good nor evil but from God, the judge of all, a point acknowledged on both hands, is what renders these descriptions interesting and affecting to us in the highest degree; and the whole affords no contemptible argument of the antiquity of the book. See Peters and Dodd.

Verse 13. *They spend their days in wealth*—Heb. בָּטוּב, *batob*, in good: *εν αγαθου*, LXX., in good things: in *delicias*, in *delights*, Arab. ver.: that is, in the enjoyment of all the good things of this life without any mixture of evil. *And in a moment go down to the grave*—They do not die of a lingering disease, as many good men die, but suddenly and sweetly.

Verse 14. *Therefore*—Because of their constant prosperity, *they say unto God*—Sometimes in words, but commonly in their thoughts and affections, and by the language of their lives, *Depart from us*—Let us not be troubled with the apprehension of our being under God’s eye, nor be restrained by the fear of him. Or, they bid him depart as one they do not need, nor have any occasion to apply to for help or comfort. The world is the portion which they have chosen, and with which they are satisfied, and in which they think themselves happy, and while they have that they can live without God. Justly will God say to them, *Depart*, who have bid him depart; and justly doth he now take them at their word. *We desire not the knowledge of thy ways*—Much less the practice of them. They that are resolved not to walk in God’s ways, desire not to know them, because their knowledge would be a continual reproach to their disobedience.

Verse 15. *What is the Almighty, that we should serve him?*—What is he to us? *What excellence is there in him?* What advantage have we, or can

A. M. 2484. 16 Lo, their good is not in their
B. C. 1520. hand: ^k the counsel of the wicked is
far from me.

17 ^l How oft is the ^m candle of the wicked
put out? and *how oft* cometh their destruction
upon them? *God* ⁿ distributeth sorrows in his
anger.

^k Chap. xxii. 18; Psa. i. 1; Prov. i. 10.—^l Chap. xviii. 6.
^m Or, lamp.—ⁿ Luke xii. 46.—^o Psa. i. 4; xxxv. 5; Isa. xvii.
13; xxix. 5; Hos. xiii. 3.

we expect from him? Strange that ever creatures should speak so insolently respecting their Creator, on whom they are every moment dependant for life, and breath, and all things! that ever reasonable creatures should speak so absurdly and unreasonably concerning their Redeemer and Saviour, their Governor and their Judge! The two great bonds, by which we are drawn and held to religion, are those of *duty* and *interest*; but here they endeavour to break both those bonds asunder. They will not own that they owe him any worship or service, nor will they believe that they should be a whit the better for serving him.

Verse 16. *Lo, their good is not in their hand*—These words, says Chappelow, will be more consistent with what goes before, if read with an interrogation; namely, *Lo, is not their good in their hand?* that is, *Is not every thing in their power?* Do they not enjoy whatever they desire? To this purpose, he observes, is Sol. Jarchi's comment. Most commentators, however, read the words without an interrogation, which is certainly more agreeable to the Hebrew text. And Poole, with Henry and several others, consider them as containing an answer to the foregoing questions, and a confutation of the ungodly opinion and practice mentioned verses 14, 15, as if he had said, Wicked men have no reason to reject God, because of their prosperity, for their wealth is *not in their hand*; neither obtained nor kept by their own might, but only by God's power and favour. Therefore I am far from approving their opinion, or following their course. "After the foregoing elegant description of the prosperity of some wicked men," says Dr. Dodd, "Job proceeds, on the other hand, to confess what was likewise apparent in the ways of Providence, that some of them were as remarkably distinguished by their wretchedness, being exposed to the most dreadful evils and calamities. He knew that while he had been recounting the prosperity of the wicked, he had touched upon a tender point, to which his adversaries would be apt to give a wrong turn, as if he had been pleading the cause of iniquity. He therefore guards against their entertaining any idea of that kind, in this verse, in which he speaks to this purpose: 'Do not imagine that because I say the wicked sometimes prosper, therefore, I believe their prosperity to be owing to themselves, or in their own hand or power. God forbid that I should give such a countenance to impiety! No; though they may thus presumptuously imagine with themselves,

18 ^a They are as stubble before the wind, and as chaff that the storm ^b carrieth away.

19 God layeth up ^c his iniquity ^d for his children: he rewardeth him, and he shall know it.

20 His eyes shall see his destruction, and ^e he shall drink of the wrath of the Almighty.

^a Heb. *stealeth away*.—^b That is, *the punishment of his iniquity*.
^c Exod. xx. 5.—^d Psa. lxxv. 8; Isa. li. 17; Jer. xxv. 15; Rev. xiv. 10; xix. 15.

I am not of their opinion, nor yet of their society; *the counsel of the wicked is far from me*—I know that all the happiness that they can boast is merely by the will and sufferance of Almighty God, and that sometimes he is pleased to make them terrible examples of his justice." Of which he speaks in the following verses to verse 21.

Verse 17. *How oft is the candle of the wicked put out!*—Or, *lamp*, that is, their glory or outward happiness. I grant that this happens often, though not constantly, as you affirm. This certainly best agrees, both with the use of this phraseology in Scripture, in which it always signifies that a thing is done frequently, and never that it is done but seldom; and with the foregoing words, which contain a reason why *the counsel of the wicked* was far from him, namely, because they often pay dear for their wickedness in this life, and always in the life to come. This sense of the words also agrees best with the following verses, in which he discourses largely, not of the prosperity of the wicked, (as he should have done, if he had intended to say that such were but seldom afflicted,) but of their calamities.

Verse 18. *They are as stubble before the wind, &c.*—That is, their destruction shall be speedy, certain, and irrecoverable. Thus he goes on to concede to his adversaries, "that wicked men are sometimes thus severely punished, as they in their speeches had been fond of representing; but then he had before shown, that they were sometimes as remarkably prosperous; and this made way for a third particular, which is indeed his general assertion all along, and the medium by which he endeavoured to convince them of the rashness of their censures and suspicions of him; namely, that things are dealt out here promiscuously, and without any strict regard to merit or demerit."—Dodd.

Verses 19, 20. *God layeth up*—Namely, in his treasures; *his iniquity*—Or rather, *the punishment of his iniquity*; that is, He will punish him both in his person and in his posterity. *His eyes shall see his destruction*—That is, he shall be destroyed; as *to see death*, is to die, Psa. lxxxix. 48; Heb. xi. 5; and *to see affliction*, or any kind of evil, is *to feel it*, Psa. xc. 15; and *to see good*, is to enjoy it, chap. vii. 7, and ix. 25. Or, this phrase may be emphatical; he shall foresee his ruin hastening toward him, and not be able to prevent or avoid it: he shall sensibly feel himself sinking and perishing, which aggravates his misery. *He shall drink of the wrath*

A. M. 2484. 21 For what pleasure *hath* he in
B. C. 1520. his house after him, when the number of his months is cut off in the midst?

22 ^a Shall *any* teach God knowledge? seeing he judgeth those that are high.

23 One dieth ^b in his full strength, being wholly at ease and quiet.

24 His ^c breasts are full of milk, and his bones are moistened with marrow.

25 And another dieth in the bitterness of his

^a Isa. xl. 13; xlv. 9; Rom. xi. 34; 1 Cor. ii. 16.—^b Heb. in his very perfection, or, in the strength of his perfection.

of the Almighty—Not sip or taste, but *drink*; which word commonly denotes receiving abundance of the thing spoken of.

Verse 21. *What pleasure hath he in his house after him?*—As for what befalls his children when he is dead, he concerns not himself; he is not affected with their felicity or misery, irreligion commonly making men unnatural. And therefore God punishes both him and his children while he lives, verses 19, 20. Or, the meaning may be, what delight can he take in the thoughts of the glory and happiness of his posterity, when he finds he is dying a violent and untimely death? Thus, this is a further proof, that this man is neither happy in himself, nor with reference to his posterity. *When the number, &c.* When that number of months, which, by his constitution, and the course of nature, he might have lived, is diminished, and cut off by the hand of violence.

Verse 22. *Shall any teach God knowledge?*—How to govern the world? For so you do while you tell him that he must not afflict the godly, nor give the wicked prosperity; that he must invariably punish the wicked, and reward the righteous in this world. No: he will act as sovereign, and with great variety in his providential dispensations. *Seeing he judgeth those that are high*—The highest persons on earth, he exactly knows them, and gives sentence concerning them, as he sees fit. Thus, as Job had introduced the foregoing particular, namely, that wicked men are sometimes severely punished in this world, by an easy transition, at verse 16; so, by another as easy, he here introduces the remaining article of his discourse above mentioned, namely, that God deals out things promiscuously in this world, not according to men's merit or demerit, which he pursues in the following verses.

Verses 23, 24. *One dieth in his full strength*—In a state of perfect health, and strength, and prosperity; all which this phrase implies. *His breasts are full of milk*—The Hebrew word, גִּבְיָו, *gnatin*, here rendered breasts, is not elsewhere used in Scripture, and therefore is translated different ways. Houbigant renders the clause, *When his bowels are laden with fatness*. Others, *When his milk-pails are full of milk*; or, *his oil-vessels are full of fatness*. *And his bones are moistened with marrow*—Which is opposed to that dryness of the bones (Job xxx.

soul, and never eateth with pleasure. A. M. 2484. B. C. 1520.

26 They shall lie down alike in the dust, and the worms shall cover them.

27 Behold, I know your thoughts, and the devices *which* ye wrongfully imagine against me.

28 For ye say, ^d Where is the house of the prince? and where *are* ^e the dwelling-places of the wicked?

29 Have ye not asked them that go by the

^d Or, *milk pails*.—^e Chap. xx. 11; Eccles. ix. 2.—^f Chapter xx. 7.—^g Heb. the tent of the tabernacles of the wicked.

30; Psa. cii. 3;) which is caused by old age or grievous distempers and calamities.

Verses 25, 26. *Another dieth*—Another wicked man, or any other man promiscuously considered, either good or bad. *In the bitterness of his soul*—With heart-breaking pains and sorrows; *and never eateth with pleasure*—Hath no pleasure in his life, no, not so much as at meal-time, when men usually are most free and pleasant. So he shows there is a great variety in God's dispensations; he distributes great prosperity to one, and great afflictions to another, according to his wise but secret counsel. *They shall lie down alike in the dust*—All these worldly differences are ended by death, and they lie in the grave without any distinction till the time of the general resurrection. So that no man can tell who is good and who is bad, by events which befall them in this life. And if one wicked man die in a palace, and another in a dungeon, they will meet in the congregation of the dead and damned; and the worm that dieth not, and the fire that is not quenched, will be the same to both: which makes those differences inconsiderable, and not worth perplexing ourselves about.

Verses 27, 28. *Behold, I know your thoughts*—I perceive what you think and will object for your own defence; *and the devices*—Hebrew, מַחְשְׁבוֹתַי, *mezimmoth, machinations pravas, the evil thoughts, or, wicked designs and contrivances; which ye wrongfully imagine*—תַּחְמוֹסוֹ, *tachmosu, wrest, or violently force*, for they strained both Job's words and their own thoughts, which were biased by prejudice and passion; *against me*—For I well know that your discourses, though they be concerning wicked men in the general, yet are particularly levelled at me, that is, I know what you would insinuate by the speeches which you make, such as this which follows: *Where is the house of the prince?*—Of Job, or his eldest son, whose house God had lately overthrown; it is nowhere: it is lost and gone. *And where are the dwelling-places of the wicked?*—רֶשְׁהֵי, *reshagnim*, in the plural, of wicked persons in general. Are not their habitations overthrown? Do not they come to ruin? So the meaning of the question is, that it was apparent from common observation, that eminent judgments, even in this life, were sooner or later the portion of all ungodly men.

Verses 29, 30. *Have ye not asked them that go by*

A. M. 2484. way? and do ye not know their to-
B. C. 1520. kens,

30 'That the wicked is reserved to the day of destruction? they shall be brought forth to ¹¹ the day of wrath.

31 Who shall declare his way ^a to his face? and who shall repay him *what* he hath done?

¹ Prov. xvi. 4; 2 Peter ii. 9.—¹¹ Hebrew, *the day of wraths.*
^a Gal. ii. 11.

the way?—In these verses we have an answer to the preceding question; as if he had said, Even the travellers that pass along the road can inform you: it is so vulgar a thing that no man of common sense is ignorant of it. They can give you *tokens*, examples, or evidences of this truth. *That the wicked is reserved to the day of destruction*—That they are not punished as they deserve in the present world, and therefore that they shall be in the next. *They shall be brought forth to the day of wrath*—The day of future and final wrath, when God will judge the world in righteousness, and render unto every man according to his deeds, even *indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish, upon every soul of man that doeth evil*. "I believe," says Dr. Dodd, from Peters, "that by *the day of destruction and the day of wrath*, mentioned in this verse, can be meant no other than the future day of judgment; which, to the wicked and ungodly, is everywhere represented in Scripture as a day of wrath, a day of destruction and perdition. See 2 Thess. i. 9; 2 Pet. iii. 7. And it is remarkable that Job, when he declares to his friends that he had been all along withheld from sinning by a pious awe of the divine justice, (meaning, as I apprehend, the thoughts of a future judgment,) uses a like expression, chap. xxxi. 23. *Destruction from God was a terror to me; וַיֵּא, aid*, the very same word as is used here. To understand it of a temporal destruction is to suppose Job to cut the neck of his own argument, and to fall in directly with the reasoning of his friends; for thus it would stand, (verse 27,) '*Behold I know your thoughts, &c.*—I know what you would insinuate by the speeches which you make; such as this which follows, verse 28, *Where is the house? &c.* As if you should say, What is become of the house of Job, who lived like a prince? Or what, in general, is the portion of the wicked? Does not a great and sure destruction overtake them?' This is evidently the meaning of the question; the answer immediately follows, verse 29, *Ask those who go by the way, &c.* Now if this were meant of a temporal destruction, it directly confirms the insinuation of his friends, and the inference would be unavoidable; therefore Job must needs be wicked. The sense I contend for, must, therefore, needs be the true one."

Verse 31. *Who shall declare his way?*—That is, his wicked course and actions, and whither they lead him; *to his face*—That is, plainly, and while he lives, as the same phrase is used Deut. vii. 10. His power and splendour are so great that scarcely any man dare reprove him for his sin, or show him his

32 Yet shall he be brought to the ^{A. M. 2484.}
^{B. C. 1520.} grave, and shall ¹³ remain in the tomb.

33 The clods of the valley shall be sweet unto him, and ² every man shall draw after him, as *there are* innumerable before him.

34 How then comfort ye me in vain, seeing in your answers there remaineth ¹⁴ falsehood?

¹³ Heb. *graves.*—¹⁴ Heb. *watch in the heap.*—² Heb. ix. 27.
¹⁴ Heb. *transgression.*

danger. *And who shall repay him what he hath done?*—No man can bring him to an account or punishment. Job is here pursuing the same way of reasoning which he did before, and showing that the wicked mighty man is so far from being always punished in this world, that he often does what he pleases without any to control him, or so much as open their lips against him. And that such a one shall at last go down to the grave in peace, and be buried with great pomp.

Verse 32. *Yet*—Hebrew, *And*, the pomp of his death shall be suitable to the glory of his life; *shall he be brought to the grave*—With pomp and state, as the word *יובל, jubal*, signifies. Hebrew, *לקברות, likbaroth*, to the graves, that is, to an honourable and eminent grave; the plural number being often used emphatically to denote eminence. He shall not die a violent, but a natural death, and shall lie in the bed of honour. *And shall remain in the tomb*—Or, *watch in the heap*. His body shall quietly rest in his grave or monument, where he shall be embalmed and preserved so entire and uncorrupted that he might rather seem to be a living watchman, set there to guard the body, than to be a dead corpse. Hebrew, *ועל גריש שקור, vegnal gadish jishkod*, *over the tomb he shall watch*. "A stately monument," says Bishop Patrick, "is raised to preserve his memory, and represent him as if he were still living."

Verse 33. *The clods of the valley*—Or, the grave, which is low and deep like a valley; *shall be sweet unto him*—He shall sweetly rest in his grave, free from all cares, and fears, and troubles, chap. iii. 17, 18. *Every man shall draw after him*—Hebrew, *He shall draw every man after him*, into the grave; all that live after him, whether good or bad, shall follow him to the grave, shall die as he did. So he fares no worse herein than all mankind. He is figuratively said to *draw* them, because they come after him, as if they were drawn by his example. "There he lies," says Bishop Patrick, "quietly in the earth, and no one disturbs his ashes: he suffers nothing but what all men shall do after him, as innumerable have done before him."

Verse 34. *How then comfort ye me in vain?*—See then how ill you discharge the office of comforters, whose arguments have so little truth in them. Or, Why do you seek to comfort me with vain hopes of recovering my prosperity if I repent, seeing your grounds are manifestly false, and common experience shows, what also every body can tell you, that good men are very often in great tribulation, while the vilest of men thrive and prosper in the world.

CHAPTER XXII.

Eliphaz checks Job for his complaints of God, 1-4. Charges miseries on his sins, 5-14. Compares his case to that of the old world, 15-20. Assures him, that if he would return to God, he would show him mercy, 21-30.

A. M. 2484.
B. C. 1520.

THEN Eliphaz the Temanite answered and said,

2 *Can a man be profitable unto God, ¹as he that is wise may be profitable unto himself?*

3 *Is it any pleasure to the Almighty, that thou art righteous? or is it gain to him, that thou makest thy ways perfect?*

4 *Will he reprove thee for fear of thee? will he enter with thee into judgment?*

^a Psalm xxxv. 7; Psa. xvi. 2; Luke xvii. 10.—¹ Or, if he may be profitable, doth his good success depend thereon?—^b Exod. xiii. 26; Deuteronomy xxiv. 10; Chapter xxiv. 3, 9; Ezekiel xviii. 12.

NOTES ON CHAPTER XXII.

Verse 1. *Then Eliphaz answered*—Eliphaz, in this chapter, charges Job home with particular facts of cruelty and oppression, which he supposes him to be guilty of, though he cannot allege one proof of them; to which he adds the atrocious crime of atheism, and a denial or disbelief of God's providence; and this latter he assigns as the reason of Job's obstinacy in refusing to submit and acknowledge his guilt. He compares his wickedness to that of the mighty oppressors of the antediluvian world; to that of the inhabitants of Sodom and the cities of the plain; not obscurely intimating that his end would probably be the same as theirs, unless prevented by a speedy submission and full restitution; to which he therefore earnestly presses him, and endeavours to allure him by placing full in his view the great advantages he would probably reap from such a conduct.—Heath.

Verse 2. *Can a man be profitable unto God*—That is, add any thing to his perfection or felicity? namely, by his righteousness, as the next verse shows. Why then dost thou insist so much upon thy own righteousness, as if thou didst oblige God by it; or, as if he could not, without injustice, afflict thee, who supposeth thyself to be a righteous person? *As, or because, he that is wise*—He that is a truly righteous and good man; *may be profitable to himself*—Does much good to himself; promotes his own peace, and honour, and happiness, by his goodness. Because a wise man receives great benefit by his virtue, shall we think that God is a gainer by it too?

Verse 3. *Is it any pleasure to the Almighty that thou art righteous?*—That is, any such pleasure as he needs in order to his happiness? Heath renders it, *any advantage*. God, we know, approves of and accepts the good actions of his people, and is often said in Scripture to delight in them; but certainly cannot be advantaged by them. He needs not us or our services. We are undone, for ever undone, without him: but he is happy, for ever happy, without us.

Verse 4. *Will he reprove thee*—That is, rebuke, chastise, or punish thee; *for fear of thee?*—Because he is afraid lest, if he should let thee alone, thou

A. M. 2484.
B. C. 1520.

5 *Is not thy wickedness great? and thine iniquities infinite?*

6 *For thou hast ^btaken a pledge from thy brother for naught, and ²stripped the naked of their clothing.*

7 *Thou hast not given water to the weary to drink, and thou ^chast withholden bread from the hungry.*

8 *But as for ³the mighty man, he had the earth; and the ⁴honourable man dwelt in it.*

^b Heb. *stripped the clothes of the naked*.—^c Chap. xxxi. 17; Deut. xv. 7; Isa. lviii. 7; Ezek. xviii. 7, 16; Matthew xxv. 42.
³ Heb. *the man of arm*.—⁴ Heb. *eminent, or, accepted for countenance*.

wouldst grow too great and powerful for him: surely no. As thy righteousness cannot profit him, so thy wickedness can do him no hurt.

Verse 5. *Is not thy wickedness great?*—Thy great sins are the true and only cause of thy misery. Or, the verse may be translated, *Is not thy evil (thy affliction or punishment) great, because, יָרַקְתָּ, ein ketz, there is no end to thy iniquities?* Are not thy calamities procured by, and in proportion to thy sins? Thy conscience tells thee they are so. And therefore thou hast no reason to accuse God, or any person but thyself.

Verse 6. *For thou hast taken a pledge*—Or, *surely thou hast taken*. He speaks thus, by way of conjecture, or strong presumption: as if he had said, When I consider thy grievous and unusual calamities, I justly conclude thou art guilty of some, or all, of these following crimes; and do thou search thy own conscience whether it be not so with thee. *From thy brother*—Of thy neighbour, or of thy kinsman; *for naught*—Without a sufficient and justifiable cause. *And stripped the naked of their clothing*—By taking their garments for a pledge, and thereby rendering them naked; or, by robbing them of their rights, all other injuries being comprehended under this.

Verse 8. *The mighty man had the earth*—That is, he had the firm possession, or free enjoyment of it. Which is meant, either, 1st, of Job, of whom he speaks invidiously in the third person: as if he had said, The mighty man Job possessed, enlarged, and enjoyed his estate, without any compassion to the poor. Or, 2d, of other rich and potent men, who had the earth or land by Job's kindness and courtesy. The rich were always welcome to him; his house was open to them; his land was before them, when the poor were driven away from his house and territories. *The honourable man dwelt in it*—Either by Job's sentence or permission, he had a peaceable and sure possession of it, whether he had a right to it or not. Heath renders this verse, *But, as for the mighty man, the whole land was for him; and thy particular favourite, he might dwell in it.*

A. M. 2484. 9 Thou hast sent widows away
B. C. 1520. empty, and the arms of ^d the fatherless
have been broken.

10 Therefore ^e snares are round about thee,
and sudden fear troubleth thee;

11 Or darkness, *that* thou canst not see; and
abundance of ^f waters cover thee.

12 *Is* not God in the height of heaven? and
behold ^g the height of the stars, how high they
are!

13 And thou sayest, ^h How ⁱ doth God know?
can he judge through the dark cloud?

^d Chap. xxxi. 21; Isa. x. 2; Ezek. xxii. 7.—^e Chap. xviii. 8,
10; xix. 6.—^f Psa. lxix. 1; cxxiv. 4; Lam. iii. 54.—^g Heb.
the head of the stars.—^h Or, What.—ⁱ Psalm x. 11; lix. 7;
lxxiii. 11; xciv. 7.—^j Psa. cxxxix. 11.

Verse 9. *Thou hast sent widows*—Whose helpless state called for thy pity; *away empty*—Either by denying them that relief that their poverty required, or that right which their cause deserved; or, by spoiling them of their goods, because thou knewest them to be unable to oppose thee, or to defend themselves. *And the arms of the fatherless have been broken*—That is, all their supports and rights, a heinous sin, but falsely charged upon Job.

Verses 10, 11. *Therefore snares are round about thee*—For these and the like crimes thou art encompassed with dangers and calamities. *And sudden fear troubleth thee*—Besides thy present miseries, thou art tormented with the dread of further and greater judgments. *Or darkness, that thou canst not see*—Such confusion and perplexity of mind that thou canst not discern the true cause and use of thy sufferings; or grievous calamities, often called darkness, which are such that thou canst see no way or possibility of escaping; *and abundance of waters cover thee*—That is, a variety of sore afflictions, frequently compared to waters.

Verse 12. *Is not God in the height of heaven?*—Surely, he is; and from that high tower he looketh down upon men, to behold, and govern, and recompense all their actions, whether good or bad. And, therefore, O Job, thou art grossly mistaken, in thinking that good men suffer as deeply as any others in this lower world, while the vilest of men flourish and are exalted; which would imply that all things are managed here by chance, or without any regard to justice and to just men, and not by the wise and holy providence of God. *Behold the stars, how high they are*—Yet God is far higher than they, and from thence can easily observe all men and things here below.

Verse 13. *And—Or therefore, thou sayest, How doth God know? &c.*—From this true and certain principle, thou drawest a false and wicked conclusion, and fanciest, perhaps, that because he is so high he minds not what is done here below: or, that he cannot discern the difference of things so very remote, through those immense and innumerable clouds, which lie between the heaven and the earth.

14 ^h Thick clouds are a covering
A. M. 2484. to him, that he seeth not; and he
B. C. 1520. walketh in the circuit of heaven.

15 Hast thou marked the old way which
wicked men have trodden?

16 Which ⁱ were cut down out of time, ^j whose
foundation was overflown with a flood:

17 ^k Which said unto God, Depart from us:
and, ^l What can the Almighty do ^m for them?

18 Yet he filled their houses with good
things: but ⁿ the counsel of the wicked is far
from me.

^h Chap. xv. 32; Psa. lv. 23; cii. 24; Eccles. vii. 17.—ⁱ Heb.
a flood was poured upon their foundation, Gen. vii. 11; 2 Pet. ii.
5.—^j Chapter xxi. 14.—^k Psalm iv. 6.—^l Or, to them.
^m Chap. xxi. 16.

Verse 14. *Thick clouds are a covering to him*—He is surrounded, thou imaginest, with such thick clouds that they conceal us from his sight. *And he walketh in the circuit of the heaven*—His delight is in heaven, which is worthy of his care, but he will not burden himself with the care of earth; which was the opinion of many heathen philosophers, and, as his friends fancied, was Job's opinion also.

Verses 15, 16. *Hast thou marked the old way?*—Hebrew, ארץ עולם, *orach g'nom, the way of antiquity*, that is, of men living in ancient times, or former ages. And, by their *way*, he either means their course, and common practice, or their end and success. *Which were cut down out of time*—Before their time; who died a violent and untimely death. *Whose foundation was overflown, &c.*—Who, together with their foundation the earth, and all their supports and enjoyments, were destroyed by a flood of waters. As the universal deluge was a most signal and memorable instance of God's displeasure against wickedness and wicked men, and was, doubtless, very well known in those days, Eliphaz takes occasion to enlarge upon it, for five or six verses together, as a proper lesson (so he thought it) for his friend; and then closes it with the mention of another destruction by fire, either past or to be expected, which is described to be as general and as fatal to the wicked.

Verse 17. *Which said unto God, Depart from us*—He repeats Job's words, chap. xxi. 14, 15; but to a contrary purpose. Job alleged them to show that some men prospered, notwithstanding their professed wickedness, and Eliphaz produces them to show that they were cut off for it. *And, What can the Almighty do for them?*—Thus did that wicked generation, whom Noah had in vain called to repentance, as it were, defy God, contemning both his threatenings and his promises.

Verse 18. *Yet he filled their houses with good things*—Yet it is true, that for a time God did prosper them, but, at last, cut them off in a tremendous manner. *But the counsel of the wicked, &c.*—He repeats Job's words, (chap. xxi. 16,) not without reflection: thou didst say so, but against thy own princi-

A. M. 2484. 19 ^a The righteous see it, and are
B. C. 1520. glad: and the innocent laugh them
to scorn.

20 Whereas our ^b substance is not cut down,
but ^c the remnant of them the fire consu-
meth.

^a Psa. lviii. 10; cvii. 42.—^b Or, estate.—^c Or, their excellence.

ple, that God carries himself indifferently toward good and bad; but I, who have observed God's terrible judgments upon wicked men, have much more reason to abhor their counsels.

Verse 19. *The righteous see it*—Whom God often spares in common calamities, and gives them to see the destruction of the wicked; as Noah, Lot, &c. *And are glad*—Not that they insult over, or rejoice in, the ruin of any men, but because they delight in the vindication of God's honour, and justice, and holiness, which is connected with the destruction of his enemies, and which is, and ought to be, dearer to them than all the interests of men. *And the innocent laugh them to scorn*—Justly deride them, for their vain and strong confidences, which are now destroyed; for their profane contempt of God's wrath and judgments, which they now feel; and for their deep and crafty counsels, which are now frustrated and turned against themselves.

Verse 20. *Whereas*—Or rather, *seeing that, or, because*, when wicked men are destroyed, they are preserved. He should have said *their substance*; but he changes the person, and saith, *our substance*; either as including himself in the number of righteous persons, and thereby intimating that he pleaded the common cause of all such, while Job pleaded the cause of the wicked; or because he would hereby thankfully acknowledge some eminent and particular preservation given to him among other righteous men. *The remnant of them*—All that was left undestroyed in the general calamity. *The fire consumeth*—He is thought by some to allude to the judgment of God upon Sodom and Gomorrah: as if he had said, Thou mayest find here and there an instance of a wicked man dying in peace. But what is that to the two great instances of the final perdition of ungodly men, the drowning the whole world, and the burning of Sodom and Gomorrah. It seems, however, much more natural, as Dr. Dodd observes, to understand him as referring to the last general conflagration: "for how could the destroying a little city or two be said, with any propriety, to consume the remnant; that is, the whole remainder of wicked men? when, at the very same time, Chaldea, and perhaps the greatest part of the world, was overrun with idolatry. The dissolution of the world by fire is what St. Peter calls expressly, *The day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men*, 2 Pet. iii. 7. And St. Jude, verse 14, seems to say, that this was prophesied of by Enoch before the flood; and if so, must have been known to Noah, and by him, no doubt, transmitted to posterity, and so might be well known to Job and his friends." Eliphaz, therefore,

21 Acquaint now thyself¹¹ with him, A. M. 2484.
and ^o be at peace: thereby good shall B. C. 1520.
come unto thee.

22 Receive, I pray thee, the law from his mouth, and ^p lay up his words in thy heart.

¹¹ That is, with God.—^o Isa. xxvii. 5.—^p Psa. cxix. 11.

may be understood as saying, Though the judgment by water, extensive as it was, did not thoroughly purge the world, but wickedness and wicked men again sprung up, spread widely, and abounded; yet know, there shall come a time hereafter when the world shall be consumed by fire, and then the whole race and remainder of wicked men shall be delivered up, once for all, to such an absolute destruction, as that none shall ever spring from their ashes, nor shall the new world and its inhabitants know wickedness, or a defection from God any more. If this view of the passage be admitted, it will appear that the doctrine of the future dissolution of the world by fire, so plainly taught us in the New Testament, and so immediately connected with that of the resurrection, was not unknown in Job's time, and consequently we shall have a further confirmation of the interpretation we have given of chap. xix. 25, and some other passages in this book. See Peters, p. 409; and the xxivth, xxvth, and xxvith chapters of Isaiah, where the prophet seems to speak copiously on this subject, using an expression, chap. xxvi. 11, very like to this of Eliphaz. *The fire of thine enemies*, which is prepared for thine enemies, *shall consume them*.

Verse 21. *Acquaint now thyself with him*—That is, with God, as appears both from verse 23, where he is expressed, and from the nature of the matter in hand, there being no other way to happiness. Renew thy acquaintance with God by prayer, and repentance for all thy sins, and true humiliation under his hand, and hearty compliance with all his commands, and diligent care to serve and enjoy him. It is our honour, that we are made capable of this acquaintance; our misery, that by sin we have lost it; our privilege, that through Christ we may return to it; and our unspeakable advantage, to renew and cultivate it. *And be at peace*—At peace with God, and at peace with thyself; not fretful or uneasy. *Good shall come unto thee*—All the good thou canst desire, temporal, spiritual, eternal.

Verse 22. *Receive the law from his mouth*—Take the rule, whereby thou mayest govern thy thoughts, and words, and whole life, not from idolaters and profane heathen, whose opinion concerning God's providence thou appearest to have embraced, nor from thy own imaginations or violent passions, which have led thee into thy present errors; but from God, and from his law, which is written in thy own mind, and from the doctrines and instructions of the wise and holy men of God, who are all of our mind in this matter. *And lay up his words in thy heart*—Not only hear them with thine ears, but let

A. M. 2484. 23^a If thou return to the Almighty,
B. C. 1520. thou shalt be built up, thou shalt put
away iniquity far from thy tabernacles.

24 Then shalt thou^r lay up gold¹² as dust, and
the gold of Ophir as the stones of the brooks.

25 Yea, the Almighty shall be thy¹³ defence,
and thou shalt have¹⁴ plenty of silver.

26 For then shalt thou have thy^a delight in

^a Chap. viii. 5; xi. 13.—^r 2 Chron. i. 15.—¹² Or, on the dust.
¹³ Or, gold.

them sink into thy heart, being received there with hearty affection, and fixed by the serious, frequent, and practical consideration of them.

Verse 23. *If thou return to the Almighty*—The Hebrew phrase, תשוב ער שר, *tashub gnad shaddai*, is emphatical, and implies a thorough turning from sin to God, so as to love him, and cleave to him, and sincerely devote a man's self to his fear and service. *Thou shalt be built up*—God will repair thy ruins, and give thee more children, and bless thee with prosperity. *Thou shalt put away iniquity, &c.*—It is either, 1st, A spiritual promise; if thou dost sincerely repent, God will give thee grace effectually to reform thyself and family: or, 2d, A temporal promise, meaning, *thou shalt put away the punishment of thy sins*, as iniquity is very often used; *far from thy tabernacles*—From all thy dwellings, and tents, and possessions.

Verses 24, 25. *Then shall thou lay up gold*—The word בצר, *batzer*, here rendered *gold*, is a word of dubious meaning. R. Levi, indeed, makes it parallel to *zahab, gold*: Ab. Ezra, to *cheseph, silver*. "In Arabic," says Chappelow, "it sometimes signifies some particular stones, diversified with white lines. And this, perhaps, is the true sense of the term." *As dust*—In great abundance. Or, as על עפר, *gnal gnaphar*, rather means, *upon the dust, or ground*. It shall be so plentiful, and therefore vile, that thou shalt not lock it up in chests, but scatter it anywhere, and suffer it to lie, even upon the ground; *as the stones of the brook*—As if pieces of gold were but so many pebble-stones, which are to be found in or near every brook. *Yea, the Almighty shall be thy defence*—Against the incursions of neighbouring spoilers: thy wealth shall not then lie exposed, as it did to Sabceans and Chaldeans; God, by his watchful providence, shall protect thee from all dangers and calamities. *And thou shalt have plenty of silver*—The Hebrew, ככף חופפות, *cheseph tognapoth*, is literally, *argentum virium tibi*, or, *the strength of silver shall be to thee*: that is, shall by God's blessing be thy defence, Eccles. vii. 12; or, as the phrase may be rendered, *silver of heights*, that is, high and heaped up like a mountain. Henry very properly calls our attention here to the margin, which reads *gold* instead of *defence* in the former clause of the verse, the original word being the same with that rendered *gold*, verse 24. Thus interpreted the sense is, *The Almighty shall be thy gold, and silver of strength to thee;*

the Almighty, and^t shalt lift up thy
face unto God. A. M. 2484.
B. C. 1520.

27^u Thou shalt make thy prayer unto him, and
he shall hear thee, and thou shalt pay thy vows.

28 Thou shalt also decree a thing, and it shall
be established unto thee: and the light shall
shine upon thy ways.

29 When *men* are cast down, then thou

^u Heb. *silver of strength*.—^t Chap. xxvii. 10; Isa. lviii. 14.
^v Chap. xi. 15.—^w Psa. l. 14; Isa. lviii. 9.

which translation is perfectly agreeable to the Hebrew. On this the same pious author observes, "Worldlings make gold their god; saints make God their gold: they that are enriched with his favour and grace may truly be said to have abundance of the best gold, and best laid up."

Verse 26. *For then shalt thou have thy delight in the Almighty*—Thou shalt find delight, not only or chiefly in these outward comforts, but also and especially in God, whose face shall shine upon thee; and who shall give thee these things, not in anger, as he doth to wicked men, but as pledges of his love and favour to thee, and of those greater and eternal blessings which he hath in store for thee. And accordingly thou shalt delight thyself in him as worldly people delight themselves in their money, and shalt find real and continual pleasure in worshipping, obeying, and serving him in and with all his mercies. Thus these words contain a reason why he might confidently expect all those forementioned blessings, because he should set his affections on God, and possess his favour, which is the spring and foundation of all good. *And lift up thy face unto God*—Look up to him with cheerfulness and confidence.

Verse 27. *Thou shalt make thy prayer unto him*—Hebrew, תתור אליו, *tangter eelaiu*, thou shalt pray earnestly and importunately, or, *thou shalt multiply thy prayer*. Under all thy burdens, in all thy wants, cares, and fears, thou shalt apply to heaven for wisdom, strength, and comfort. *Thou shalt pay thy vows*—Thou shalt obtain those blessings for which thou didst make vows to God, and therefore, according to thy obligation, shalt pay thy vows to him.

Verses 28, 29. *It shall be established*—Thy purposes shall not be disappointed, but ratified by God. And in all thy counsels and actions God shall give thee the light of his direction and governance, and of comfort and success. *When men are cast down*—When, in a time of general calamity, all are cast down round about thee, cast down in their affairs, cast down in their spirits, sinking, desponding, ready to despair; when *men's hearts fail them for fear*. or, rather, according to the Hebrew, (in which there is nothing for *men*, and which is only כִּי הִשְׁפִּילוּ, *chi hishpilu, cum depresserint*,) when they have cast thee down, or, when thou art cast down; when God, in the course of his providence, shall bring thee, or suffer thee to be brought, into any trouble which he

A. M. 2484. shalt say, *There is lifting up*; and
B. C. 1520. * he shall save ¹⁵ the humble per-
son.

* Prov. xxix. 23; James iv. 6; 1 Pet. v. 5.—¹⁶ Heb. *him that hath low eyes.*

sees will be good for thee; *thou shalt say*—Within thyself, with good confidence and assurance; *There is lifting up*—Or, *there shall be lifting up*; either, 1st, For them, who, if they repent and humble themselves, shall be preserved and restored: or, rather, for thee and thine: God will deliver thee, when others are crushed and destroyed. Hebrew, *Thou shalt say, הַלְלוּ, geval, exaltation!* an expression to be admired for its conciseness and comprehensiveness. Thou shalt expect exaltation in the time of depression; nay, thy depression shall be in order to, and the means of, thy exaltation. And thou shalt find that consolation in thyself, which will not only bear thee up under thy troubles, and keep thee from fainting, but lift thee up above thy troubles, and enable thee to rejoice notwithstanding them. *And he*—God, from whom alone cometh salvation; *shall save*—Temporally from the evils here mentioned, and eternally from other and infinitely greater evils; *the humble person*—Hebrew, שַׁח עֵינָיִם, *shach gneinaim, him that hath low or cast-down eyes*; which phrase may denote, either, 1st, Humility and lowliness of mind,

30 ¹⁶ He shall deliver the island of A. M. 2484.
the innocent: and it is delivered by B. C. 1520.
the pureness of thy hands.

¹⁶ Or, *the innocent shall deliver the island, Genesis xviii. 26, &c.*

as pride is often expressed by high or lofty looks; and so this is a tacit reproof of Job, for his confident justification of himself: or, 2d, Lowness of state and condition, as James i. 10. And so understood, it describes him, whose eyes and countenance are dejected by reason of great troubles and miseries.

Verse 30. *He*—Whose prerogative it is to give deliverances; *shall deliver*—Namely, upon thy request, as the following clause shows; *the island of the innocent*—Not only thyself, when thou shalt become innocent, or righteous, but, for thy sake, he will deliver the whole island, or country, in which thou dwellest: God will have so great a respect to thy innocence, that for thy sake he will deliver those that belong to thee, or live with thee, or near thee, though, in themselves, they be ripe for destruction. *By the pureness of thy hands*—By thy prayers, proceeding from a pure heart and conscience. So Eliphaz and his two friends, who, in this matter, *were not innocent*, were delivered by *the pureness of Job's hands*, chap. xlii. 8.

CHAPTER XXIII.

Here seems to be a struggle throughout this chapter between nature and grace. Job complains of his condition, yet with an assurance of God's clemency, 1-7. He cannot understand God's dealings, nor hope for relief, yet holds fast his integrity, 8-14. He is in deep trouble, 15-17.

A. M. 2484. **T**HEN Job answered and said,
B. C. 1520. 2 Even to-day is my complaint

¹ Hebrew,

bitter: ¹ my stroke is heavier than my A. M. 2484.
groaning. B. C. 1520.

my hand.

NOTES ON CHAPTER XXIII.

Verse 1. *Then Job answered*—Job, being exceedingly grieved by the freedom which Eliphaz had taken with him in his last speech, charging him directly with the most enormous sins, (see the 15th and following verses,) turns and appeals to God, according to his custom, and earnestly begs he would hear the matter fully, and determine between him and his friends. The passage from this to the end of the 10th verse is peculiarly fine, and well worthy of the reader's deep attention. In it Job fully answers the charge of Eliphaz concerning his denial or disbelief of the Divine Providence; and observes, that this was so far from being the case, that there was nothing he so much lamented as that he was excluded from God's presence, and not permitted to draw near and make his defence before him; having the testimony of his own conscience respecting his integrity, and not doubting but he should make his cause good. He then shows, that

his cause was far from being singular, for that many other dispensations of God's providence were equally difficult to be accounted for, at least by human understanding; and that it was this which filled him with greater apprehensions. He expresses his desire that God, in the course of his providence, would make a more visible distinction between the righteous and the wicked in this world, that good men might not fall into such mistakes in censuring suffering innocence. He concludes with showing what, according to their principles, ought to be the general course of providence with regard to wicked men, which, however, it was notorious was not the case: and since it was not, it was plain that he had proved his point, and the falsity of their maxim was apparent: and their censuring him merely for his sufferings was a behaviour by no means justifiable.—Heath.

Verse 2. *Even to-day is my complaint bitter*—Even at this time notwithstanding all your pro-

A. M. 2484. 3 ^a O that I knew where I might
B. C. 1520. find him! *that* I might come *even* to
his seat!

4 I would order *my* cause before him, and fill
my mouth with arguments.

5 I would know the words *which* he would
answer me, and understand what he would say
unto me.

6 ^b Will he plead against me with *his* great
power? No; but he would put *strength* in
me.

^a Chap. xiii. 3; xvi. 21.—^b Isa. xxvii. 4, 8; lviii. 16.—^c Chap.
ix. 11.

mises and pretended consolations. For your dis-
courses give me neither relief nor satisfaction. Hence
in this and the following chapter Job seldom applies
his discourse to his friends, but either addresses his
speech to God, or bewails his misery. *My stroke is
heavier than my groaning*—The hand or stroke of
God upon me exceeds my complaints.

Verses 3-5. *O that I knew where I might find
him!*—Namely, God, as his friends well knew.
Thou advisest me to acquaint myself with him, I
desire nothing so much as his acquaintance and
presence; but, alas! he hides his face from me, that
I cannot see or come near him. *That I might come
even to his seat*—To his throne or judgment-seat,
to plead my cause before him. *I would order my
cause*—Declare in order the things which concern
my cause, would set it in a true light, and show the
justice of it, and that *before him*, who searches my
heart. *And fill my mouth with arguments*—To
prove my sincerity and innocence toward him, and
consequently, that my friends accuse me falsely. *I
would know what he would say to me*—If he should
discover to me any secret sins, for which he con-
tendeth with me, I would humble myself before
him, and accept of the punishment of mine iniquity.

Verse 6. *Will he plead against me*—Hebrew,
יָרִיב עִמָּי, *jarib gnmadi*, contend with me; with
his great power—בְּרַב כֹּחַ, *berob choach*, in the great-
ness, or extent, of his strength. Will he use his
sovereign and absolute power to oppress me, as men
do those whom they cannot fairly answer? *No,
but he would put strength in me*—He would not use
his power against me, but for me; by enabling me
to plead my cause, and giving sentence according to
that clemency which he uses toward his children.
The word *strength*, though not in the text, is rightly
added by our translators to complete the sense.

Verse 7. *There*—At that throne of grace, where
God lays aside his majesty and power, and judges
according to his wonted grace and clemency; *the
righteous*—Such as I trust I am in sincerity and
truth; *might dispute with him*—Humbly and mo-
destly propound the grounds of their confidence and
the evidences of their righteousness. *So*—Upon such
a fair and equal hearing; *should I be delivered from
my judge*—From the severe censures of all corrupt
and partial judges, such as my friends are, or rather,

7 There the righteous might dispute ^{A. M. 2484.}
with him; so should I be delivered ^{B. C. 1520.}
for ever from my judge.

8 ^c Behold, I go forward, but he *is* not *there*;
and backward, but I cannot perceive him:

9 On the left hand, where he doth work, but
I cannot behold *him*: he hideth himself on the
right hand, that I cannot see *him*:

10 But he ^d knoweth ² the way that I take:
when ^e he hath tried me, I shall come forth as
gold.

^d Psa. cxxxix. 1, 3.—^e Heb. *the way that is with me.*—^f Psa.
xvii. 3; lxvi. 10; James i. 12.

from the condemnatory sentence of God; for he is
supposed to be pleading, not only *before* God, but
with him. This and some such expressions of Job
cannot be excused from irreverence toward God, and
too great confidence in himself; for which, there-
fore, God afterward reproves him, and Job abhors
himself.

Verses 8, 9. *I go forward*—קִדְמָה, *kedem*, ad orien-
tem, toward the east: אַחֲרָי, *achor*, ad occidentem,
toward the west; so the Vulgate, which is likewise
the interpretation of the Jewish commentators, who
by the *left hand*, and the *right*, in the next verse,
understand the *north* and the *south*. They have a
tradition that Adam was created with his face placed
toward the east, that he might see the rising sun.
From whence they say the *east* was to him *kedem*,
the anterior part of the world. From that situation
they named the other quarters. But Job in both
these verses certainly intended nothing more than
that, let him turn himself which way he pleased, in
no place could he find God present, namely, as a
judge to hear and determine his cause, of which he
is speaking: for, otherwise, he knew God was essen-
tially present in all places. *On the left hand where
he doth work*—That is, in a special and peculiar man-
ner, say some interpreters, both Jewish and Chris-
tian, the north being the more habitable and more
populous part of the world. *Ibi gentes*, says Cart-
wright, *rebus gestis et bello omni aro clarissima*:
*ibi evangelium generalius et luculentius promulga-
tum*. "There the nations have flourished, most
famous in all ages for exploits and war; and there
the gospel has been more generally and successfully
promulgated." All this may be true, yet as the
whole world is God's workmanship, and is continu-
ally preserved by him, and as his providential care
reacheth equally to every part, no one place is here
intended to be signalized more than another, with
regard to the works of God. *He hideth himself on
the right hand*—He moves and works invisibly in
all quarters of the world, but yet I cannot behold
him appear as my judge, nor discover him to plead
my cause in his sight.

Verse 10. *But he knoweth the way that I take*—
My comfort is, that, though I cannot see him, and
know all his ways, and the reasons of his dispensa-
tions; yet he, being everywhere present, always

A. M. 2484. 11 My foot hath held his steps, his way have I kept, and not declined.

12 Neither have I gone back from the commandment of his lips; I have esteemed the words of his mouth more than my necessary food.

13 But he is in one mind, and who can turn him? and what his soul desireth, even that he doeth.

^f Psa. xlv. 18.—^g Heb. *I have hid, or, laid up.*—^h John iv. 32, 34.—ⁱ Or, *my appointed portion.*

sees me, knows my heart and life, and observes the whole course of my conduct, my internal desires and designs, and the counsels of my heart, as well as my outward words and actions. It is a great comfort to those who are upright in their intentions, and mean honestly, that God understands their meaning though men do not, cannot, or will not. *When he hath tried me*—When he hath proved me by these afflictions, as gold is tried by the fire; *I shall come forth as gold*—Which comes forth from the furnace pure from all dross. The Hebrew is absolute, בכונני, *bechanani, He hath tried me, I shall come forth, &c.* They that keep the way of the Lord may comfort themselves when they are in affliction with these three things: 1st, That they are but tried; it is not intended for their hurt, but for their honour and benefit; it is the trial of their faith, 1 Pet. i. 7. 2d, That when they are sufficiently tried, they shall come forth out of the furnace, and not be left to consume in it, as dross or reprobate silver. The trial will have an end; *God will not contend for ever.* 3d, That they shall come forth as gold, pure in itself, and precious to the refiner. They shall come forth as gold approved and improved; found to be good, and made to be better. Afflictions are to us, as we are; those that go gold into the furnace will come out no worse.

Verses 11, 12. *My foot hath held his steps*—Either the steps or ways in which God himself walks; the paths of justice, mercy, and holiness, wherein Job had made it his care to walk with, or after God, as the phrase is, Gen. v. 24; or, which is the same thing, the steps or paths which God hath appointed men to walk in. These, Job says, *his foot had held*, that is, he had made a free and fixed choice of them; had taken fast hold of them; had been strongly and firmly resolved and settled to walk in them. *Neither have I gone back*—Turned aside to either crooked or sinful path, or course of life. *I have esteemed the word of his mouth*—Hebrew, תצפנתי, *tzaphanti; abscondi, reposui, I have hid, or laid it up*, as men do their best treasures, or what they most love and value. The expression signifies a high esteem for it, a hearty affection to it, and a diligent care to preserve it. *More than my necessary food*—Or, *my appointed, or daily portion*; that food or provision which is necessary for the support of my life, (as the same word is used Gen. xlvii. 22; Prov. xxx. 8; and xxxi. 15.) and which is more prized and desired than

14 For he performeth the thing that is appointed for me: and many such things are with him.

15 Therefore am I troubled at his presence: when I consider, I am afraid of him.

16 For God maketh my heart soft, and the Almighty troubleth me:

17 Because I was not cut off before the darkness, neither hath he covered the darkness from my face.

^b Chapter ix. 12; xii. 14; Romans ix. 19.—^c Psalm cxv. 3. ^d 1 Thess. iii. 3.—^e Psa. xxii. 14.

all the riches of the world. There is, however, nothing in the Hebrew for the word *food*, which our translators have supplied, the term חוקי, *chokki*, meaning simply *statutum, vel, præscriptum mihi*, what is appointed or prescribed to me. Chappelow, therefore, renders the whole verse thus: "As to the commandment of his lips, I have made no digression: according to what is prescribed me, I have kept the words of his mouth."

Verse 13. *He is of one mind*—The word *mind* is not in the Hebrew, which is only באחד, *beehad, he is in one*, namely, in one way, or purpose, or counsel. Notwithstanding all these evidences of my sincere piety, and all my prayers to him, he still continues in the same course of afflicting me. *And who can turn him?*—No man can change his counsels or course of acting. He is most absolute and free, to do what he pleaseth, and he deals with me accordingly, and not by those milder methods which he uses toward other men. *What his soul desireth, even that he doeth*—He will not do what I please or desire, but only what he pleases.

Verses 14, 15. *He performeth, &c.*—Hebrew, ישלם חקי, *jashlim chukki, he will perfect, or finish, my appointed portion*, that is, those calamities which he hath allotted to me for my portion. *And many such things are with him.* There are many such examples of God's proceeding with men; and his counsels and providences, though always just, yet are often secret; and we cannot discern the reasonableness or equity of them. *Therefore am I troubled at his presence, &c.*—When I set this great and holy God before me, and reflect that I am in his presence, I am troubled at the consideration of his glorious majesty, and sovereign, irresistible power, by which he can do whatsoever pleaseth him, without giving any account of his matters. There is, indeed, that in God which, if we consider, we shall see cause to be afraid of him: his infinite justice and purity, compared with our sinfulness and vileness; but if, withal, we consider his grace in a Redeemer, and are conscious of our compliance with that grace, the fears will vanish, and we shall see cause to hope in him.

Verses 16, 17. *For God maketh my heart soft*—Or, *tender*; he hath bruised and broken, or melted it, so that I have no spirit, or courage, or strength in me: so this, or the like phrase, frequently signifies. There is a gracious softness of heart, like that of Jo-

siah, whose heart was tender, and trembled at the word of God: but this is meant of an afflictive and painful softness, which apprehends every thing that is present to be pressing, and every thing that is future to be threatening. *Because I was not cut off before the darkness*—Because God did not cut me off by death before these dark and dismal miseries came upon me. Or, as כַּפְנֵי חוֹשֶׁךְ, *mippenei choshech*, may be properly rendered, *before the face, or, by reason of the darkness*; that is, God hath not yet cut me off by these calamities, but prolonged my days under them, to the great increase of my misery. *Neither hath he covered the darkness from my face*—That I might no longer see or feel my miseries, but might be taken out of them by my long-desired

death. Thus Job seems to be disposed to quarrel with God, because he did not die before his troubles; and yet, it is probable, that if, in the height of his prosperity, he had received a summons to the grave, he would have thought it hard. It may help to reconcile us to death, whenever it comes, to consider that we do not know from what evil we may be taken away. But when trouble is actually come upon us, it is folly to wish we had not lived to see it; and it is much better to look to God for grace, that we may be enabled to make the best of it; and to remember, amidst the darkness, that frequently *to the upright there ariseth a marvellous light in the darkness*, and that there is reserved for them a much more marvellous light after it.

CHAPTER XXIV.

Job shows that open sinners are often prosperous, 1-12. That secret sinners often pass undiscovered, 13-18. That God punishes such by secret judgments, and reserves them for future judgment, 19-25.

A. M. 2484.
B. C. 1520.

WHY, seeing ^a times are not hidden from the Almighty, do they that know him not see his days?

^a Acts i. 7.—^b Deut. xix. 14; xxvii. 17; Prov.

NOTES ON CHAPTER XXIV.

Verse 1. *Why, &c.*—Job, having by his complaints, in the foregoing chapter, given vent to his passion, and thereby gained some ease, breaks them off abruptly, and now applies himself to a further discussion of the doctrinal controversy between him and his friends, concerning the prosperity of wicked people. That many live at ease, who yet are ungodly and profane, and despise all the exercises of devotion, he had showed, chap. xxi. Now he goes further, and shows that many who are mischievous to mankind, and live in open defiance of all the laws of justice and common honesty, yet thrive and succeed in their unrighteous practices; and we do not see them reckoned with in this world. He first lays down his general proposition, That the punishment of wicked people is not so visible and apparent as his friends supposed, and then proves it by an induction of particulars. *Why*—How comes it to pass; *seeing times are not hidden from the Almighty*—Seeing the fittest seasons for every action, and particularly for the punishment of wicked men, are not unknown to God: *do they that know him*—That love and obey him; *not see his days?*—The times and seasons which he takes for the punishment of ungodly men; which times are frequently called *the days of the Lord*, as Isa. ii. 12, and xiii. 6; Jer. xlv. 10; Acts ii. 20. Surely, if they were constant and fixed in this life, they would not be unknown to good men, to whom God is wont to reveal his secrets. His words may be paraphrased a little more at large, thus: To answer a little what you have so often asserted: If punishments from God upon the wicked, in this world, are so certain as you say,

A. M. 2484.
B. C. 1520.

2 Some remove the ^b landmarks; they violently take away flocks, and ¹ feed thereof.

xxii. 28; xxiii. 10; Hos. v. 10.—¹ Or, feed them.

why do not they who are truly pious see them openly inflicted? Surely it is most strange, that there are not some certain fixed times when God arises publicly, and in the face of the whole world inflicts these deserved punishments upon the wicked. Whereas, experience shows, that these visible judgments are very rarely inflicted, and many true worshippers of God pass through the world without ever seeing any thing of this kind. Heath renders the verse, *Why are not stated seasons set apart by the Almighty? And why do not those who know him see his days?* namely, of vengeance on the wicked.

Verse 2. *Some, &c.*—In proof that wicked persons prosper, he instances in two sorts of unrighteous people, whom all the world saw thriving in their iniquity: 1st, Tyrants, and those that did wrong under pretence of law and authority; and, 2d, Robbers and plunderers, that did wrong by downright force, as the bands of the Sabians and Chaldeans, who had lately plundered him. *Remove the landmark*—By which men's lands are distinguished, and their properties secured, that so they may enlarge their own border by diminishing the estate of their neighbour—which is so great an act of injustice that it was not only very strictly forbidden by God in his law, but also declared execrable by the heathen, among some of whom it was permitted to any man to kill him that did it. Forging or destroying deeds is now a crime equivalent to this. *They violently take away flocks, and feed thereof*—They take away cattle by force, and use them as if they were their own. Or, *they feed them*; they do not hide, or kill them, but openly feed them in

A. M. 2484. 3 They drive away the ass of the
B. C. 1520. fatherless, they ° take the widow's ox
for a pledge.

4 They turn the needy out of the way: ° the
poor of the earth hide themselves together.

5 Behold, as wild asses in the desert, go they
forth to their work; rising betimes for a prey:
the wilderness *yieldeth* food for them and for
their children.

6 They reap *every one* his ° corn in the field:
and ° they gather the vintage of the wicked.

7 They ° cause the naked to lodge without

clothing, that *they have* no covering A. M. 2484.
in the cold. B. C. 1520.

8 They are wet with the showers of the
mountains, and ° embrace the rock for want of
a shelter.

9 They pluck the fatherless from the breast,
and take a pledge of the poor.

10 They cause *him* to go naked without
clothing, and they take away the sheaf from
the hungry;

11 *Which* make oil within their walls, and
tread *their* wine-presses, and suffer thirst.

° Chap. xxii. 6; Deut. xxiv. 6, 10, 12, 17.—^d Prov. xxviii. 28.
^e Heb. mingled corn, or, dredge.—^f Heb. the wicked gather the

vintage.—^g Exod. xxiii. 26; Deut. xxiv. 12; Chap. xxii. 6.
^h Lam. iv. 5.

their pastures, without any remorse, or shame, or
fear of punishment, either from God or man.

Verses 3, 4. *They drive away the ass of the
fatherless*—Whose helpless condition required their
pity and mercy. He says, *the ass*, to aggravate
their sin, in that they robbed him who had but one
ass. *They take the widow's ox*—Thereby depriving
her, not only of the ox itself, but of all the benefit
of its labours, by which her life was sustained; for
a *pledge*—Contrary to God's law, first written in
men's hearts, and afterward in the Holy Scriptures,
Exod. xxii. 26. *They turn the needy out of the way*
—Out of the way of piety and virtue. They engage
them to take evil courses by their examples, or pro-
mises, or threatenings. Or, out of their right, of
which they deprive them, by subtlety or power. Or,
rather, as the word כירר, *midtarech*, more pro-
perly signifies, and as the next clause explains it,
out of the highway, out of the path or place in
which these oppressors walk and range. These
needy persons labour to keep out of their way for
fear of their further injuries and oppressions. *The
poor of the earth hide themselves, &c.*—For fear of
these wicked tyrants and persecutors.

Verse 5. *Behold, as wild asses*—Which are law-
less and fierce, and greedy of prey; *in the desert*—
Which is the proper habitation of wild asses, Jer.
ii 24: *they go forth to their work*—These oppressors
go forth to spoil and rob, which is their constant
work and trade: *rising betimes for the prey*—Be-
ginning their work of plunder before the poor go to
their daily labour. *The wilderness yieldeth food
for them*—They are so diligent and industrious in
their wicked work, that they fetch food for them-
selves and families even out of desert places, in
which the owners can with difficulty subsist.

Verse 6. *They reap every one his corn in the
field*—The words, *every one*, are not in the original,
and ought not to have been inserted here, as they
alter the sense. The clause would be better trans-
lated without them. *They reap his corn in the
field*; that is, these plunderers make incursions,
reap and take away the corn of the honest, indus-
trious husbandman, which he had sown for the sup-
port of his family. *They gather the vintage of the*

wicked—Or, rather, the vintage of wickedness; that
is, they plunder the vineyards of the honest, just
man, as well as his corn-fields.

Verse 7. *They cause the naked*—That is, those
whom they have made naked, whom they have
stripped of their garments and coverings; so far
were they from exercising charity or even justice
toward them; *to lodge without clothing*—To sleep
in the night without bed-clothes to cover them; *that
they have no covering in the cold*—Of the night, in
the winter season. This verse perhaps would be
better rendered thus, *They cause men to lodge naked,
because they have no clothing*, (that is, because they
leave them nothing wherewith they can clothe them-
selves,) *and no covering in the cold*; they leave
them neither raiment to wear in the day, nor a
covering in the night.

Verse 8. *They are wet*—That is, the poor, being
stripped of their raiment, and forced away from their
houses; *with the showers of the mountains*—With
the rain-water, which, in great showers, runs down
from the rocks or mountains into the caves or holes
in the sides of them, to which they have fled for
shelter. *And embrace the rock*—That is, are glad
when they can find a cavern, or cleft of a rock, in
which they may have some protection against the
injuries of the weather, and a hiding-place from the
fury of their oppressors.

Verses 9, 10. *They*—The wicked oppressors;
pluck the fatherless from the breast—Either out of
cruelty, not sparing poor infants, or out of covetous-
ness, not allowing the mother time for the suckling
of her infant. *They take away the sheaf from the
hungry*—That single sheaf, which the poor man had
got with the sweat of his brow, to satisfy his hunger.

Verses 11, 12. *Which make oil within their walls*
—The walls of the rich oppressors, for their use and
benefit. *And tread their wine-presses*—That is, the
grapes in their wine-presses; *and suffer thirst*—
Because they are not permitted to quench their
thirst out of the wine which they make. *Men
groan*—Under the burden of injuries and grievous
oppressions; *from out of the city*—Not only in
deserts, or less inhabited places, where these tyrants
have the greater opportunity to practise their vil-

A. M. 2484. 12 Men groan from out of the city,
B. C. 1520. and the soul of the wounded crieth out:
yet God layeth not folly to them.

13 They are of those that rebel against the light; they know not the ways thereof, nor abide in the paths thereof.

14 ^s The murderer rising with the light killeth the poor and needy, and in the night is as a thief.

15 ^b The eye also of the adulterer awaiteth for the twilight, ⁱ saying, No eye shall see me: and ^d disguiseth his face.

[†] Psa. x. 8.—^h Prov. vii. 9.—^{—i} Psa. x. 11.—^{—d} Heb. setteth

lanies; but even in cities, where there is a face of order, and government, and courts of justice, and a multitude of people to observe and restrain such actions; whereby they plainly declare that they neither fear God nor reverence man. *The soul of the wounded crieth out*—The life or blood of those who are wounded to death (as the word חָלָלִים, *chalalim*, properly signifies) crieth aloud to God for vengeance; yet God layeth not folly to them—Does not appear to impute, or lay to their charge, this folly, or wickedness; does not punish them for it as it deserves.

Verse 13. *Those that rebel against the light*—Who sin impudently, in the face of the sun, and obstinately, in spite of all their light, as well the light of reason and conscience, which abhors and condemns their wicked actions, as the light of divine revelation, which was then, in good measure, imparted to the people of God, and shortly after committed to writing; all which they set at defiance, sinning with manifest contempt of God, and of men, and of their own consciences. *They know not the ways thereof*—That is, of the light, or such ways and courses as are agreeable to the light; they do not approve, love, or choose them. *Nor abide in the paths thereof*—If they begin to walk in those paths, and do some good actions, yet they do not persevere in well-doing: they are not constant and fixed in a good course of life.

Verses 14, 15. *The murderer rising with the light*—As soon as the light appears, using no less diligence in his wicked practices than labourers do in their honest and daily employments; *killeth the poor and needy*—Where he finds nothing to satisfy his covetousness, he exerciseth his cruelty. *And in the night is as a thief*—He is really a thief; the particle *as* being often used to express, not the resemblance, but the truth, of the thing. In the night they rob men secretly and cunningly, as in the day-time they do it more openly and avowedly. *The adulterer waiteth for the twilight*—Namely, for the evening twilight, which is his opportunity; *saying*—In his heart; *No eye shall see me*—Comforting himself with the thoughts of secrecy and impunity; *and disguiseth his face*—Hebrew, *putteth his face in secret*; covers it with a mask that he may not be discovered.

590

16 In the dark they dig through houses, which they had marked for themselves in the day-time: they ^k know not the light.

17 For the morning is to them even as the shadow of death: if one know them, they are in the terrors of the shadow of death.

18 He is swift as the waters; their portion is cursed in the earth: he beholdeth not the way of the vineyards.

19 Drought and heat ^s consume the snow-waters: so doth the grave those which have sinned.

his face in his secret.—^k John iii. 20.—^s Heb. violently take.

Verses 16, 17. *In the dark they dig through houses*—Either the adulterer last mentioned, or rather the thief or robber, whose common practice this is, of whom he spake, verse 14; and having, on that occasion, inserted the mention of the adulterer, as one who acted his sin in the same manner as the night thief did, he now returns to the latter again: *which they had marked for themselves*—Distinguishing, by some secret mark, the house of some rich man which they intended to rob, and the part of the house where they resolved to enter it. *They know not the light*—Do not love nor make use of it, but abhor and shun it. *For the morning is as the shadow of death*—Terrible and hateful, because it both discovers them and hinders their practices. *If one know them, &c.*—If they are brought to light, or discovered, they are overwhelmed with deadly horrors and terrors.

Verse 18. *He is swift as the waters*—That is, the wicked man quickly passeth away, with all his glory, as the waters, which never stay in one place, but are always hasting away. *Their portion*—Or, his portion (for he still speaks of the same person, though with a change of the number) *is cursed in the earth*—His habitation and estate, which he leaves behind him, is accursed of God; and, by all men who live near it, or observe it, is pronounced accursed, because of the remarkable judgments of God upon it, and upon his posterity or family, to which he left it, and from whom it is strangely and unexpectedly alienated. *He beholdeth not the way of the vineyards*—He shall never more see or enjoy his vineyards, or other pleasant places and things, which seem to be comprehended under this particular. Thus, though Job constantly maintains against his friends, that many ungodly men do prosper, and escape punishment, in this life, yet, withal, he asserts that God will certainly, sooner or later, punish them; and that he sometimes doth it here, cutting them off by cruel and untimely deaths, or otherwise inflicting some notable judgment upon them, of which he also speaks chap. xxi. 17.

Verse 19. *Drought and heat consume the snow-waters*—As the snow, though it doth for a time lie upon the ground, yet at last is dissolved into water by the heat of the season, and that water is

2

A. M. 2484. 20 The womb shall forget him; the
B. C. 1520. worm shall feed sweetly on him; ¹ he shall be no more remembered; and wickedness shall be broken as a tree.

21 He evil-entreateth the barren *that* beareth not: and doeth not good to the widow.

22 He draweth also the mighty with his power: he riseth up, ⁶ and no *man* is sure of life.

¹ Prov. x. 7.—⁶ Or, *he trusteth not his own life.*

quickly swallowed up by the earth when it is dry and thirsty; so ungodly sinners, though they live and prosper for a season, yet at last shall go into the grave, which will consume them, together with all their hopes and comforts; their merry life is followed by a sad and ofttimes sudden death; not with such a death as the godly die, which perfects them, and brings them to happiness, but with a consuming and never-dying death.

Verse 20. *The womb shall forget him*—His mother that bare him, and much more the rest of his friends, shall seldom or never mention or remember him, but shall rather be ashamed to own their relation to one that lived such a vile and wretched life, and died such an accursed death. This portion he shall have, instead of that honour and renown which he thirsted and laboured for, and expected should perfume his name and memory. *The worm shall feed sweetly on him*—This proud and insolent tyrant, that preyed upon all his neighbours, shall himself become a prey to the contemptible worms; *he shall be no more remembered*—Namely, with honour, or so as to be desired; but his name shall rot, and scarcely ever be mentioned but with infamy. *And wickedness shall be broken*—The wicked man shall be broken to pieces, or violently broken down, as the word *תִּשְׁבֵּר*, *tishaber*, signifies; shall be utterly and irrecoverably destroyed; *as a tree*—Which being once broken never groweth again.

Verse 21. *He evil-entreateth the barren*—Job here returns to the declaration of his further acts of wickedness, the causes of these judgments; *that beareth not*—Barrenness was esteemed a curse and reproach; and so it is mentioned as an instance of this man's wickedness, that he added affliction to the afflicted, whom he should have pitied and helped; but because the barren had no children, and the widows no husbands to defend or avenge their cause, he exercised cruelty upon them.

Verse 22. *He draweth also the mighty with his power*—He draweth into his net, as Psa. x. 9, or to his party, to assist and serve him in his enterprises, those who are mighty in place, or wealth, or power; he practiseth upon these as well as upon the poor: *he riseth up*—Namely, against any man, as the same word *קָם*, *kum*, is rendered, Psa. xviii. 39, and xlv. 5. When he sets himself against a man and resolves to destroy him, *no man is sure of life*—None of them, whom he so opposes, can be secure of holding his life, but all such give themselves up as lost men, as knowing they cannot resist his greater power.

23 *Though* it be given him *to be* A. M. 2484.
in safety, whereon he resteth; yet ^m his B. C. 1520.
eyes *are* upon their ways.

24 They are exalted for a little while, but ⁷ are gone and brought low; they are ⁸ taken out of the way as all *other*, and cut off as the tops of the ears of corn.

25 And if *it be* not so now, who will make me a liar, and make my speech nothing worth?

^m Psa. xi. 4; Prov. xv. 3.—⁷ Heb. *are not.*—⁸ Heb. *closed up.*

Verse 23. *Though it be given him*—Namely, of God; *to be in safety*—That is, Though God granteth to the oppressor to be for a time in apparent safety, and to live a comfortable life; *whereon he resteth*—His former experience of God's long-suffering makes him confident of the continuance of it, so that he is not only happy in his present enjoyments, but also in his freedom from distracting fears of future miseries; *yet his eyes are upon their ways*—That is, the eyes of God, who, although he gives wicked men such strange successes and great prosperity, yet he sees and observes them all, and marks their whole conduct, and will in due time punish them severely.

Verse 24. *They are exalted for a little while*—They live in honour and prosperity, but not for ever; it is only, at the most, during this short and mortal life, which lasts but for a very little time; and, therefore, their present happiness is not to be envied; nor is it any reproach to God's providence, which has time enough to reckon with them hereafter; *but are gone*—Hebrew, *אֵינֶנּוּ*, *einennu*, *are not*; namely, in this world, they die. *And are brought low*—As low as their graves. *They are taken out of the way*—Out of this world; *as all other*—They can no more prevent, or delay their death, than the meanest men in the world: *and cut off*—By the sickle of death, perhaps by the hand of violence; *as the tops of the ears of corn*—When in its greatest height and maturity; when they are arrived at their perfect stature of worldly power and glory, then God cuts them off, and that suddenly and unexpectedly.

Verse 25. *And if it be not so now*—Namely, as I have discoursed; if God does not often suffer wicked men to live long and prosperously in the world, before he punishes them; and if good men be not sometimes sorely afflicted here; if all things do not fall alike to all men in these matters; and if it do not from hence follow, that I am unjustly injured and condemned: *who will make me a liar?* Or, as Sol. Jarchi interprets the words, Let one of you come and make me a liar, *and make my speech nothing worth*—Let them that can undertake to prove that my discourse is either false in itself, and then they prove me a liar; or foreign, and nothing to the purpose, and then they prove it frivolous and nothing worth. That, indeed, which is false is nothing worth: where there is not truth, how can there be goodness? But they that speak the words of truth and soberness, need not fear having what they say brought to the test, but can cheerfully submit it to a fair examination, as Job here submits what he had spoken.

CHAPTER XXV.

Bildad, still thinking that Job had made too bold with the Divine Majesty, in his appeals to his tribunal, shows, in a few words, the infinite distance there is between God and man; teaching us, (1.) To think highly and honourably of God, 2, 3, 5. (2.) To think meanly of ourselves, 4, 6. Which, however misapplied to Job, are two good lessons for us all to learn.

A. M. 2484. **THEN** answered Bildad the Shu-
B. C. 1520. hite, and said,

2 Dominion and fear *are* with him, he maketh peace in his high places.

3 Is there any number of his armies? and

^a James i. 17.

NOTES ON CHAPTER XXV.

Verse 1. *Then answered Bildad*—Who makes the last weak effort against Job; and being unable to deny the truth of his assertions, but at the same time unwilling to give up the argument, shelters himself behind the acknowledged attributes of God, *power, justice, and purity*, and the infirmities of human nature. Probably he and the rest of Job's friends now perceived that Job and they did not differ so much as they had thought. They owned that the wicked might prosper for a while; and Job owned they would be destroyed at the last. As to the point of bringing Job to confess himself guilty of some enormous crimes, which they at first rashly supposed had drawn this heavy judgment upon him, that is completely given up, and Bildad satisfies himself with an evasive answer to what Job had observed on that head, to this purpose, namely, that no man, strictly speaking, can be justified before God; man being at best a frail and fallible creature, and God a being of infinite purity and perfection; an argument which concerned Job no more than themselves, but equally involved them all in the same class of sinners. This answer has no reference to what Job spake last, but to that which seemed most reproveable in all his discourses, his censure of God's proceedings with him, and his desire of disputing the matter with him. Bildad's sentiments are extremely good and pious, but they are but little to the purpose, since he is now reduced to advance what Job had never disputed. "As we here take our leave," says Dr. Dodd, "of the arguments urged by Job's friends, we may just observe, in conclusion, that nothing could be more untoward than this conduct of theirs, to bring a charge against him which they could not prove, and from which his well-known virtue and integrity of life ought to have screened him. But, though Job very plainly shows them the injustice and inhumanity of this procedure; nay, though he confutes them so far that they had nothing to reply, yet, like modern disputants, they stood out to the last, and had not the grace to own their mistake, till God himself was pleased to thunder it in their ears. Here, then, we have a lively instance of the force of prejudice and prepossession."

Verse 2. *Dominion and fear are with him*—Absolute and sovereign power over all persons and things, so that it is both rebellion and madness to contend with him; and terror, which justly makes

upon whom doth not ^a his light arise? A. M. 2484. B. C. 1520.

4 ^b How then can man be justified with God? or how can he be clean *that is* born of a woman?

^b Chap. iv. 17; xv. 14, &c.; Psa. cxxx. 3; cxliii. 2.

him dreadful to all men, and especially to all that undertake to dispute with him. In other words, awful majesty and infinite knowledge are his, whereby he is much better acquainted with men's hearts and ways than they are themselves, and sees much sin in them, which themselves do not discover; and to him belong also exact purity and justice, which render him formidable to sinners. These are with him whom thou challengest; with him who is not lightly and irreverently to be named, much less to be contended with; and therefore it is thy duty to humble thyself before him, and quietly and modestly to submit thyself and thy cause to his pleasure. *He maketh peace in his high places*—This clause, as well as the following verse, seems to be added, to prove God's dominion and dreadfulness; he keepeth and ruleth all persons and things in heaven, in peace and harmony. The angels, though they be very numerous, all own his sovereignty, and acquiesce in his pleasure. The stars, though vast in their bulk, and various in their motions, exactly keep the order which God hath appointed them: and therefore it is great folly for thee to quarrel with the methods of God's dealings with thee.

Verse 3. *Is there any number of his armies?*—Of his angels, and stars, and other creatures, all which are his hosts, wholly submitting themselves to his will, to be and to do whatever he pleases. And, therefore, how insolent and unreasonable a thing it is to quarrel with him, or resist his will! *Upon whom doth not his light arise?*—The light of the sun is communicated to all parts of the world. This is a faint resemblance of the cognizance and care which God takes of the whole creation. All are under the light of his knowledge: all partake of the light of his goodness: his pleasure is to show mercy: all the creatures live upon his bounty.

Verse 4. *How then can man be justified with God?*—That is, before God's tribunal, to which thou dost so boldly appeal. Thou mayest plead thy cause with thy fellow-worms, as we are, and expect to be justified; but wo to thee, if the great God undertake to plead his cause against thee: how severely and certainly wouldest thou be condemned! The word used for man here, שׂוֹאֵל, *enosh*, signifies *miserable man*, which supposes him to be sinful; and that such a creature should quarrel with that dominion of God to which the sinless, and happy, and glorious angels willingly submit, is absurd and impious.

A. M. 2484. 5 Behold even to the moon, and
B. C. 1520. it shineth not; yea, the stars are not
pure in his sight.

c Psalm

Verse 5. *Behold, even to the moon, and it shineth not*—The moon, though bright and glorious, if compared with the divine majesty, is without any lustre or glory. By his naming the moon, and thence proceeding to the stars, he shows that he includes the sun also, and all other creatures, and signifies that the brightest and most glorious objects in nature shine not when compared with God's ineffable and essential brightness. Indeed, the highest order of beings make but small advances to the essential perfection which is in him; so that, when a comparison

6 How much less man, *that is* ° a worm; and the son of man, *which is* a worm?

A. M. 2484.
B. C. 1520.

xxii. 6.

is made, their highest purity will be little less than impurity, when brought before the standard of divine perfection.

Verse 6. *How much less man, that is a worm*—Mean, vile, and impotent; proceeding from corruption, and returning to it. *And the son of man*—For *miserable man*, in the last clause, he here puts the *son of any man*, to show that this is true, even of the greatest and best of men. Let us then wonder at the condescension of God, in taking such worms into covenant and communion with himself!

CHAPTER XXVI.

Job observes, that Bildad's discourse was foreign to the matter, 1-4. Enlarges on the power and greatness of God, which yet are unsearchable, 5-14.

A. M. 2484. BUT Job answered and said,
B. C. 1520. 2 How hast thou helped him
that is without power? *how* savest thou the
arm *that hath* no strength?

3 How hast thou counselled him *that hath* no

wisdom? and *how* hast thou plentifully
declared the thing as it is?

A. M. 2484.
B. C. 1520.

4 To whom hast thou uttered words? and
whose spirit came from thee?

5 Dead things are formed from under the

NOTES ON CHAPTER XXVI.

Verse 1. *But Job answered and said*—Job, finding his friends quite driven from their strong hold, and reduced to give up the argument, now begins to triumph, verses 2, 3. He tells them, if the business was to celebrate the power and wisdom of the Almighty, he could produce as many shining instances of it as they could; but, at the same time, he intimates that their behaviour was mean, after so great a parade of wisdom as they had exhibited, to shelter themselves at last behind the power of God, rather than generously give up an argument which they were unable to maintain, and acquit him of a suspicion which they were not capable of supporting by a conviction.—Heath.

Verse 2. *How hast thou helped him that is without power?*—Thou hast helped excellently! It is an ironical expression, implying quite the contrary, that he had not helped at all. As if he had said, I am a poor helpless creature, my strength and spirits are quite broken with the pains of my body, and the perplexities of my mind; and humanity and religion should have taught thee to support and comfort me, with representations of the goodness and promises of God, and not to terrify and overwhelm me with displaying his sovereign majesty, his glorious holiness, and inflexible justice, the thoughts whereof are already so discouraging and dreadful to me.

Verse 3. *How hast thou counselled him that hath no wisdom?*—Me, whom thou takest to be void of understanding, and whom, therefore, thou oughtest to have instructed with wholesome counsels, instead of those impertinent discourses which thou hast de-

livered. But, as the words, *him that hath*, are not in the original, the text would be better rendered, *Why dost thou counsel without wisdom? And how hast thou plentifully declared the thing as it is?*—*And the essence, truth, or substance*, (so the word *ותושה*, *vetushiah*, signifies,) namely, of the thing in question between us, *in abundance thou hast made known*; thou hast spoken the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, and all that can be said in the matter! A most wise and profound discourse thou hast made, and much to the purpose! An ironical expression as before. But the word *לרב*, *la-rob*, which we translate, *plentifully*, or, *in abundance*, may be read, *la-rib*, *to contention*: and then the clause will bear a clearer sense, thus: *Why dost thou discover truth or wisdom for the sake of contention?*

Verse 4. *To whom hast thou uttered words*—For whose instruction hast thou uttered these things? For mine? Dost thou think I do not know that which the meanest persons are not unacquainted with; that God is incomparably greater and better than his creatures? *Whose spirit came from thee*—Who inspired thee with this profound discourse of thine?

Verse 5. *Dead things, &c.*—That is, according to several interpreters, those seeds which are sown and die in the earth quicken again and grow. Or, as R. Levi rather thinks, an allusion is made to those *vegetables, stones, or metals*, which are found in the earth under the waters. The Hebrew word here for dead things is *רפאים*, *rephaim*, which is generally rendered *dead men*; thus, Psa. lxxxviii. 10, we read, *Wilt thou show wonders to methim, the dead?* Shall

A. M. 2484. waters, ¹ and the inhabitants thereof.
B. C. 1520.

6 ^a Hell is naked before him, and destruction hath no covering.

7 ^b He stretcheth out the north over the

¹ Or, with the inhabitants.—^a Psa. cxxxix. 8, 11.; Heb. iv. 13.

rephaim, the dead, arise and praise thee? Isa. xxvi. 14. *The dead, methim*, shall not live: *the deceased, rephaim*, shall not rise. In these passages, therefore, and many others that might be produced, *methim* and *rephaim* are both translated *dead* or *deceased*. Instead of this, however, the LXX., the Vulgate Latin, and the Targum, render *rephaim, giants, or mighty men*. "Their interpretation is very just," says Chappelow, "if, as R. Bechai writes, they were so named because their countenance was so austere, that whoever looked on them, *manus ejus remissa fuerunt, his hands were weakened with the terror that was upon him*, (Buxtorf in *rapha*.) From hence it is that our learned Mede explains *rephaim*, in Prov. xxi. 16, not of the *dead*, but of the *giants* or *rebels* against God, of whom we read, Gen. vi., namely, those mighty men of the old world, whose wickedness was so great as to occasion the deluge. Therefore, to 'remain in the congregation of *rephaim*,' is the same as to go and keep them company; that is, to go to that accursed place and condition in which they are. Thus, S. Jarchi's gloss is, *In cætu rephaim*, that is, *in cætu gehinnom, the congregation of those in hell*. His gloss is the very same on our text here in Job. Again, Prov. ix. 17, 18, 'He knoweth not that *rephaim, the dead*, (the mighty ones,) are there, and that her (the harlot's) guests are in the depths of hell,' that is, she will bring them, who frequent her, to hell, to keep the apostate giants company. From all which we conclude, with the ingenious author above mentioned, that the place before us, and the verse following, seem to be no other than a description of hell." Peters, Dodd, and many other critics, view the passage in the same light. Houbigant renders it, *Behold the giants tremble beneath the waters in their habitations*; and, he says, "Job means those giants who were overwhelmed with the flood; having their overthrow as immediately present before his eyes, because the deluge at this time was fresh in the memory of men." Poole, whose note on the passage is well worth the reader's attention, comprehends all the forementioned particulars in his interpretation, thus: Job, having censured Bildad's discourse, proceeds to show how little he needed his information in that point. He shows that the power and providence of God reach not only to the things we see, but also to the invisible parts of the world; not only to the heavens above and their inhabitants, and to men upon earth, of which Bildad discoursed, chap. xxv. 2, 3, but also to such persons or things as are under the earth, or under the waters; which are out of our sight and reach, yet not out of the view of Divine Providence: including, 1st, *dead* or *lifeless things*, such as amber, pearl, coral, metals, or other minerals, which are *formed* or *brought forth*, by the almighty power of God, *from under the waters*;

empty place, and hangeth the earth upon nothing. A. M. 2484. B. C. 1520.

8 ^c He bindeth up the waters in his thick clouds; and the cloud is not rent under them.

^b Chap. ix. 8; Psa. xxiv. 2; civ. 2, &c.—^c Prov. xxx. 4.

either in the bottom of the sea, or within the earth, which is the lowest element, and in the Scripture and other authors spoken of as under the waters. And, 2d, *dead men*, and the worst of them, such as died in their sins, and after death were condemned to further miseries; of whom this very word seems to be used, (Prov. ii. 18, and ix. 18,) who are here said to *mourn* or *groan from under the waters*, from the lower parts of the earth; or from under those subterranean waters which are supposed to be within and under the earth; and from under the *inhabitants thereof*; either of the waters or of the earth, under which these waters are; or with the other *inhabitants thereof*; of that place under the waters; namely, the apostate spirits. So the sense is, that God's dominion is over all men, yea, even the dead, and the worst of them, who, though they would not own God, nor his providence, while they lived, yet now are forced to acknowledge and feel that power which they despised, and bitterly mourn under the sad effects of it in their infernal habitations.

Verse 6. *Hell is naked before him*—Is in his presence, and under his providence. Hell itself, that place of utter darkness, is not hid from his sight. *Destruction*—The place of destruction, *hath no covering*—Such as can conceal it from his view.

Verse 7. *He stretcheth out the north*—The northern part of the heavens, which he particularly mentions, and puts for the whole visible heavens, because Job and his friends lived in a northern climate; *over the empty space*—Hebrew, על תרו, *gnal tohu, over the vacuity*, or emptiness; the same word which Moses uses, Gen. i. 2, which does not prove that the author of this book lived after Moses wrote the book of Genesis, and had seen that book, but only that Moses's account of the creation is the ancient and true account, well known in the days of Job and his friends, and therefore alluded to here. *And hangeth the earth upon nothing*—Upon its own centre, which is but an imaginary thing, and, in truth, nothing; or, he means, upon no props, or pillars, but his own power and providence. Bishop Patrick's paraphrase is, "By his wonderful power and wisdom he stretches out the whole world from the one pole to the other, which he alone sustains; as he doth this globe of earth hanging in the air, without any thing to support it."

Verse 8. *He bindeth up the waters*—Those fluid and heavy bodies, pressing downward with great force; *in his thick clouds*—As it were in bags, keeping them there suspended often for a long time; *and the cloud is not rent under them*—But sustains them, notwithstanding their great weight, so that they do not burst forth all at once, and fall suddenly and violently upon the earth, but distil in dews, drops, and showers, to moisten, refresh, and fertilize it in due season.

A. M. 2484. 9 He holdeth back the face of his
B. C. 1520. throne, and spreadeth his cloud upon it.

10 ^d He hath compassed the waters with bounds, ² until the day and night come to an end.

11 The pillars of heaven tremble, and are astonished at his reproof.

^a Chap. xxxviii. 8; Psa. xxxiii. 7; civ. 9; Prov. viii. 29; Jer. v. 22.—³ Heb. *until the end of light with darkness.*

Verse 9. *He holdeth back*—Namely, from our view, that its efulgent brightness may not dazzle our sight; *the face of his throne*—The heaven of heavens, where he dwells, its light and glory being too great for mortal eyes; *and spreadeth his clouds upon it*—And thereby mercifully hides from our eyes those overpowering splendours which we could not bear to behold. Bishop Patrick, however, understands this merely of God's covering the face of the sky with clouds, to prevent "the beams of the sun from scorching the earth."

Verse 10. *He hath compassed the waters*—Namely, of the sea; for of the waters of the clouds he had just spoken; *with bounds*—With rocks and shores, and principally his own decree, formed at the creation, and renewed after the deluge, (Gen. ix. 11, 15,) that the waters should not overwhelm the earth; *until the day and night come to an end*—Until the end of the world, for so long these vicissitudes of day and night are to continue.

Verse 11. *The pillars of heaven tremble*—Perhaps the mountains, which by their height and strength seem to reach and support the heavens. *And are astonished at his reproof*—When God reproveth not them, but men by them, manifesting his displeasure by thunders or earthquakes.

Verse 12. *He divideth the sea with his power*—“By his power he raises tempests, which make great furrows in the sea, and divideth, as it were, one part of it from another;” *and by his understanding he smiteth through the proud*—“And, such is his wisdom, he knows how to appease it again, and repress its proud waves into the dearest calm.”—Bishop Patrick. Waterland and Schultens render רַגְעַת הַיָּם, *ragang hajam, he shaketh the sea.* Bishop Warburton tells us, that the destruction of Pharaoh and his host in the Red sea is here plainly referred to, and that רַחַב, *rahab*, rendered *proud*, signifies *Egypt*. But Mr. Peters justly observes, “Others may see nothing more in it than the description of a storm or tempest. The Hebrew word translated *divide*, is not the same that is used, Exod. xiv., of the Red sea, but signifies a violent *breaking* and *tossing* of the waves as in a storm. And if the former part of the sentence means that God sometimes, by his power, raises a violent storm at sea, the latter may well enough be understood of the pride and swelling of the sea itself, allayed again by the same divine power and will which raised it.”

Verse 13. *By his Spirit*—Either, 1st, By his divine virtue or power, called his Spirit, Zac. iv. 6; Matt. xii. 28. Or, 2d, By his *Holy Spirit*, to which the creation of the world is ascribed, Gen. i. 2; Job

12 • He divideth the sea with his A. M. 2484.
power, and by his understanding he B. C. 1520.
smiteth through ³ the proud.

13 ^f By his Spirit he hath garnished the heavens; his hand hath formed ^e the crooked serpent.

^e Exod. xiv. 21; Psalm lxxiv. 13; Isaiah li. 15; Jer. xxxi. 35.
³ Heb. *pride.*—^f Psa. xxxiii. 6.—^e Isa. xxvii. 1.

xxxiii. 4. *He hath garnished the heavens*—Adorned or beautified them with those glorious lights, the sun, moon, and stars. *His hand hath formed the crooked serpent*—By which he may mean all kinds of serpents, with fishes and monsters of the sea. It is the same word that is used for leviathan, Isa. xxvii. 1, of which the Targum understands it, and perhaps may be intended of the whale or crocodile. Chappelow, who gives us divers senses of the word רַחַב, *bariach*, here rendered *crooked*, and used as an epithet to designate the kind of serpent intended, observes that, in any of those senses, it is applicable to the great dragon, that old serpent called the *devil* and *Satan*, which *deceiveth the whole world*, Rev. xii. 9, and xx. 2. For (to allude to those senses of the word) that *crooked, apostate serpent was formed*, was *brought forth*, was *wounded even to death*, by God, *fled* from his vengeance, *grieved*, and *trembled*. “It may well be asked,” says the learned Bishop Sherlock, who is of the same mind, and thinks that by the *crooked serpent* here is meant that apostate spirit who tempted Eve under the form of a serpent, “how come these disagreeable ideas to be joined together? How comes the *forming of a crooked serpent* to be mentioned as an instance of almighty power, and to be set, as it were, upon an equal footing with the creation of the heavens, and all the host of them? When you read the whole chapter, all the images in which are great and magnificent, can you possibly imagine that the forming the crooked serpent, in this place, means no more than that God created snakes and adders? This surely cannot be the case. If we consider the state of religion in the world when this book was penned, it will help to clear this matter up. The oldest notion in opposition to the supremacy of the Creator is that of two independent principles; and the only kind of idolatry mentioned in the book of Job, and it was of all others the most ancient, is the worship of the sun and moon, and heavenly host. From this Job vindicates himself, chap. xxxi. 26, &c. Suppose Job now to be acquainted with the fall of man, and the part ascribed to the serpent of the introduction of evil; and see how aptly the parts cohere. In opposition to the idolatrous practice of his time, he asserts God to be the Maker of all the hosts of heaven. *By his Spirit hath he garnished the heavens*—In opposition to the false notion of two independent principles, he asserts God to be the Maker of him who was the first author of evil; *his hand hath formed the crooked serpent*—You see how properly the *garnishing of the heavens* and the *forming of the serpent* are joined together. That this is the ancient traditionary ex-

A. M. 2484. 14 Lo, these are parts of his ways ;
B. C. 1520. but how little a portion is heard of

him? but the thunder of his power A. M. 2484.
who can understand? B. C. 1520.

planation of this place we have undeniable evidence from the translation of the LXX., who render the latter part of this verse, which relates to the serpent, in this manner: *By a decree he destroyed the apostate dragon.* The Syriac and Arabic versions are to the same effect. These translators apply the place to the punishment inflicted on the serpent, and it comes to the same thing; for the punishing the serpent is as clear an evidence of God's power over the author of evil as the creating him."

Verse 14. *Lo, these are parts of his ways*—But very small parcels even of those of his works which are visible to us. For it would be a vain and fruitless labour should I undertake to speak of all the wonders of the Creator. His works are so many, so great, and so far surpassing our narrow conceptions, that we can never hope to arrive at a perfect knowledge of them all, or even of any of them. We must

be content to stand, as it were, at a distance, and, with profound reverence, take a short, imperfect view of a few mere sketches of the effects of his wonder-working power. *But how little a portion is heard of him?*—Of his wisdom, and power, and providence. If these his external and visible works be so stupendous, how glorious then must be his invisible, and more internal perfections and operations! For what we see or know of him is nothing in comparison of what we do not know, and of what is in him, or is done by him. *But the thunder of his power who can understand?*—Either, first, Of his mighty and terrible thunder, which is often mentioned as an eminent work of God. Or, second, Of his almighty power, which is properly compared to thunder, in regard of its irresistible force, and the terror which it causes to wicked men.

CHAPTER XXVII.

Job protests his integrity, 1-6; and his dread of hypocrisy, 7-10. Shows the miserable end of the wicked, notwithstanding their long prosperity, 11-23.

A. M. 2484. **M**OREOVER, Job ¹ continued his
B. C. 1520. parable, and said,

2 As God liveth, ^a who hath taken away my judgment; and the Almighty, *who* hath ² vexed my soul;

3 All the while my breath *is* in me, and ³ the spirit of God *is* in my nostrils;

4 My lips shall not speak wickedness, nor my tongue utter deceit.

¹ Heb. added to take up.—^a Chap. xxxiv. 5.—² Heb. made my soul bitter, Ruth i. 20.—³ That is, the breath which God gave

5 God forbid that I should justify A. M. 2484.
you: till I die ^b I will not remove B. C. 1520.
mine integrity from me.

6 My righteousness I ^c hold fast, and will not let it go: ^d my heart shall not reproach me ^e so long as I live.

7 Let mine enemy be as the wicked, and he that riseth up against me as the unrighteous.

him, Gen. ii. 7.—^b Chapter ii. 9; xiii. 15.—^c Chapter ii. 3
^d Acts xxiv. 16.—^e Heb. from my days.

NOTES ON CHAPTER XXVII.

Verses 1-4. *Job continued his parable*—His grave and weighty discourse. *As God liveth*—He confirms the truth of his expressions by an oath, because he found them very backward to believe what he professed. *Who hath taken away my judgment*—Who, though he knows my integrity, yet does not plead my cause against my friends. *All the while my breath is in me*—Which is the constant companion and certain sign of life; or my soul or life is in me; and *Spirit of God*—Or rather, *the breath of God; is in my nostrils*—I protest, that as long as I have breath in my body, and he shall enable me to speak a word; *my lips shall not speak wickedness, &c.*—My tongue shall be the faithful interpreter of my heart, and I will never speak otherwise than I think.

Verses 5, 6. *God forbid that I should justify you*—In your opinion concerning me, and censure of

me; *till I die, &c.*—Never hope that I will yield to your judgment, which I know to be false: no, I abhor the thought of it, and will sooner die than confess the guilt which you charge upon me. *My righteousness I hold fast*—You shall never extort that from me, but I will resolutely maintain my uprightness, and not be persuaded by any reason to desert its defence. *My heart shall not reproach me, &c.*—With betraying my own cause and innocence; my conscience doth not hitherto, accuse me, and it shall not upbraid me hereafter.

Verse 7. *Let mine enemy be as the wicked*—I am so far from loving and practising wickedness, whereof you accuse me, that I abhor the thoughts of it; and if I might and should wish to be revenged of mine enemy, I could wish him no greater mischief than to be a wicked man. This does not imply that we may lawfully wish any man to be wicked, or that any man who is not wicked should be treated as

A. M. 2484. 8 * For what is the hope of the
B. C. 1520. hypocrite, though he hath gained,
when God taketh away his soul?

9 † Will God hear his cry, when trouble cometh
upon him?

10 * Will he delight himself in the Almighty?
will he always call upon God?

11 I will teach you † by the hand of God: *that*
which is with the Almighty will I not conceal.

12 Behold, all ye yourselves have seen it;
why then are ye thus altogether vain?

* Matt. xvi. 26; Luke xii. 20.—† Chap. xxxv. 12; Psa. xviii. 41; cix. 7; Prov. i. 28; xxviii. 9; Isa. i. 15; Jer. xiv. 12; Ezek. viii. 18; Mic. iii. 4; John ix. 31; James iv. 3.

wicked; but we ought all rather to choose to be in the condition of a beggar, an outlaw, a galley-slave, any thing rather than in the condition of the wicked, though in ever so much outward pomp and prosperity.

Verse 8. *What is the hope of the hypocrite, though he hath gained?*—There is no reason why I should envy or desire the portion of wicked men: although they oftentimes prosper in the world, and seem to be great gainers; yet death, which hasteneth to all men, and to me especially, will show that they are far greater losers, and die in a most wretched and desperate condition, having no hope either of continuing in this life, which they chiefly desire, or of enjoying a better life, which they never regarded. But I have a firm and well-grounded hope, not of that temporal restitution which you promise, but of a blessed immortality after death; and therefore I am not a hopeless hypocrite, as you think me to be. *When God taketh away his soul*—When, much against his will, and by an act of violence, (as the word *יָשַׁח*, *jeshel*, here used, signifies,) God, as the Judge, takes his soul out of his body, that it may be tried and determined to its everlasting state. What will his hope be then? It will be vanity and a lie; it will stand him in no stead. The wealth of this world, which he hoped in, he must leave behind him, and the happiness of the other world, which he hoped for, he will certainly fall short of; his hopes, therefore, will disappoint and make him ashamed.

Verse 9. *Will God hear his cry when trouble cometh?*—When any calamity comes upon him; or, when his conscience accuses him, and his guilt flies in his face? Will God pay any regard to the cries of one who regarded him so little?

Verse 10. *Will he delight himself in the Almighty?*—When he has nothing else to delight in? No: his delight is in the things of the world, which now sink under him. *Will he always call upon God?*—Will he have the confidence to pray to God, and expect any comfort from him? Nay, will he not rather despond in such a case, and cease to call upon him? Certainly those who do not delight in God will not long call upon him.

Verse 11. *I will teach you by the hand of God*—That is, by God's help and inspiration; or, by such arguments as are irresistible. The words,

13 † This is the portion of a wicked man with God, and the heritage of oppressors, *which* they shall receive of the Almighty.

14 † If his children be multiplied, *it is* for the sword: and his offspring shall not be satisfied with bread.

15 Those that remain of him shall be buried in death: and † his widows shall not weep.

16 Though he heap up silver as the dust, and prepare raiment as the clay;

† Chap. xxii. 26, 27.—* Or, being in the hand, &c.—† Chap. xx. 29.—† Deut. xxviii. 41; Esth. ix. 10; Hos. ix. 13.—* Psa. lxxviii. 64.

however, may be rendered, *concerning the hand of God*; that is, concerning his counsel and providence in governing the world, or the manner of his dealing with men, and especially with wicked men, of whom he discourses, verse 13, &c., showing how far the hand of God is either for them, upon, or against them. *That which is with the Almighty*—That is, in his counsel, and how he executes his secret purposes concerning them; *I will not conceal*—I will declare the truth of God, and the doctrine that he hath taught his church about these matters.

Verse 12. *Ye yourselves have seen it*—I speak no false or strange things: but what is known and confirmed by your own experience, and that of others. *Why then are ye thus altogether vain?*—In maintaining such a foolish and false opinion against your own knowledge and experience? Why do you so obstinately defend your opinion, and not comply with mine, for the truth of which I appeal to your own consciences?

Verse 13. *This is the portion of a wicked man*—Namely, that which is mentioned in the following verses; *with God*—Either laid up with God, namely, in his counsel and appointment; or, which he shall have from God, as the next words explain it; *and the heritage of oppressors*—Who are mighty, fierce, terrible, and mischievous, as the word *גַּרְזִיזִים*, *gnaritzim*, implies; whom, therefore, men cannot destroy, but God will.

Verses 14, 15. *It is for the sword*—That they may be cut off by the sword, either of war or of justice: *and his offspring, &c.*—Shall be starved, or shall want necessaries. *Those that remain of him*—Who survive that sword and famine; *shall be buried in death*—“Shall be reduced to so great a degree of misery,” says Schultens, “that where they die, there they shall rot, and no person shall bury them: *they shall have death itself*, (so he renders the text,) *for their sepulchre.*” It is put in antithesis, or by way of contrast to the monuments of the rich. *And his widows*—For they had many wives; *shall not weep*—Because they, as well as other persons, groaned under his tyranny, and, therefore, rejoice in their deliverance from it.

Verses 16–18. *Prepare raiment as the clay*—In great abundance. *But the just shall put it on*—

A. M. 2484. 17 He may prepare *it*, but ¹ the just
B. C. 1520. shall put *it* on, and the innocent shall
divide the silver.

18 He buildeth his house as a moth, and ^m as
a booth *that* the keeper maketh.

19 The rich man shall lie down, but he shall
not be gathered: he openeth his eyes, and he
is not.

20 ⁿ Terrors take hold on him as waters, a

¹ Prov. xxviii. 8; Eccles. ii. 26.—^m Isa. i. 8; Lam. ii. 6.

Either because it shall be given to him by the mag-
istrate, to recompense him for those injuries which
he had received from the oppressor; or because the
right of it is, in some other way, transferred upon
him by divine providence. *He buildeth his house
as a moth*—Which setteth itself in a garment, but
is quickly and unexpectedly dispossessed of its
dwelling, and crushed to death. *And as a booth,
&c.*—Which the keeper of a garden or vineyard
suddenly rears up in fruit-time, and as quickly pulls
down again.

Verse 19. *The rich man shall lie down*—In
death; *but he shall not be gathered*—Namely, in
burial, as this word *הָכַר*, *jeaseph*, is often used. In-
stead of that honourable interment with his fathers,
which he expected, his carcass shall lie like dung
upon the earth. *He openeth, or, one openeth his
eyes, and he is not*—That is, while a man can open
his eyes, in a moment, or in the twinkling of an eye,
he is as if he had never been; he is dead and gone,
and his family and name are extinct with him.

Verse 20. *Terrors take hold on him*—From the
sense of approaching death or judgment. *As
waters*—As violently and irresistibly as a river
breaking its banks, or a deluge of waters bears
down all before it. *A tempest stealeth, &c.*—God's
wrath cometh upon him like a tempest, and withal
unexpectedly like a thief in the night.

Verses 21, 22. *The east wind*—Some terrible
judgment, fitly compared to the east wind, which, in

tempest stealeth him away in the A. M. 2484.
night. B. C. 1520.

21 The east wind carrieth him away, and he
departeth: and as a storm hurleth him out of
his place.

22 For *God* shall cast upon him, and not
spare: ⁶ he would fain flee out of his hand.

23 *Men* shall clap their hands at him, and
shall hiss him out of his place.

ⁿ Chap. xviii. 11.—⁶ Heb. *in fleeing he would flee*.

those parts, was most vehement, furious, pestilential,
and destructive; *carrieth him away*—*Out of his
place*, as it follows; out of his stately mansion,
where he expected to dwell for ever; whence he
shall be carried, either by an enemy or by death.
For God shall cast upon him—His darts or plagues,
one after another and *not spare*—That is, shall
show no pity or mercy to him when he crieth to
him for it. As there is no Hebrew for *God*, we may
attribute this power to the storm occasioned by
the east wind. For, if the tempest, verse 20, steals
him away, according to the same kind of phrase-
ology, the storm may be said to *cast itself upon him*,
and *not spare*. *He would fain flee out of his
hand*—That is, God's hand, or from the power and
violence of the storm. He earnestly desires and
endeavours, by all possible ways, to escape the
judgments of God, but in vain. Those that will
not be persuaded to flee to the arms of divine
grace, which are now stretched out to receive them,
will not be able to flee from the arms of divine
wrath, which will shortly be stretched out to destroy
them.

Verse 23. *Men*—Who shall see and observe these
things; *shall clap their hands at him*—In token of
their joy, at the removal of such a public pest and
tyrant; and by way of astonishment, as also in con-
tempt and scorn; all which this action signifies in
Scripture. *And shall hiss him out of his place*—
In token of detestation and derision.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

Job shows that the industry of man finds out many hidden things, such as silver, gold, iron, and brass, 1-11. But that the more valuable treasure of wisdom lies beyond his reach, and is not discoverable by any of his efforts, 12-22. That God, however, who alone comprehends it, hath revealed to man that portion of it which it most concerns him to understand, which is to fear God, and depart from evil.

A. M. 2484. SURELY there is ¹ a vein for the silver,
B. C. 1520. and a place for gold *where* they find *it*.

¹ Or, a mine.

NOTES ON CHAPTER XXVIII.

Verse 1. *Surely, &c.*—Job, having confuted his
three friends on their own principles, in the last two
and some of the preceding chapters, here falls into a

2 Iron is taken out of the ² earth, and A. M. 2484.
brass is molten out of the stone. B. C. 1520.

² Or, dust.

kind of soliloquy on the difficulty of obtaining true
wisdom. His friends had laid claim to it from their
great age, and from their knowledge of ancient tra-
ditions: see chap. v. 27, and viii. 8, 9, and xv. 9,

A. M. 2184. 3 He setteth an end to darkness, and searcheth out all perfection : the stones of darkness, and the shadow of death.

4 The flood breaketh out from the inhabitant; *even the waters* forgotten of the foot: they are dried up, they are gone away from men.

5 *As for* the earth, out of it cometh bread:

³ Or,

10, and xx. 4; but he had shown them of how little importance or signification their conclusions were. Where, then, it became the question, is wisdom to be found? To answer this question is the intent of Job's discourse in this chapter, which is evidently an inquiry after wisdom; not the unsearchable depths of God's counsels, but wisdom in general; or, rather, the wisdom proper to man: see verse 28. Job here determines, that even that wisdom is not attainable by the human capacity and industry without a revelation from God. The several arts of discovering and purifying silver, of refining gold, making iron and brass from the ore, the art of mining itself, the secrets of husbandry, are all within the reach of human ability and diligence: but to comprehend the ways of Divine Providence, and understand the reasons of God's dispensations toward mankind, whether the righteous or the wicked, is above man's capacity, and can only be known so far as God is pleased to reveal them: that God, however, has furnished man with a sufficient rule to walk by, and that to attend to it is his highest wisdom, and, indeed, the only way to be truly wise; all other speculations and attempts to attain true wisdom being vain and fruitless.

There is a vein for silver, &c.—Thus the chapter begins with a fine description of the indefatigable industry and ardour of mankind in searching after things which contribute either to the use or ornament of life; how they dig into the bowels of the earth for metals, gold, silver, iron, brass; and that the industry or avarice of man is without bounds: he searcheth into the land of darkness itself for hidden treasures. The word rendered *vein*, כּוּצָא, *mutza*, signifies properly a going forth; *there is a going forth for the silver*: that is, "man hath found where silver may be dug out of the earth." *And a place for gold where they find it*—Or, as it is in the margin, rather, *for gold which they find*. For he speaks not here of the works of men and of art, but of those of God and nature, as is manifest from the foregoing and following words.

Verses 2, 3. *Iron is taken out of the earth, &c.*—They invent means to extract iron and brass out of the earth and stone. *He setteth an end to darkness, &c.*—There is no mine so dismally dark, but there is some man or other who will undertake to work in it, and find out a method of conveying light into it: *and searcheth out all perfection*—He searches to the very bottom of it, and finds out all the valuable treasures contained therein; *the stones of darkness, and the shadow of death*—The precious stones,

and under it is turned up as it were A. M. 2484.
B. C. 1520. fire.

6 The stones of it are the place of sapphires: and it hath ³dust of gold.

7 *There is* a path which no fowl knoweth, and which the vulture's eye hath not seen:

8 The lion's whelps have not trodden it, nor the fierce lion passed by it.

³ gold ore.

which lie hid in the dark bowels of the earth, where no living thing can dwell.

Verse 4. *The flood breaketh out*—While men are digging and searching in the mines, a flood of waters breaks in suddenly and violently upon them, and disturbs them in their work; *from the inhabitant*—Hebrew, גַּל מְנִימַגַּר, *megnim gar*, from *with the inhabitant*, or *sojourner*, as the word rather means: that is, out of that part of the earth which the miners inhabit, or wherever they sojourn and work; so that they dare not continue there any longer, but are forced to leave the place; *even the waters forgotten of the foot*—The first words in this clause, *even the waters*, are not in the Hebrew. It is only, *They* (namely, *the waters*) *are forgotten of the foot*; that is, the foot, treading on dry ground, forgets that the waters were lately there. *They are dried up, they are gone away from men*—That is, the art of man finds a way to divert such waters into different channels, and to drain them, so that they leave the places dry again, or, at least, run in such shallow streams that they are easily passed over.

Verses 5, 6. *As for the earth, out of it cometh bread*—Out of the surface of the earth man gets herbs and corn, and other kinds of food for his sustenance: *and under it is turned up, as it were, fire*—Lime, to manure and enrich the ground, or coals and brimstone, and other materials of fire: unless, as some suppose, this rather refers to a central fire in the bowels of the earth. *The stones of it are the place of sapphires*—Of precious stones; the sapphire, as one of the most eminent, being put for all the rest. In some parts of the earth the sapphires are mixed with stones, and cut out of them and polished. *And it hath*—The earth containeth; *dust of gold*—Distinct from that gold which is found in the mass; both sorts of gold being found in the earth.

Verses 7, 8. *There is a path which no fowl knoweth*—Namely, in the bowels of the earth. Man by his industry goeth in mines under the earth, in paths where neither bird nor beast has ever entered. *Which the vulture's eye hath not seen*—Whose eye is very quick and strong, and searches all places for its prey. *The lion's whelps*—Hebrew, בְּנֵי שַׁחַצַּת, *benei shachatz*, the sons of the wild beast, have not trodden it—The wildest beasts, who search for solitary places, have never made their den there, nor so much as approached it; *nor the fierce lion passed by it*—Which rangeth all places for prey. The birds and beasts have often led men to such places as otherwise they should never have found out; but

A. M. 2484. 9 He putteth forth his hand upon
B. C. 1520. the 'rock; he overturneth the moun-
tains by the roots.

10 He cutteth out rivers among the rocks; and
his eye seeth every precious thing.

11 He bindeth the floods⁵ from overflowing; and
the thing that is hid bringeth he forth to light.

12 ^a But where shall wisdom be found? and
where is the place of understanding?

13 Man knoweth not the ^b price thereof; nei-
ther is it found in the land of the living.

14 ^c The depth saith, It is not in me: and the
sea saith, It is not with me.

^a Or, flint.—^b Heb. from weeping.—^c Ver. 20; Eccles. vii. 24.
^d Prov. iii. 15.—^e Verse 22; Rom. xi. 33, 34.—^f Heb. Fine

they could not lead them to these mines; the finding
out of them is a special gift of God.

Verses 9-11. *He putteth forth his hand upon the
rock, &c.*—He digs through the hardest rocks by
his obstinate labour; and undermines mountains,
that he may find the treasures hid in their bowels.
He cutteth out rivers among the rocks—If he meets
with waters in his mining, which hinder his work,
he cuts a channel through the rocks to convey them
away; or, if he wants water, to wash the ore, he,
with incredible industry, cuts channels to bring it
into the mines. *And his eye seeth every precious
thing*—Having with great art, and indefatigable in-
dustry, broke through all difficulties, he at last ar-
rives at the wished-for object, and finds those pre-
cious treasures which he sought for. *He bindeth
the floods from overflowing*—He restrained them,
and, as it were, bindeth them to their good behaviour,
that they may not overflow the mine. Or, by his
industry and skill he confineth the rivers, so that
they cannot overflow. *And the thing that is hid
bringeth he forth to light*—Those metals, or pre-
cious stones, which lie hid in the secret parts of the
earth, he discovers to himself and others.

Verse 12. *But where shall wisdom be found?*—
I confess that man hath one kind of wisdom, and
that in a great degree, namely, to discover the works
of nature, and to perform the operations of art;
but as for that sublime and eminent wisdom which
consists in the perfect knowledge of all God's coun-
sels and ways, and of the reasons of the dispensa-
tions of his providence toward good and bad men,
this is far above man's reach, and is the prerogative
of God alone. Nay, and that wisdom which con-
sists in the true and saving knowledge of God and
ourselves, no man can attain but by the special gift
of God.

Verses 13, 14. *Man knoweth not the price thereof*
—Its immense, its unspeakable value: nor can it be
purchased with all that he hath to give for it. *Nei-
ther is it found in the land of the living*—It is not
a thing that any part of this world affords. Nor is
it found in perfection among mortal men, that live
on earth, but only among those blessed spirits that
live in heaven. *The depth saith, It is not in me,*

(*)

15 ^e It ^d cannot be gotten for gold, A. M. 2484.
neither shall silver be weighed for the B. C. 1520.
price thereof.

16 It cannot be valued with the gold of Ophir,
with the precious onyx, or the sapphire.

17 The gold and the crystal cannot equal it:
and the exchange of it shall not be for ^f jewels
of fine gold.

18 No mention shall be made of ^g coral,
or of pearls: for the price of wisdom is above
rubies.

19 The topaz of Ethiopia shall not equal it,
neither shall it be valued with pure gold.

gold shall not be given for it.—^d Prov. iii. 13, 14, 15: viii. 10,
11, 19; xvi. 16.—^e Or, vessels of fine gold.—^f Or, Ramoth.

&c.—Could the profound abysses of the sea speak,
they would tell us they do not conceal this wisdom
in their great depths. It is not to be found in any
part of the land or sea, though a man should dig or
dive ever so deep to find it; nor is it to be learned
from any creature. For though the creatures of
God discover his being, and power, and, in part, his
wisdom, yet they do not instruct us in the methods
and reasons of his providential dispensations to-
ward good and evil men; nor communicate that
experimental, practical knowledge of him of which
cometh salvation.

Verses 15-17. *It cannot be gotten for gold*—The
choicest gold laid up in treasures, as the word כתר
segor, signifies: *neither shall silver be weighed
for the price thereof*—Namely, in the balance; for
in those times money was paid by weight. *It can-
not be valued with gold of Ophir*—Though the
gold that comes from thence be the purest of all,
neither that, nor the most precious stones, can pur-
chase this wisdom. *The gold and the crystal*—
—Hebrew, זכוכית, zecucith, gemma nitidissima,
a very bright gem, says Buxtorf: lapis pretiosus, ni-
tidus, a bright precious stone, Ab. Ezra. The word
is not elsewhere used, but being derived from זך,
zachach, purus, vel mundus esse, it has in it the
signification of purity, clearness, and brightness.
The exchange of it shall not be for jewels—Or,
vessels, as כלי, chelei, rather means; of fine gold,
זך, paz, of solid gold, in which vessels the curi-
osity of art is added to the excellence of the matter
of which they are formed.

Verses 18, 19. *No mention shall be made of coral
or of pearls*—They are of no value, if compared
with wisdom, nor fit to be mentioned as a price
wherewith to purchase it. *For the price, &c.*—
Hebrew, משך, meshech, the attraction, or extraction,
of wisdom is above rubies—מפנינין, mippeninin,
pearls. But the expression is rendered by the LXX.,
πρὸς τὰ εσωτέρα, above the innermost, or most con-
cealed and guarded things; and by the Vulgate de
occultis, of secret things. Chappelow proposes to
render the words, "The attraction of wisdom is
above any thing we behold:" a translation which,
as he observes, Aquila's version justifies γλαυκὸν de

2

A. M. 2484. 20 • Whence then cometh wisdom?
B. C. 1520. and where is the place of understand-
ing?

21 Seeing it is hid from the eyes of all living,
and kept close from the fowls of the ⁹ air.

22 ^f Destruction and death say, We have
heard the fame thereof with our ears.

• Verse 12.—⁹ Or, heaven.—^f Verse 14.

σοφία παρα τα περιβλεπτα, wisdom is sweet, or desirable, above the things that are anywhere seen. Poole, who would render *meshech, extraction, or acquisition*, thinks there is an allusion to the manner in which pearls are obtained, namely, by diving to the bottom of the sea; which, he observes, is aptly applied to this wisdom, because, lying very deep, and remote from the reach of mankind, it is not to be obtained without diligent search and consideration. The clause would then be read, *The drawing forth of wisdom is above that of pearls: that is, men may dive into the sea, and fetch up pearls, but this wisdom lies a great deal deeper. The topaz of Ethiopia—Or of Arabia, for Cush signifies both countries; and the topaz, which Pliny calls amplissima gemmarum, the most noble of gems, was found in the Red sea, which lay between both, and so might be ascribed to either; shall not equal it, &c.—The Ethiopian topaz, which is so much esteemed for its wonderful lustre, doth not come near it in value; nor are the golden ornaments which they wear in those parts proportionable to it.*

Verses 20, 21. *Whence then cometh wisdom, &c.*—By what means, then, shall we get this precious treasure of wisdom, of which we are so desirous? Who can show us where it lies, that we may go and search for it? By a diligent prosecution of this inquiry he brings us at length to this issue: That there is a two-fold wisdom; one *hid in God*, which is secret, and belongs not to us; the other made known by him, and revealed to man, which *belongs to us and to our children. It is hid from the eyes of all living—Of all men that live upon the earth. And kept close from the fowls of the air—Though they fly high, and can see far and clearly, they cannot discern this: men of the most exalted and comprehensive minds, of the most enlarged and elevated understanding, cannot discover it: however acute their discernment may be, and however high their thoughts may soar, yet they cannot rise to this height, they cannot comprehend this. The line and plummet of human reason can never fathom the abyss of the divine counsels. Who can account for the maxims, measures, and methods of God's government? Let us then be content, not to know the future events of Providence, till time discovers them; and not to know the secret reasons of Providence, till eternity brings them to light.*

Verse 22. *Destruction and death—Either, 1st, Men that are dead, and thereby freed from the encumbrance of their bodies, which depressed their*

23 God understandeth the way A. M. 2484
B. C. 1520 thereof, and he knoweth the place thereof.

24 For he looketh to the ends of the earth,
and ^s seeth under the whole heaven;

25 ^b To make the weight for the winds; and
he weigheth the waters by measure.

^s Prov. xv. 3.—^b Psa. cxxv. 7.

minds, and whose faculties are more raised and enlarged than those of men still in the body; or, rather, 2d, The grave, the habitation of the dead, to which these things are here ascribed, as they are to the depths and to the sea, verse 14, by a common figure. These inward recesses of the earth are as little acquainted with this wisdom as the upper regions: and had they a tongue they could only say, *We have heard the fame thereof—We know it only by slight and uncertain rumours. But though they cannot give an account of it themselves, yet there is a world, on which these dark regions border, where we shall see it clearly. Have patience, says death, I will fetch thee shortly to a place where even this wisdom shall be found. When the veil of flesh is rent, and the interposing clouds are scattered, we shall know what God doth, though we know not now.*

Verses 23, 24. *God understandeth the way thereof—God alone knows and can make known the nature and properties, the rules and measures, the plans and designs, the operations and effects, of this wisdom which we inquire after; or, the methods which he takes, in the management of all affairs in the world, together with its reasons, and the ends he has in view in them. And he knoweth the place thereof—Where it dwells, which is only in his own mind. For he looketh to the ends of the earth—He, and he only knows it, because his providence is infinite and universal, reaching to all places and times, past, present, and to come; whereas the most knowing men have narrow understandings, and the wisdom, and justice, and beauty of God's works are not fully seen till all the parts of them be laid together.*

Verse 25. *To make the weight for the winds—His wisdom it is which sets things in such exact order, and gives them such just measures, that the wind cannot blow but in those proportions which he hath prescribed. He appoints to every wind that blows its season, its degree, its bounds, when, and where, and how much, and how long, each shall blow. He only knows why he doth these things. He instanceth in some few of God's works, and those which seem to be most trivial and uncertain, that thereby he might more strongly imply that God doth the same in other things which are more considerable, and that he doth all things in the most exact order, and weight, and measure. And he weigheth the waters—Namely, the rain-waters, which God layeth up in his storehouses, the clouds, and thence draws them forth, and sends them down upon the earth, in such times and proportions as he thinks fit. By measure—For liquid things are examined by measure, as other things are by weight:*

A. M. 2484. 26 When he ⁱ made a decree for the
B. C. 1520. rain, and a way for the lightning of
the thunder;

27 Then did he see it, and ¹⁰ declare it; he

ⁱ Chap. xxxviii. 25.—¹⁰ Or, number it.

and here are both *weight* and *measure*, to signify with what perfect wisdom God governs the world.

Verse 26. *When*—At the first creation, he settled that course and order which should afterward be continued; *he made a decree for the rain*—An appointment, and, as it were, a statute law, that it should fall upon the earth, and that in such times, and places, and proportions, and manner, as he should think fit, either for *correction* or *mercy*, as Elihu speaks, chap. xxxvii. 13. *And a way for the lightning of the thunder*—A path, or egress, for it out of the thick cloud in which it was shut up, and, as it were, imprisoned; and the course which it should take, and in which it should proceed, to accomplish the purposes intended by him.

Verse 27. *Then did he see it*—Namely, wisdom, which is the subject of the present discourse. This God saw, not without, in any creature formed by him, but within himself; he looked upon it in his own eternal mind, as the rule by which he would proceed in the creation and government of all things. *And declared it*—Made it evident, first to angels, and then to man, when he created this lower world; that is, discovered by his works the deep wisdom which lay hid before in his own breast. *He prepared it*—He had it in readiness for the doing of all his works, as if he had, for a long time, been preparing materials for them. So it is spoken of God after the manner of men. Or, as הכינה, *hechinah*, may be properly rendered, *he established it*, namely, the order which he first fixed in the world, that it should continue in after ages. *And searched it out*—Not properly; for so searching implies ignorance, and requires time and industry, all which is repugnant to the divine perfections; but figuratively, he did, and doth, all things with that absolute and perfect wisdom, so exactly and perfectly, as if he had bestowed a long time in searching, to find them out.

Verse 28. *And*—Or, rather, *but, unto man*—For this is added by way of opposition, to show that man's wisdom doth not lie in a curious inquiry into, or an exact knowledge of God's secret counsels, and the ways of his providence, but in things of quite

prepared it, yea, and searched it out. A. M. 2484.
B. C. 1520.

28 And unto man he said, Behold,
¹ the fear of the LORD, that is wisdom; and to depart from evil is understanding.

* Deut. iv. 6; Psa. cxl. 10; Prov. i. 7; ix. 10; Eccles. xii. 13.

another nature; *he said*—Unto Adam, in the day when he was created, and in and with him to all his posterity: that is, God spake it partly, and at first inwardly, to the mind of man, in which he wrote this with his own finger; and partly afterward, by the holy patriarchs and prophets, and other teachers whom he sent into the world, to teach men true wisdom; which accordingly they did, not by acquainting the people with the secrets of God's counsels and providence, but by declaring to them his revealed will, and instructing them in their duty toward God and one another; making it their great and principal, if not only business, to make men wise unto salvation: see Deut. iv. 6, and xxix. 29. *Behold*—Which expression denotes the great importance of this doctrine, and man's backwardness to apprehend, consider, and practise it; and withal, man's proneness to place his wisdom in vain and curious speculations; *the fear of the Lord*—True religion in all its branches, including the knowledge and love of God, followed by obedience to his will, and every part of godliness and righteousness: *that is wisdom*—In that only consists man's true wisdom; because that, and that only, is his duty, and his safety and happiness, both for this life and for the next; and because this is attainable, whereas the depths of God's counsels are unknown and unsearchable to man and all created beings. *And to depart from evil*—From sin, which is called *evil* eminently, as being the chief evil, and the cause of all other evils. Religion consists of two branches, doing good, and forsaking evil; the former is expressed in the former clause of this verse, and the latter in these words. *Is understanding*—Is the best kind of knowledge or wisdom to which man can attain in this life. The design of Job, in this close of his discourse, is not only to reprove the boldness of his friends, in prying into God's secrets, and passing such a rash censure upon him, and upon God's carriage toward him; but also to vindicate himself from the imputation of hypocrisy, which they fastened upon him, by showing that he had ever esteemed it to be his best wisdom to fear God, and to depart from evil.

CHAPTER XXIX.

Job, after pausing a little while, shows what comfort he formerly had in his house and family, 1-6. What honour and power he had in his country, 7-10. What good he did as a magistrate, 11-17. And what a prospect he had of the continuance of his prosperity, 18-25.

A. M. 2484.
B. C. 1520. **M**OREOVER, Job ¹ continued his parable, and said,

2 O that I were ^a as in months past, as in the days when God preserved me ;

3 ^b When his ² candle shined upon my head, and when by his light I walked through darkness ;

4 As I was in the days of my youth, when ^c the secret of God was upon my tabernacle.

5 When the Almighty was yet with me, when my children were about me ;

6 When ^d I washed my steps with butter, and ^e the rock poured ³ me out rivers of oil ;

7 When I went out to the gate through the city, when I prepared my seat in the street !

8 The young men saw me, and hid themselves : and the aged arose, and stood up.

¹ Heb. added to take up.—^a Chap. vii. 3.—^b Chap. xviii. 6.
² Or, lamp, Psa. xviii. 28.—^c Psa. xxv. 14.

^d Genesis xlix. 11 ; Deut. xxxii. 13 ; xxxiii. 24 ; Chap. xx. 17.
^e Psa. lxxxi. 16.—³ Heb. with me.

NOTES ON CHAPTER XXIX.

Verse 1. Job now goes on to finish his defence, and in order to it he first sets forth his condition in the time of his prosperity, against which he places, by way of contrast, his present unhappy situation, describing both with great beauty and elegance. He then proceeds to purge himself of the several crimes laid to his charge, imprecating on himself the divine vengeance, in various manners, in case he were guilty, and at last concludes that this was his plea, on this he would rest his defence: he was desirous it might be recorded, and prays that his cause might be brought to a decision, declaring he was under no manner of apprehensions of the consequences.

Verses 2, 3. O that I were as in months past—O that God would re-establish me in that happy condition wherein I was some time ago; in the days when God preserved me—From all those miseries which now I feel, and when I seemed to be a principal part of his care! You would then pay a greater regard to my words than you do now in my adversity: When his candle shined upon my head—When his favour and blessing attended me, to comfort and direct me. And when by his light I walked through darkness—Passed through many difficulties, dangers, and common calamities which befell others who lived near me, and overcame those troubles which happened to myself.

Verse 4. As I was in the days of my youth—In my former and flourishing days; when the secret of God was upon my tabernacle—When there was a secret blessing of God upon me and my family, succeeding us in all our affairs; and when God conversed freely with me, as one bosom friend with another; when I knew his mind, and was not in uncertainty respecting it, as I have been of late. It may be proper, however, to observe, that the word סוד, *sod*, here translated the secret, signifies not only secret counsels, in which sense it is used Amos iii. 7, but also the assembly where such consultations are held, in which latter sense it is used much more frequently, as Psa. lxxxix. 8, and cxi. 1; Jer. vi. 11. And in this sense Sol. Jarchi understands it here. Thus interpreted, the meaning of the clause is, when the society of God, a company of devout persons, assembled in my tabernacle, namely, for divine worship, and other purposes of religion. In these meetings, no doubt, Job presided, and in them he took a great deal of pleasure, and it was no little grief to

him to have them intermitted, and the persons that composed them scattered.

Verses 5, 6. When the Almighty was yet with me—On my side; whereas now he is against me, and hath forsaken me. When my children were about me—Or, servants, for the word נַעֲרַי, *nagnarai*, signifies both. When the members of my family were wont to be present to join and assist in our religious services, and we had communion with God and with each other. When I washed my steps with butter—When I had all temporal blessings as well as spiritual, and abounded with all sorts of good things, which is often signified by this or such like phrases. When I had such numerous herds of cattle, and consequently such plenty of butter, that if I had so pleased I might have washed my feet with it. And the rock poured me out rivers of oil—When not only fruitful fields, but even barren and rocky places, (such as the part of Arabia where Job lived,) yielded me olive-trees and oil in great plenty: see Deut. xxxii. 13.

Verse 7. When I went out to the gate—When I went from my dwelling to the gate of the city, the place of judicature, which, as has often been observed, was in the gates. When I prepared my seat in the streets—When I caused the seat of justice to be set for me in that open place, as בַּרְחוּב, *barechob*, signifies, near the gate, where the people assembled for the administration of justice. By this, and several other expressions, it appears that Job was a magistrate or judge in his country.

Verses 8–10. The young men saw me and hid themselves—Out of reverence to my person and dignity, or out of a consciousness of their guilt and folly, which they supposed I might understand either by information from others, or discover by their countenances, and for which they knew I would reprove them, and bring them to shame or other punishment. And the aged arose and stood up—While I either passed by them, or was present with them: so great was the veneration which they had for me, although you treat me with such contempt and scorn. The princes refrained talking—A general silence immediately ensued when I appeared, the great men themselves, who were high in office, breaking off their discourses, and not taking the liberty to speak a word till I had first given my opinion, which they readily approved of, and to which they fully assented. The nobles held their

A. M. 2484. 9 The princes refrained talking,
B. C. 1520. and ¹laid *their* hand on their mouth.

10 ⁴The nobles held their peace, and their ⁵tongue cleaved to the roof of their mouth.

11 When the ear heard *me*, then it blessed me; and when the eye saw *me*, it gave witness to me:

12 Because ^hI delivered the poor that cried, and the fatherless, and *him that had none* to help him.

13 The blessing of him that was ready to pe-

¹ Chap. xxi. 5.—⁴ *The voice of the nobles was hid.*—⁵ Psalms cxxxvii. 6.—^h Psa. lxxii. 12; Prov. xxi. 13; xxiv. 11.—ⁱ Deut. xxiv. 13; Psa. cxxxii. 9; Isa. lix. 17; lxi. 10; Eph. vi. 14, &c.;

peace—Those who were distinguished by their birth and quality, and were superior to others in honour and dignity, could not have heard me with greater attention and stillness, if they had quite lost their voices, or their tongues had been tied to the roof of their mouths.

Verses 11, 12. *When the ear heard me, then it blessed me*—Prayed to God to bless me, and pronounced a blessing upon me, because of the integrity, justice, and wisdom which were observed in all my discourses and actions, and of the satisfaction which I gave to all; as well as on account of the relief which I afforded to the oppressed, by my equitable decrees in all causes which were brought before me. *When the eye saw me it gave witness to me*—Gave testimony to my pious, and just, and blameless conversation. *Because I delivered the poor*—From his potent oppressor. Men did not honour me for my great wealth or power, but for my impartial justice and pity to the afflicted, and courage in maintaining their cause and right against their mighty adversaries. *The fatherless, and him that had none to help him*—None would own or help them, partly because they were poor, and unable to recompense them for it, and partly because their enemies were great, and likely to crush both them and their helpers; which made Job's virtue more remarkable.

Verse 13. *The blessing of him that was ready to perish*—Who was in danger of losing his life or estate, by the malice and tyranny of wicked men; *came upon me*—Both he, and others for his sake, blessed me, and begged that God would bless me. *I caused the widow's heart to sing for joy*—For her great and unexpected deliverance. Widows are the common objects of injuries and oppressions, because they are generally unable to defend themselves from the violence of their oppressors, or to offend those who molest them.

Verse 14. *I put on righteousness, and it clothed me*—As a garment covers the whole body, and is worn continually all the day long, so I was constantly just in the whole course of my administrations, public and private; and I never put off this clothing, out of partiality to myself, or respect to the persons of others, as the manner of many judges is.

ish came upon me: and I caused the A. M. 2484.
widow's heart to sing for joy. B. C. 1520.

14 ⁱI put on righteousness, and it clothed me: my judgment *was* as a robe and a diadem.

15 I was ^heyes to the blind, and feet *was* I to the lame.

16 I *was* a father to the poor: and ^lthe cause *which* I knew not I searched out.

17 And I brake ^mthe ⁵jaws of the wicked, and ⁶plucked the spoil out of his teeth.

18 Then I said, ^aI shall die in my nest, and I shall multiply *my* days as the sand.

1 Thess. v. 8.—^k Num. x. 31.—^l Prov. xxix. 7.—^m Psa. lviii. 6; Prov. xxx. 14.—⁵ Heb. *the jaw teeth, or, the grinders.*
⁶ Heb. *cast.*—^a Psa. xxx. 6.

My judgment was as a robe and diadem—My judgments, or decrees, were so equal and righteous, that they never brought shame and reproach upon me, but rather honour and reputation; and I looked upon them as a greater ornament than the purple robe or the diadem.

Verses 15, 16. *I was eyes to the blind*—That is, instead of eyes, to instruct, direct, and assist such, as through ignorance or weakness were apt to mistake, and to be seduced or cheated by the craft and artifices of evil-minded men. *And feet was I to the lame*—That is, ready to help him who was unable to help himself. *I was a father to the poor*—For the poor I had such a tender affection, that I was as careful of their interest as if I had been their father, and was as ready to relieve them, and supply their wants, as if they had been my children. *And the cause which I knew not I searched out*—I was their advocate, as well as their judge, and never ceased considering their cause, when there was any obscurity in it, till I thoroughly understood it, that I might set it in a true light, cleared of all false colours, and do them justice. In all causes, especially in those which concerned the poor, I diligently inquired into the matters of fact, patiently and impartially heard both sides, laid all circumstances together, that might discover the truth and the merits of every cause; and then, and not till then, gave judgment upon it.

Verse 17. *I brake the jaws of the wicked*—Hebrew, כהלית, *methallegnoth, dentes molares vel maxillas cum dentibus, the grinders, or the jaw-bones with the teeth*, the sharpest and strongest teeth in the jaw; that is, the power and violence wherewith they used to oppress others. It is a metaphor taken from wild beasts, which tear and crush their prey with their teeth. *And plucked the spoil out of his teeth*—Forced him to restore what he had violently taken away.

Verse 18. *Then I said*—That is, I persuaded myself, being thus strongly fortified with the consciousness of my own universal integrity, and with the singular favour of God and of all men; *I shall die in my nest*—Not a violent or untimely, but a natural, peaceable, and seasonable death, sweetly expiring

A. M. 2484. 19 ° My root *was* 'spread out' by
B. C. 1520. the waters, and the dew lay all night
upon my branch.

20 My glory *was* ° fresh in me, and ° my bow
was ° renewed in my hand.

21 Unto me *men* gave ear, and waited, and
kept silence at my counsel.

22 After my words they spake not again; and
my speech dropped upon them.

° Chap. xviii. 16.—° Heb. *opened*.—P. Psa. i. 3; Jer. xvii. 8.

in my own bed and habitation, in the midst of my children and friends, leaving the precious perfume of a good name behind me, and a plentiful inheritance to all my posterity. *And I shall multiply my days as the sand*—He means, as the sand on the sea-shore: whereas, we should rather reckon our days by the sand in the hour-glass, which will be all run out in a little time. See how apt even good men are to set death at a distance from them!

Verses 19, 20. *My root was spread out by the waters*—I was like a tree, whose root, spreading out itself by the waters, receives continual moisture and nourishment from the earth, so that it is in no danger of withering; and, being deeply fixed in the ground, is kept firm, so that it is in no danger of being overturned. *And the dew lay all night upon my branches*—I was watered by the divine favour and influence from above, as well as nourished from the earth beneath, and consequently prospered in soul as well as body, and was enriched with spiritual as well as temporal blessings. Let none think to support their prosperity or comfort with what they draw from the earth, without that blessing which is derived from heaven. *My glory was fresh in me*—My reputation did not wither and decay, but continued to grow every day. Through the divine favour he persevered and increased in all holiness and usefulness; and those about him had continually something new to say in his praise, so that, instead of losing any part of the love and respect paid him by his friends and neighbours, his honour and credit increased day by day; and *his bow was renewed in his hand*—That is, his power to protect himself, and to annoy those that assailed him, so that he thought he had as little reason as any man to fear the insults and injuries of the Sabeans and Chaldeans, or any other hostile power.

Verses 21-23. *Unto me men gave ear*—When I spake all men gave me the greatest attention, and my word was a law to them; *and waited and kept silence, &c.*—Expecting till I spake, and silently listening to my counsel, which they were confident would be wise, and just, and good, and preferring it to their own judgment. *After my words they spake not again*—Either to confute them as false, or to add any thing to them as being lame and imperfect. *And my speech dropped upon them*—Hebrew, תִּטּוֹף, *tittof*, distilled as the dew, as Ab. Ezra renders it, referring to Deut. xxxii. 2, where Moses, writing in

23 And they waited for me as for A. M. 2484.
the rain; and they opened their mouth B. C. 1520.
wide as for 'the latter rain.

24 *If I laughed on them, they believed it not; and the light of my countenance they cast not down.*

25 I chose out their way, and sat chief, and dwelt as a king in the army, as one *that* comforteth the mourners.

° Heb. *new*.—° Gen. xlix. 24.—° Heb. *changed*.—Zec. x. 1.

the same style, says, *My doctrine shall drop as the rain, &c.* As rain is most acceptable and beneficial to the earth, not when it comes down in great and violent storms, but when it descends in moderate and gentle showers; so my words sweetly distilled upon them, and sunk into their hearts. *And they waited for me as for the rain*—They expected my opinion and advice, with silent attention, and with the same eager desire wherewith the husbandman expects the showers after he has sown his seed. *And they opened their mouth wide*—They gaped, as it were, with desire for my words, as the dry and parched earth thirsts and opens its mouth to receive the rain after a long, drouthy season. Among the Egyptians, the heavens pouring down rain or dew, was the hieroglyphic, or emblem, of learning and instruction.

Verse 24. *If I laughed on them*—That is, carried myself familiarly and pleasantly with them; *they believed it not*—It was so acceptable to them to see me well pleased with them, and cheerful among them, that they could scarcely believe their eyes and ears which testified that it was so. *And the light of my countenance they cast not down*—My familiarity with them did not produce presumption in them to say or do any thing that might grieve me, or make my countenance to fall. They were very cautious not to abuse my smiles, nor to give me any occasion to change my countenance or carriage toward them.

Verse 25. *I chose out their way*—They sought to me for advice in all doubtful and difficult cases, and I directed them what methods they should take; *and sat chief*—As a prince or judge, while they stood waiting for my counsel: Hebrew, רֹאשׁ, *rosh*, as their *head*, or *ruler*, and my word was as a law, or oracle to them. *And dwell as a king in the army*—Whose presence puts life, and courage, and joy into the whole army. And no less acceptable was my presence to them. The word גִּדּוּד, *gedud*, here rendered *army*, is generally translated *troops*, as Gen. xlix. 19; Psa. xviii. 30. And Heath renders the last two clauses, "*If I chose to travel with them, I had the most honourable place: I pitched my tent also as a king among the troop.*" As one that *comforteth the mourners*—As I was able and ready to comfort any afflicted or sorrowful persons, so my consolations were always grateful and acceptable to them.

CHAPTER XXX.

Job's honour is turned into contempt, 1-14. His prosperity into fears, pains, and a sense of the wrath of God, 15-22. He looks for nothing but death, 23. And rest therein, 24. Reflects on his former sympathy with the afflicted, 25. And describes his own present calamities, 26-31.

A. M. 2484.
B. C. 1520. **BUT** now *they that are*¹ younger than I have me in derision, whose fathers I would have disdained to have set with the dogs of my flock.

2 Yea, whereto *might* the strength of their hands *profit* me, in whom old age was perished?

3 For want and famine *they were*² solitary: fleeing into the wilderness³ in former time desolate and waste.

¹ Heb. of fewer days than I.—² Or, dark as the night.

NOTES ON CHAPTER XXX

Verse 1. *But now, &c.*—Job having, in the foregoing chapter, described the honour of his former condition, goes on here, by way of contrast, to describe the vileness of his present state. *They that are younger than I*—Whom both universal custom and the light of nature taught to reverence their elders and betters; *have me in derision*—Make me the object of their contempt and scoffs: thus my glory is turned into shame. *Whose fathers I would have disdained*—Or, rather, *might have disdained*; that is, whose condition was so mean and vile, that in the opinion, and according to the custom of the world, they were unworthy to be my shepherds, and the companions of my dogs, which watch my flocks. This and the seven following verses are an exaggerated description of the vileness of those to whom he was now become a derision, notwithstanding all his former authority.

Verse 2. *Yea, whereto might their hands profit me?*—Nor was it strange that I did, or might refuse to take them into any of my meanest services, being utterly impotent and unfit for any business; *in whom old age was perished*—Who were grown no wiser for being old. Or, rather, who had so wasted their strength and spirits by their evil courses, that when they came to old age they were debilitated, feeble, and useless for any labour. Accordingly, Houbigant interprets the clause, *When all their health or strength was worn out*; and others render it, *In whom vigorous age was perished*; that is, who were grown useless for service. For the word בלח, *chelah*, here rendered *old age*, is used only here and Job v. 26, where also it may be so rendered, *Thou shalt come to thy grave in a vigorous, or mature age*, having the vigour of youth even in thy old age, and until thy death, as Moses had. And if this word do signify *old age*, yet it signifies not every, but only a flourishing and healthful old age; as the Hebrews note, and the word may seem to imply; whence the LXX. also render it *perfection*, namely, of age, and of the endowments belonging to age.

Verse 3. *For want and famine*—Brought upon them either by their own sloth or wickedness, or by

4 Who cut up mallows by the bushes, A. M. 2484. and juniper-roots for their meat. B. C. 1520.

5 They were driven forth from among men, (they cried after them as after a thief;)

6 To dwell in the cliffs of the valleys, in⁴ caves of the earth, and in the rocks.

7 Among the bushes they brayed; under the nettles they were gathered together.

8 *They were* children of fools, yea, children of⁵ base men: they were viler than the earth.

³ Heb. yesternight.—⁴ Heb. holes.—⁵ Heb. men of no name.

God's just judgment. Hebrew, בחסר, *becheser*, *In want and famine*, which aggravates their following solitude. *They were solitary, &c.*—Although want commonly draws persons to places of resort and company for relief, yet they were so conscious of their own guilt, and contemptibleness, and hatefulness to all persons, that they shunned all company, and for fear or shame fled into and lived in desolate places.

Verse 4. *Who cut up mallows*—Or, *bitter herbs*, as the word seems to import, which shows their extreme necessity; *by the bushes*—Or, *by the shrubs*, nigh unto which they grew. Or, *with the bark of trees*, as the Vulgate Latin renders it; and *juniper-roots*—Possibly the word may signify some other plant, for the Hebrews themselves are at a loss for the signification of the names of plants.

Verses 5, 6. *They were driven forth from among men*—As unworthy of human society; and for their beggary and dishonesty, suspected and avoided of all men; *they cried after them as after a thief*—Giving one another warning of their danger from them.

Verse 7. *Among the bushes they brayed*—Like the wild asses, (Job vi. 5,) for hunger or thirst. *They brayed*, seems to be an improper translation here; because, though נהק, *nahak*, signifies *to bray*, when applied to an *ass*, yet when spoken of men in difficult circumstances, as in this verse, we should rather say with the Targum and LXX., *they sighed, cried out, or made their moan*. So Heath and Houbigant render it. *Under the nettles they were gathered*—The word חרול, *charul*, here rendered *nettles*, is by some translated *thorns, or thistles*, the nettle being too small a plant, as Bochart observes, for men to gather themselves under. Dr. Waterland, however, renders it, *Among the nettles were they tormented, or burned*. The meaning is, that they hid themselves under the thorns, or among the nettles, that they might not be discovered when they were sought out for justice.

Verses 8-10. *They were children of fools, &c.*—They were children of base, obscure parents; viler than the earth upon which they trod. Houbigant translates the verse, *Foolish men and inglorious,*

A. M. 2484. 9 * And now am I their song, yea,
B. C. 1520. I am their by-word.

10 They abhor me, they flee far from me,
and spare not ^b to spit in my face.

11 Because he ^c hath loosed my cord, and afflicted me, they have also let loose the bridle before me.

12 Upon *my* right hand rise the youth; they push away my feet, and ^d they raise up against me the ways of their destruction.

* Chap. xvii. 6; Psa. xxxv. 15; lxi. 12; Lam. iii. 14, 63.
* Heb. and withhold not spittle from my face.—^b Num. xii. 14;

they were driven out of the country in which they lived. And now am I their song—The matter of their song and derision. They now rejoice in my calamities, because I formerly used my authority to punish such vagrants. *They flee far from me*—In contempt of my person, and loathing of my sores; and spare not to spit in my face—Not literally, for they kept far from him, as he now said, but figuratively; that is, they use all manner of contemptuous and reproachful expressions toward me, not only behind my back, but even to my face. Houbigant reads, *They abominate me; they hold me in the utmost abhorrence; and fear not to spit in my face.* Here we may see in Job a type of Christ, who was thus made a reproach of men, and despised of the people.

Verse 11. *Because he*—That is, God; *hath loosed my cord*—Hath slackened the string of my bow, and so rendered it and my arrows useless; that is, he hath deprived me of my strength and defence: so understood, this expression is opposed to that used chap. xxix. 20, *My bow is renewed, &c.* But the phrase may mean, He hath taken away from me that power and authority wherewith, as with a cord, I bound them to their good behaviour, and kept them within proper bounds. A similar expression is used in this sense chap. xii. 18. As, however, the word יָתֵר, *jether*, here rendered *cord*, also means *excellence*, and is so translated Gen. xlix. 3; Job iv. 21, and in other places, the sense here may be, *He hath loosed, broken, or destroyed my excellence:* or, as Schultens translates it, *He hath stripped me of my glory.* And *afflicted me*—When they perceived that God, who had been my faithful friend and constant defender, had forsaken me and was become mine enemy, they presently took this advantage of showing their malice against me. *They have also let loose the bridle*—They have cast off all former restraints of law, humanity, or modesty, and have given themselves full liberty to speak or act what they pleased against me: and this *before me*—For they now dare to do those things before mine eyes which they would formerly have trembled lest they should come to my ears.

Verse 12. *Upon my right hand*—The place of adversaries or accusers in courts of justice, Psa. cix. 6; Zech. iii. 1. Or this may be observed to show their boldness and contempt of him, in that they dared to place themselves on his right hand; *rise the youth*—Hebrew, *young striplings*. Those who formerly

13 They mar my path, they set forward my calamity, they have no helper.

14 They came upon me as a wide breaking in of waters: in the desolation they rolled themselves upon me.

15 Terrors are turned upon me: they pursue my soul as the wind: and my welfare passeth away as a cloud.

Deut. xxv. 9; Isa. l. 6; Matt. xxvi. 67; xxvii. 30.—^c Chap. xii. 18.—^d Chap. xix. 12.—^e Heb. my principal one.

hid themselves from my presence, (chap. xxix. 8,) now rise up, in the way of contempt and opposition, or to accuse and reproach me. *They push away my feet*—Either, 1st, Properly, they trip up my heels; or, rather, 2d, Metaphorically, they endeavour utterly to overthrow my goings, and to cast me down to the ground. *And they raise up against me the ways of their destruction*—That is, causeways or banks, alluding to soldiers who cast up banks against the city which they besiege. The meaning is, they prepare, contrive, and use several methods to destroy me. Heath renders the verse, *On my right hand their brood start up; they trip up my heels. Their troops of destruction throw up an intrenchment round me.*

Verse 13. *They mar my path*—Or, rather, *dig up my path*. As I am in great misery, so they endeavour to stop all my ways out of it, and to frustrate all my counsels and methods for obtaining relief and comfort. The allusion to a place besieged is still carried on; the besiegers of which strive to cut off all communication of the besieged with the country around. Or, the sense may be, they pervert all my ways, putting perverse and false constructions on them, censuring my conscientious discharge of my duty to God and men as nothing but craft and hypocrisy. *They set forward my calamity*—Increasing it by bitter taunts, invectives, and censures. But עָלוּ, *jognilu*, may be rendered, *They profit by, or are pleased with, my calamity*. Heath reads this and the next clause, *They triumph in my calamity: there is none who helpeth me against them.*

Verse 14. *They came as a wide breaking in of waters*—As fiercely and violently as a river doth when a great breach is made in the bank which kept it in. Hebrew, כְּפֶרֶץ רַחֵב, *cheperetz rachab*, as at a wide breach, as a besieging army, having made a breach in the walls of the city, do suddenly and forcibly rush into it. The word *waters*, the reader will observe, is not in the Hebrew. *In the desolation they rolled themselves upon me*—As the waters or soldiers come tumbling in at the breach, they poured themselves upon me, that they might utterly destroy and make me desolate.

Verse 15. *Terrors are turned upon me*—Many terrible things from God, who sets himself against me, and in some sort joins his forces with these miscreants, are directed against me, to whom they seem not to belong, as being the portion of wicked men. *They pursue my soul*—Hebrew, נִדְבַּחִי, *nedibathi*,

A. M. 2484. 16 * And now my soul is poured out
B. C. 1520. upon me; the days of affliction have
taken hold upon me.

17 My bones are pierced in me in the night
season: and my sinews take no rest.

18 By the great force of *my disease* is my
garment changed: it bindeth me about as the
collar of my coat.

19 He hath cast me into the mire, and I am
become like dust and ashes.

20 I cry unto thee, and thou dost not hear me:
I stand up, and thou regardest me *not*.

* Psa. xlii. 4. —⁸ Heb. turned to be cruel. —⁹ Heb. the strength

my principal, or *excellent one*; that is, my soul,
which is properly so called, as being the chief part
of man, and which was the proper seat and object
of divine terrors, as his body was of his outward
pains and ulcers; *as the wind*—That is, speedily,
vehemently, and irresistibly; *and my welfare*—All
the happiness and comfort of my life; *passeth away
as a cloud*—Which is quickly dissolved into rain, or
dissipated by the sun, or driven away with the wind.

Verses 16, 17. *My soul is poured out upon me*—
Or within me, as the particle *ל*; *gnali*, is elsewhere
used. All the strength and powers of my soul are
melted, faint, and die away. *My bones are pierced*
—Or rather, *it*, namely, the terrors or affliction last
mentioned, *hath pierced my bones*. This is no slight
and superficial, but a most deep wound, that reaches
to my very heart, bones, and marrow. Nothing in
me is so secret but it reaches it; nothing so hard and
solid but it feels the weight and burden of it. *In the
night season*—When others and I should receive
some rest and refreshment; *and my sinews take no
rest*—The flesh of my body, which covereth the
sinews and is mixed with them. So he signifies
that neither his bones nor his flesh rested.

Verses 18, 19. *By the great force of my disease,*
&c.—The words, *of my disease*, are not in the He-
brew, neither do they seem to be rightly supplied,
but rather to obscure the sense of the clause, which,
without any supplement, is literally rendered, *With
great force my garment is changed*, for so this verb
שִׁחַפְּשָׁה, *jithchappesh*, is used, 1 Kings xxii. 30. Thus
the sense is, I cannot shift or put off my garment
without great difficulty; the reason whereof is given
in the following words: *It bindeth me about as the
collar of my coat*—It cleaveth fast to me, being glued
by that purulent matter which issues from my sores.
He seems to allude to the fashion of the eastern out-
ward garments, which were all of a piece, and had a
strait mouth at the top, which was brought over the
head and fastened close about the neck. Some,
however, understand the clause figuratively, thus:
By the great force, that is, the power of God, *is my
garment changed*, that is, my condition is wholly
altered; *it bindeth me about*, &c.—I am straitly
bound in on every side with my sorrows and afflic-
tions, as it were, with a collar; every part of me,
from head to foot, is, as it were, wrapped round with

21 Thou art ⁸ become cruel to me: A. M. 2484.
with ⁹ thy strong hand thou opposest B. C. 1520.
thyself against me.

22 Thou liftest me up to the wind; thou
causest me to ride upon it, and dissolvest my
¹⁰ substance.

23 For I know that thou wilt bring me to
death, and to the house ¹ appointed for all
living.

24 Howbeit he will not stretch out his hand
to the ¹¹ grave, though they cry in his destruc-
tion.

of thy hand. —¹⁰ Or, wisdom. —¹ Heb. ix. 27. —¹¹ Heb. heap.

pains; and all my limbs are, in a manner, bound
with them. *He hath cast me into the mire, &c.*—I
am reduced to the lowest and filthiest condition pos-
sible. Houbigant, who thinks that the idea here is
taken from a man struggling with another, laying
hold on his garment, and casting him into the mire,
renders these two verses, *With great force he layeth
hold on my garment, and infolds me by the collar
of my robe: He hath cast me into the mire, &c.*

Verses 20, 21. *Thou dost not hear me*—Namely,
so as to answer or help me. *I stand up*—Namely,
before thee: I pray importunately and continually, as
thou requirest; *and thou regardest me not*—Notwith-
standing all my griefs and cries, thou dost not pity and
help me, but rather seemest to take pleasure in be-
holding my calamities, as the following words imply;
Thou art become cruel to me—Hebrew, *תהפֶּחַךְ*, *teha-
pheck*, *Thou art turned to be cruel*, as if thou hadst
changed thy very nature; which is kind, merciful,
and gracious; and such thou hast formerly been in
thy carriage to me; but now thou art grown severe,
rigorous, and inexorable. *Thou opposest thyself
against me*—Thy power, wherewith I expected that
thou wouldest have supported me under my troubles,
thou usest against me.

Verses 22, 23. *Thou liftest me up to the wind*—Thou
exposetest me to all sorts of storms and calamities, so
that I am like chaff or stubble lifted up to the wind,
and violently tossed hither and thither in the air.
And dissolvest my substance—By which my body is
almost consumed, and my heart is melted within me.
I know that thou wilt bring me to death—Rather, *I
verily know*, or am persuaded, that by these linger-
ing and painful disorders thou art gradually bringing
me to death; *the house appointed for all living*—
The grave, to which all living men are hastening.
The grave is a narrow, dark, cold house, but there
we shall rest and be safe. It is our home, for it is our
mother's lap, and in it we are gathered to our fathers.
It is a house appointed for us by him that has ap-
pointed the bounds of all our habitations. And it is
appointed for all living. It is the common recep-
tacle for rich and poor: we must all be brought
thither, and that shortly.

Verse 24. *He will not stretch out his hand to the
grave*—This verse is judged by commentators to be
very obscure. The sense of it probably is, Notwith-

A. M. 2484. 25 ^a Did not I weep ¹² for him that
B. C. 1520. was in trouble? was *not* my soul

grieved for the poor?

26 ^b When I looked for good, then evil came
unto me: and when I waited for light, there
came darkness.

27 My bowels boiled, and rested not: the days
of affliction prevented me.

28 ^c I went mourning without the sun: I stood

^a Psa. xxxv. 13; Rom. xii. 15.—¹² Heb. for him that was hard of day.—^b Jer. viii. 15.—^c Psa. xxxviii. 6; xliii. 9; xlii. 2.

standing I earnestly wished for the grave as a place of rest, thou wilt not indulge me so far as to stretch out thy hand and give me my death-wound: or, thy hand (that is, the hand of God's wrath) will not follow me beyond death and the grave: I shall then be safe and easy. *Though they cry in his destruction*—In the destruction brought on them by death; that is, though most men cry out and are affrighted while they are dying, while the body is sinking into destruction, yet I desire it; I have nothing to fear therein, since *I know that my Redeemer liveth*.

Verses 25, 26. *Did not I weep for him that was in trouble*—Have I now judgment without mercy, because I afforded no mercy or pity to others in misery? No: my conscience acquits me from this inhumanity: I did mourn over others in their misery. *Was not my soul grieved for the poor?*—The negative particle *not*, which is not in the Hebrew, seems to be here improperly supplied. The sense will be stronger and more emphatical to understand the second part of the verse as containing an answer to the first, and to render it, *My soul was grieved for the poor*; that is, I not only wept, but my very soul was grieved for them; yea, even for those who were so necessitous as to be incapable of requiting my kindness in case of their recovery from affliction. *When I looked for good, then evil came*—Yet trouble came upon myself when I expected it not.

Verses 27, 28. *My bowels boiled*—Namely, with the violence of my disorder; *and rested not*—Hebrew,

up, and I cried in the congrega- A. M. 2484.
tion. B. C. 1520.

29 ^k I am a brother to dragons, and a compa-
nion to ¹³ owls.

30 ^l My skin is black upon me, and ^m my
bones are burned with heat.

31 My harp also is *turned* to mourning,
and my organ into the voice of them that
weep.

^k Psa. cii. 6; Mic. i. 8.—¹³ Or, ostriches.—^l Psa. cxix. 83; Lam. iv. 8; v. 10.—^m Psa. cii. 3.

וּלְאֵי דָמוֹ, *velo damu*, and were not silent. *The days of affliction prevented me*—Came upon me suddenly and unexpectedly, when I promised myself peace and prosperity. *I went mourning without the sun*—Hebrew, קָרַר הַלְלַחְתִּי, *koder hillacti*, I walked black, not by the sun. My very countenance became black, but not by the sun, which makes many other persons black, but by the force of my disease. *I stood up, I cried in the congregation*—I was not able to lie still, nor to refrain from cries in the greatest assemblies.

Verse 29. *I am a brother*—By imitation of their cries; *to dragons*—Which howl and wail mournfully in the deserts, (Mic. i. 8,) either through hunger and thirst, or when they fight with, and are beaten by, the elephant. Persons of like qualities are often called brethren. *And a companion to owls*—Whose doleful noises are well known: or, *ostriches*, as Dr. Waterland renders the word; the females of which are also remarkable for their mournful cry, and which have their habitation in desolate places.

Verses 30, 31. *My skin is black upon me, &c.*—“The boiling heat of my body hath so parched me that my skin looks black, and the marrow in my bones, and all my vital moisture, are dried up.” *My harp also is turned to mourning*—“To say no more, all mirth is banished my house: the musical instruments are laid aside, and nothing but mourning and weeping come in their room.”—Bishop Patrick. All my joy is gone, my condition entirely changed, and I have nothing now but wo and misery.

CHAPTER XXXI.

Job's protestation of his innocence, with regard to wantonness, 1-4; fraud and injustice, 5-8; adultery, 9-12; haughtiness and severity toward his servants, 13-15; unmercifulness to the poor, 16-23; confidence in his wealth, 24, 25; idolatry, 26-29; revenge, 29-31; neglect of poor strangers, 32; hypocrisy, or not reproving others, 33, 34. He wishes God would answer, and that his words might be recorded, 35-37. Protests his innocence as to oppression, 38-40.

A. M. 2484. I MADE a covenant with mine ^a eyes;
B. C. 1520. why then should I think upon a maid?

^a Matt. v. 29.

NOTES ON CHAPTER XXXI.

Verse 1. *I made a covenant with mine eyes, &c.*—So far have I been from any gross wickedness, that I have abstained from the least occasions and

2 For what ^b portion of God is A. M. 2484.
there from above? and what inherit- B. C. 1520.

^b Chap. xx. 29; xxvii. 13.

appearances of evil. It was possible Job's friends might make quite another use than he intended of the relation which he had made of his miserable condition in the foregoing chapter. And, therefore, lest

A. M. 2484. ance of the Almighty from on
B. C. 1520. high?

3 *Is not destruction to the wicked? and a strange punishment to the workers of iniquity?*

4 ° Doth not he see my ways, and count all my steps?

5 If I have walked with vanity, or if my foot hath hastened to deceit;

6 ¹ Let me be weighed in an even balance, that God may know mine integrity.

* 2 Chron. xvi. 9; Chap. xxxiv. 21; Prov. v. 21; xv. 3; Jer. xxxii. 19.—¹ Heb. *Let him weigh me in balances of justice.*

it should confirm them in their old error, and they should take what he had said to be an argument of his guilt, he gives, in this chapter, a large and particular account of his integrity, which, in general, he had so often asserted; laying his very soul, and the most secret inclinations of it, open before them; together with the actions of his whole life in his private capacity, (for of his public he had spoken before, chap. xxix.,) both in respect of his neighbours of all sorts, and in respect of God, to whom he again most solemnly appeals, in the conclusion of this discourse, for the truth of what he here asserts. *Why then should I think upon a maid?*—This is generally understood to mean the great care and circumspection which Job had used to avoid all temptations and occasions of sin; and he subjoins, in the following verses, the very high and reasonable motives which had urged him, and should urge every man, to such a circumspection; namely, to avoid destruction, the sure consequence of it. Which is a further proof that his prospects were to *another* life; for, had he spoken of a temporal destruction, it would have been the very thing which his antagonists had repeated over and over to him, and had urged as an argument of his guilt that he was thus miserably destroyed. When Job, therefore, says the same thing, namely, that a sure destruction attends the wicked; it is their *portion*, an *inheritance* from God; it is plain he must understand it in another sense than his antagonists did; namely, of their final retribution in a future state. See Peters, and the note on verses 13, 23.

Verse 2. *For what portion of God is there, &c.*—What recompense may be expected from God for those who do otherwise? *From above*—How secretly soever unchaste persons carry the matter, so that men cannot reprove them, yet there is one who stands upon a higher place, whence he seeth in what manner they act.

Verses 3, 4. *Is not destruction to the wicked?*—Destruction is their portion. *And a strange punishment*—Some extraordinary and dreadful judgment, which of right belongs to them. Hebrew, וְנֶחֱךָ, *ve-necher*, an *alienation*, or *estrangement*, namely, from God and his favour: had I been such a one, I neither should nor could have expected any kindness or mercy from God in a future world, as now I do. *Doth not he see my ways?*—That is, all my counsels

7 If my step hath turned out of the way, and ^d my heart walked after mine

eyes, and if any blot hath cleaved to my hands;

8 *Then* ° let me sow, and let another eat; yea, let my offspring be rooted out.

9 If my heart have been deceived by a woman, or *if* I have laid wait at my neighbour's door;

10 *Then* let my wife grind unto ^f another, and let others bow down upon her.

^d Num. xv. 39; Eccles. xi. 9; Ezek. vi. 9; Matt. v. 29.—° Lev. xxvii. 16; Deut. xxviii. 30, 38, &c.—^f 2 Sam. xii. 11; Jer. viii. 10.

and courses. This was another reason why he was so circumspect and exact in restraining his thoughts, and senses, and whole man from sinful practices, because he knew that God would discern them, and therefore punish them, as he said, verse 3.

Verses 5, 6. *If I have walked with vanity*—Conversed in the world, or dealt with men, with lying, falsehood, or hypocrisy, as the word *vanity* is often used; or *if my foot hath hastened to deceit*—If, when I had an opportunity of enriching myself by wronging others, I have readily and greedily complied with it. *Let me be weighed, &c.*—I desire nothing more than to have my heart and life weighed in just balances, and searched out by the all-seeing God. *That God may know*—Or, *and he will know* (upon search he will find out: which is spoken of God after the manner of men) *mine integrity*—So this is an appeal to God to be witness of his sincerity.

Verses 7, 8. *If my step hath turned out of the way*—If I have knowingly and willingly swerved from the way of truth and justice, which God hath prescribed to me; and *my heart walked after mine eyes*—A strong and beautiful expression, signifying, if my eyes have seduced my heart. If I have let my heart loose to desire forbidden objects, which my eyes have seen. Commonly sin enters by the eye into the heart: thus David, letting his heart walk after his eyes, was led into the sin, first, of adultery, and then, of murder. How careful then ought we to be, how deeply should this be fixed in our minds, *not to let our heart walk after our eyes*. It is a maxim which deserves to be written, we will not say in letters of gold, but, what is of more importance, on the table of every heart! *And if any blot hath cleaved to my hands*—Any unjust gain. If I have had or have in my hands, or possession, any goods, gotten from others by fraud or violence, which would be a great scandal and a blot to my reputation: *Then let me sow, and let another eat*—Let strangers enjoy the fruit of my labours. *Yea, let my offspring be rooted out*—Or, rather, *my increase*; all my plants, and fruits, and improvements, as the word זְעֵזְעָאִי, *tzeetzaai*, properly signifies. Indeed, Job had not now any children to be rooted out.

Verses 9, 10. *If my heart have been deceived by a woman*—Namely, by a strange woman, or rather, by my neighbour's wife, as the next words limit the

A. M. 2484. 11 For this is a heinous crime; yea,
B. C. 1520. ^s it is an iniquity to be punished by
the judges.

12 For it is a fire that consumeth to destruction, and would root out all mine increase.

13 If I did despise the cause of my man-servant or of my maid-servant, when they contended with me;

14 What then shall I do when ^b God riseth up? and when he visiteth, what shall I answer him?

15 ⁱ Did not he that made me in the womb

^s Gen. xxxviii. 24; Lev. xx. 10; Deut. xxii. 22; Verse 28.
^b Psa. xli. v. 21.—ⁱ Chap. xxxiv. 19; Prov. xiv. 31; xxii. 2; Mal.

clause; for of a maid he had spoken before. *If I have laid wait at my neighbour's door*—Watching for his absence, or some fair opportunity to enter his house and defile his bed. *Then let my wife grind unto another*—Let another take away my wife from me, make her the vilest slave, and use her at his pleasure. Not as if Job desired this, but that if God should give up his wife to such wickedness, he would acknowledge his justice in it.

Verses 11, 12. *For this is a heinous crime*—Namely, adultery, whether committed by choice and design, or by the solicitation of a woman; *yea, it is an iniquity to be punished, &c.*—Hebrew, *an iniquity of the judges*; which it belongs to them to take cognizance of, and to punish, even with death; and that not only by the law of Moses, but even by the law of nature, as appears from the known laws and customs of the heathen nations. *For it is a fire that consumeth, &c.*—Lust is a fire in the soul; it consumes all that is good there, convictions of sin, desires after God, devout affections, pious resolutions, holy comforts, and lays the conscience waste. The sin of adultery, or fornication, consumes the body, the reputation, the substance, *rooting out all the increase*: it kindles the fire of God's wrath, which, if not quenched by the blood of Christ, in consequence of repentance and faith in him, will burn to the lowest hell.

Verses 13–15. *If I did despise the cause of my man-servant*—If I used my power over him to overthrow him and his just rights; *when they contended with me*—Either for requiring more work from them than they could perform, or for not providing for them those supports which their nature and necessity required, or for any other plausible cause. I heard them patiently, considered the matters complained of impartially, and did them right even against myself, if through any misinformation, or fancied provocation, I had done them an injury. *What then shall I do when God riseth up?*—Namely, to plead the cause of the oppressed against the oppressor, and to execute judgment. I used my servant like one who knew that I myself also was a servant, and had a master in heaven, to whom I was to give an account of my conduct toward my servant and all men. *And when he visiteth*—That is,

make him? and ² did not one fashion us in the womb?

A. M. 2484.
B. C. 1520.

16 If I have withheld the poor from their desire, or have caused the eyes of the widow to fail;

17 Or have eaten my morsel myself alone, and the fatherless hath not eaten thereof;

18 (For from my youth he was brought up with me, as *with* a father, and I have guided ³ her from my mother's womb;)

19 If I have seen any perish for want of clothing, or any poor without covering;

ii. 10.—² Or, *did he not fashion us in one womb?*—³ That is, *the widow*.

when he shall call me to his tribunal, and strictly examine all my actions, and particularly the cause between me and my servant; *what shall I answer him?*—What apology shall I make for myself? *Did not he that made me, &c.*—I considered that, though he was my servant, he was my fellow-creature, made by the same God, and therefore one of God's subjects, whom I could not injure without injustice to the supreme Lord. *And did not one fashion us, &c.*—With a body and soul of the same nature and quality, a rational and immortal creature, and made after God's image no less than myself, to whom therefore I owed some respect for God's sake.

Verses 16, 17. *If I have withheld the poor, &c.*—If I have denied them what they desired of me, either in justice or from necessity; for he was under no obligation to grant their vain or inordinate desires. *Or have caused the eyes of the widow to fail*—With tedious expectation of my justice or charity. I durst neither deny nor delay my help, when they needed or required it. *Or have eaten my morsel alone*—Without communicating part of my provisions or property to the poor, as it follows; *and the fatherless hath not eaten thereof*—This one kind of necessitous persons is put for all the rest. Job is most large upon these heads of doing justice to the widows and fatherless, and relieving the poor, because Eliphaz had most particularly accused him in these respects.

Verse 18. *For from my youth*—As soon as I was capable of managing my own affairs, and doing good to others; *he was brought up with me as with a father*—Under my care and protection, with all the diligence and tenderness of a father. *And I have guided her*—The widow, mentioned verse 16; *from my mother's womb*—From my tender years; ever since I was capable of discerning good from evil, I have made conscience of this duty.

Verses 19–22. *If I have seen any perish*—When it was in my power to help them. *If his loins have not blessed me*—That is, if my covering his loins hath not given him occasion to bless me, and to pray to God to bless me; the loins being put for the whole body. *If he were not warmed, &c.*—With clothing made of my wool. *If I have lifted up my hand*

A. M. 2484. 20 If his loins have not ^k blessed me,
B. C. 1520. and if he were not warmed with the
fleece of my sheep;

21 If I have lifted up my hand ^l against the
fatherless, when I saw my help in the gate:

22 *Then* let mine arm fall from my shoulder-
blade, and mine arm be broken from ⁴ the bone.

23 For ^m destruction from God was a terror
to me, and by reason of his highness I could
not endure.

24 ⁿ If I have made gold my hope, or have
said to the fine gold, *Thou art* my confi-
dence;

25 ^o If I rejoiced because my wealth was great,

^k Deut. xxiv. 13.—^l Chap. xxii. 9.—⁴ Or, the chanel-bone.
^m Isa. xiii. 6; Joel i. 15.—ⁿ Mark x. 24; 1 Tim. vi. 17.—^o Psa.
lxiii. 10; Prov. xi. 28.—^p Heb. found much.—^p Deut. iv. 19;

against the fatherless—An expression signifying
an act of power and hostility. If I have ever beaten
or ill used him; if I have brought him to the judg-
ment-seat, that, under the colour of justice, I might
take away his right, or any ways to threaten, injure,
or crush him; when I saw my help in the gate—*When I saw myself superior in the gate*,
Houbigant. That is, superior in authority. When
I understood my advantage against him, and that I
could influence the judges to do what I pleased.
Then let mine arm fall, &c.—I am contented that
that arm which hath been so wickedly employed,
may either rot off or fall out of joint, and so be
useless and burdensome to me.

Verse 23. *For destruction, &c.*—I stood in awe
of God, and his justice and wrath, and therefore
made it my care and business to shun sin, and to
please him. *And by reason of his highness*—His
excellence or majesty, which is most glorious and
terrible; *I could not endure*—I knew myself unable,
either to oppose his power, or to bear his wrath,
and therefore I did not dare to provoke him by any
impiety or injustice. Even good men have need to
restrain themselves from sin, with the fear of *de-
struction from God*. Even when salvation from
God is a comfort to us, yet destruction from God
should be a terror to us. Adam, in innocence, was
awed by a threatening.

Verse 24. *If I have made gold my hope*—That is,
the matter of my hope and trust, expecting safety and
happiness from it, and placing my chief joy in the
increase of my riches.

Verse 25. *If I have rejoiced because my wealth was
great*—Esteeming myself happy in the possession
of it, though without God's love and favour; *because
my hand had gotten much*—Ascribing my acquisition
of it to my own skill or industry, rather than to
God's goodness and mercy. And these sins Job the
rather mentions, partly for his own vindication, lest
it should be thought that God took away his property
because he had abused it to pride, or luxury, or the
oppression of others; and partly for the instruction
of mankind in succeeding generations, that they

and because my hand had ⁵ gotten ⁶ much;
A. M. 2484.
B. C. 1520.

26 ^p If I beheld ⁶ the sun when it shined, or
the moon walking ⁷ in brightness;

27 And my heart hath been secretly enticed,
or ⁸ my mouth hath kissed my hand:

28 This also were ⁹ an iniquity to be punished
by the judge: for I should have denied the God
that is above.

29 ^r If I rejoiced at the destruction of him
that hated me, or lifted up myself when evil
found him:

30 ^s Neither have I suffered ⁹ my mouth to sin
by wishing a curse to his soul.

xi. 16; xvii. 3; Ezek. viii. 16.—⁶ Heb. the light.—⁷ Heb. bright.
⁸ Heb. my hand hath kissed my mouth.—⁹ Verse 11.—^r Prov.
xvii. 5.—^s Matt. v. 44; Rom. xii. 14.—^s Heb. my palate.

might take notice of the evil of such practices, though
by most men they are reputed laudable or harmless,
or, at the worst, but light and trivial instances of
misconduct.

Verses 26, 27. *If I beheld the sun when it shined*
—Namely, in its full strength and glory; when it
most affected men's minds and hearts with admira-
tion of its beauty, and of the benefits which it is in-
strumental in communicating to the world, and
thereby moved them to worship it; or *the moon
walking in brightness*—When it shined most clear-
ly, or was at the full, at which time especially the
idolaters worshipped it. Job, in this passage, evi-
dently speaks of the worship of the host of heaven,
and especially of the sun and moon, the most eminent
and glorious of that number, which was the
most ancient kind of idolatry, and most frequent in
the eastern countries. *And my heart hath been
enticed*—Or *seduced*, or *deceived*, by their plausible
and glorious appearances, to believe that there was
something of a divinity in them, and so should be
induced to worship them, and that secretly, or in-
wardly, in my thoughts or affections, while I pro-
fessed outwardly to adhere to God and the true
religion. This emphatical expression, *enticed*,
seems to be used here with a design to teach the
world this necessary and important truth: that no
mistake, or error of mind, would excuse the practice
of idolatry. *My mouth hath kissed my hand*—In
token of worship, whereof this was a sign.

Verse 28. *This also were an iniquity*—No less
than the other fore-mentioned sins of adultery, op-
pression, &c.; *to be punished by the judge*—The
civil magistrate; who, being advanced and protect-
ed by God, is obliged to maintain and vindicate his
honour, and consequently to punish idolatry. *For
I should have denied God*—Not directly, but by
consequence, because this was to rob God of his
prerogative, by giving to the creature that worship
which is peculiar to God.

Verses 29, 30. *If I rejoiced, &c.*—I was so far
from being malicious toward, and from revenging
myself on, an enemy, which is the common and

A. M. 2484. 31 If the men of my tabernacle said
B. C. 1520. not, O that we had of his flesh! we
cannot be satisfied.

32 * The stranger did not lodge in the street :
but I opened my doors ¹⁰ to the traveller.

33 If I covered my transgressions ¹¹ as ^u Adam,
by hiding mine iniquity in my bosom :

34 Did I fear a great ^x multitude, or did the

¹ Gen. xix. 2; Judg. xix. 20; Rom. xii. 13; Heb. xiii. 2;
¹ Pet. iv. 9. — ¹⁰ Or, to the way. — ¹¹ Or, after the manner of
men.

A. M. 2484. contempt of families terrify me, that I
B. C. 1520. kept silence, and went not out of the
door?

35 ^v O that one would hear me! ¹² behold,
my desire is, ^z that the Almighty would answer
me, and that mine adversary had written a
book.

36 Surely I would take it upon my shoulder,

^u Gen. iii. 8, 12; Prov. xxviii. 13; Hos. vi. 7. — ^x Exod.
xxiii. 2. — ^y Chap. xxxiii. 6. — ¹² Or, behold my sign is that
the Almighty will answer me. — ^z Chap. xiii. 22.

allowed practice of ungodly men, that I did not so
much as delight in his ruin, when it was brought
upon him by other hands. By this, and other pas-
sages of the Old Testament, (see Exod. xxiii. 4; Prov.
xxiv. 17, 18,) we see that to love, forgive, and do
good to our enemies, is not a duty peculiar to
Christianity, but a part of that charity which now
is, and ever was, by the law of nature, of indis-
pensable obligation upon all men. Or lifted up
myself when evil found him—Hebrew, ותקעתי,
hithgnorarti, stirred up himself, to rejoice and in-
sult over his misery. Neither have I suffered my
mouth—Hebrew, חכִי, *chicchi*, my palate, which, be-
ing one of the instruments of speech, is put for all
the rest; to sin by wishing a curse to his soul. The
sense is, if any desire of his hurt did arise in me,
I forthwith suppressed it, and did not suffer it to
break forth in my uttering an imprecation against
him.

Verses 31, 32. If the men of my tabernacle—My
domestics and familiar friends; said not, O that
we had of his flesh!—Heath and Schultens read
the words, Who can show the man that hath not
filled himself with his victuals? And many com-
mentators understand Job as asserting here, that it
was a common thing among those who lived in his fam-
ily, on beholding his boundless beneficence, to cry
out, "Who is there that has not eaten of his flesh?"
That is, who has not tasted of his generosity?
Others consider it as an exclamation of gratitude,
uttered by those who were sustained by Job; as if
he had said, O that we had wherewithal to support
ourselves, that we might not thus be a burden to
this generous man; that we might not be obliged
thus to feed upon his flesh or substance! But the
connection of the words with the preceding seems
most apparent if we understand them as an ampli-
fication, and further confirmation, of Job's chari-
table disposition toward his enemies. Although his
cause was so just, and the malice of his enemies so
notorious and unreasonable, that all who were daily
conversant with him, and were witnesses of his and
their carriage, were so zealous in his quarrel, that
they protested they could eat their very flesh; yet
he restrained both them and himself from exe-
cuting vengeance upon them. The stranger—Or
traveller, as it follows; did not lodge in the street—
But in my house, according to the laws of hospital-
ity; see Gen. xviii. 3, and xix. 2.

Verse 33. If I covered my transgressions as

Adam—As Adam did in paradise. By hiding mine
iniquity in my bosom—In my own breast, and from
the sight of all men; or, in secret, as R. Levi renders
בְּחֹבֵבִי, *bechobbi*. Job alludes to Adam's hiding him-
self among the trees of the garden, and palliating
his sin; a circumstance in the history of the fall,
recorded by Moses, Gen. iii. 7, and doubtless im-
parted by the godly patriarchs to their children be-
fore Moses's time, and therefore well known to Job,
who here says he did not act thus, but was ever
ready to acknowledge his errors. The allusion is
quite proper and apposite: but if we should render
the passage, agreeably to the marginal reading, after
the manner of men, it becomes an accusation of
others; and the vindication of himself has a mixture
of pride in it, which does not suit the character of
the speaker. See Sherlock on Prophecy, p. 212.

Verse 34. Did I fear a great multitude?—No:
all that knew Job, knew him to be a man of resolu-
tion, that boldly appeared, spoke, and acted, in de-
fence of religion and justice. He durst not keep
silence, or stay within, when called to speak or act
for God. He was not deterred by the number, or
quality, or insults of the injurious, from reproving
them, and doing justice to the injured.

Verse 35. O that one would hear me!—O that I
might have my cause heard by any just and impar-
tial judge! Behold, my desires, &c.—So the Vul-
gate and the Targum understand תִּי, *tavi*, here, de-
riving it from אוֹהַב, *ivvah*, he desired, he coveted.
Some, however, deriving it from תִּוְּבַה, *tivvah*, to
mark, to design, to define, render the clause, Lo,
here is my sign, mark, or pledge, namely, that I
will stand the trial. But the former seems to be the
true sense, and is approved by A. Ezra and R. Levi.
That the Almighty would answer me—Answer my
desire herein, either by hearing me himself, or by
appointing some impartial person to judge whether
I be such a hypocrite as my friends make me, or
an upright person. And that mine adversary—
Whosoever he be that shall contend with, or ac-
cuse me; had written a book—Had put down in
writing the charges he has against me, and brought
them in. He alludes to what is usual in judicial
proceedings. This shows that letters were in use
in Job's time.

Verse 36. Surely I would take it—The book, or
writing, containing the charges against me; upon
my shoulder—As a trophy, or badge of honour;
and bind it as a crown to me—I would be so far

A. M. 2484. and bind it as a crown to me.
B. C. 1520.

37 I would declare unto him the number of my steps; as a prince would I go near unto him.

38 If my land cry against me, or that the furrows likewise thereof¹³ complain;

¹³ Heb. weep.—^a James v. 4.—¹⁴ Heb. the strength thereof.
^b 1 Kings xxi. 19.

from being ashamed or terrified, that I would glory, and rejoice, and triumph in it, nay, and openly expose it to be read by all, well knowing that so groundless and impotent an accusation would only serve the more to clear my innocence.

Verse 37. *I would declare to him*—To the Almighty, my judge; *the number of my steps*—The whole course of my life and actions, step by step, as far as I could remember: *as a prince would I go near him*—That is, with courage and confidence of success: I would stand before him with a look as upright and assured as that of a prince. Nothing can be plainer than that the *book*, or libel, here supposed to be written by Job's adversary, cannot be meant of one drawn up by God. For how was it possible for him to triumph in this? If it were a bill of accusation, coming from the God of truth, he had more reason to tremble, certainly, than to triumph. We must therefore conclude that by the adversary must be meant one or all of Job's friends,

39 If^a I have eaten¹⁴ the fruits thereof A. M. 2484.
without money, or^b have¹⁵ caused the B. C. 1520.
owners thereof to lose their life:

40 Let^c thistles grow instead of wheat, and¹⁶ cockle instead of barley. The words of Job are ended.

¹⁴ Heb. caused the soul of the owners thereof to expire, or, breathe out.—^c Gen. iii. 18.—¹⁶ Or, noisome weeds.

who were his only accusers that we know of: and God is here appealed to as a hearer or judge between them. In this it is that Job, with reason, rejoices and triumphs as being conscious of his integrity before God, and his sincere desire and endeavour to know and do his will in all things. See Peters and Dodd.

Verses 38-40. *If my land cry against me*—To wit, to God, for revenge, (as the like phrase signifies, Gen. iv. 10; Hab. ii. 11,) because I have gotten it from the right owners by fraud or violence, as my friends accuse me. *If I have eaten the fruits thereof without money*—Either without paying the price required by the right owner of the land, or by defrauding the workmen of the wages of their labours. *Or have caused the owners to lose their life*—Killing them, that I might have undisturbed possession of it, as Ahab did Naboth. *The words of Job are ended*—To wit, in answer to his friends: for he speaks but little afterward, and that is to God.

CHAPTER XXXII.

Some account of Elihu, and his sentiments concerning the dispute between Job and his friends, 1-5. He excuses his own youth, 6-10; and pleads that he had heard all they had to say, 11-13. That he had something new to offer, 14-17. Could not refrain from speaking, 18-20; and would speak impartially, 21, 22.

A. M. 2484. SO these three men ceased¹ to answer
B. C. 1520. Job, because he was^a righteous in his own eyes.

2 Then was kindled the wrath of Elihu the

¹ Heb. from answering.—^a Chap. xxxiii. 9.

NOTES ON CHAPTER XXXII.

Verse 1. *So these three men ceased to answer Job*—Finding that he persevered in asserting that he was not guilty of any of the heinous crimes which they laid to his charge, they left off disputing with him; *because he was righteous in his own eyes*—So they said; but the fact was they could not answer him.

Verses 2-4. *Then was kindled the wrath of Elihu*—Elihu, a new personage, here makes his appearance. Attentive, all the while, to the debate between Job and his friends, he utters not a word till both sides have done speaking; and then shows, that a stander-by may sometimes see further into a dispute than they who are eagerly engaged therein, and who, by having their passions raised to an un-

son of Barachel^b the Buzite, of the A. M. 2484.
kindred of Ram: against Job was his B. C. 1520.
wrath kindled, because he justified² himself rather than God.

^b Gen. xxii. 21.—² Heb. his soul.

due height, are very apt to carry things to an extreme. *The son of Barachel the Buzite*—Of the posterity of Buz, Nahor's son, Gen. xxii. 21; *of the kindred of Ram*—Or, *Aram*; for the names *Ram* and *Aram* are used promiscuously in the Hebrew, as the learned reader may see, by comparing 2 Kings viii. 28, and 2 Chron. xxii. 5. The land of Buz was doubtless somewhere in the neighbourhood of Job, as the posterity of Nahor settled in this country. His pedigree is thus particularly described, partly for his honour, as being both a wise and a good man, and principally to evidence the truth of this history. *Because he (Job) justified himself rather than God*—He justified himself not without reflection upon God, as dealing severely with him. He took more care to maintain his own innocence

A. M. 2484. 3 Also against his three friends was
B. C. 1520.

his wrath kindled, because they had found no answer, and yet had condemned Job.

4 Now Elihu had waited till Job had spoken, because they were elder than he.

5 When Elihu saw that there was no answer in the mouth of these three men, then his wrath was kindled.

6 And Elihu the son of Barachel the Buzite answered and said, I am young, and ye are very old; wherefore I was afraid, and durst not show you mine opinion.

³ Heb. *expected Job in words.*—⁴ Heb. *elder for days.*—⁵ Heb. *few of days.*—⁶ Chap. xv. 10.—⁷ Heb. *feared.*—⁸ 1 Kings iii. 12; iv. 29; Chap. xxxv. 11; xxxviii. 36; Prov. ii. 6; Ec-

clesiastes ii. 26; Dan. i. 17; ii. 21; Matthew xi. 25; James i. 5.—⁹ 1 Cor. i. 26.—¹⁰ Heb. *understandings.*—¹¹ Hebrew, *words.*

than God's glory. The word *Elihu* signifies, *My God is he*. They had all tried in vain to convince Job, but *My God is he*, who both can and will convince him. Elihu was not a little provoked at the behaviour of Job for attempting so to vindicate himself as to leave an imputation of injustice on God's providence. Also against his three friends was his wrath kindled—For charging Job with such atrocious crimes, and falling so miserably short, when they should have come to the proof, as not to be able to convict him of one of them. Now Elihu had waited—With patience and expectation, as the word *חכה*, *chiccha*, here used, means; till Job had spoken—And his three friends; because they were elder than he—Old age in those days was so highly honoured, that a young man scarcely dared to open his mouth before his elders. Elihu therefore begins with a very modest apology for his engaging in the dispute at all, drawn from his youth. He tells them he had waited a long while to hear what they would offer; but, finding they did not design to reply, he desired their leave to speak his opinion; a liberty, however, which he would not indulge himself in, if they were willing to make an answer, or could any way convict Job of what they had laid to his charge. He intimates that his intention was to attack him in a quite different manner from what they had done, for which reason he should not think himself at all obliged to answer the same arguments he had urged against them. But, at the same time, he declares it was not his intention to speak partially in his favour, since the acceptance of persons was a crime which he was sensible would be severely punished by the Almighty.

Verses 5-8. When Elihu saw, &c., then his wrath was kindled—When he saw that none of these three offered to reply, but sat as men that knew not what to say, he was not able to hold his peace any longer. With the next words the metre begins again, the preceding part of this chapter being in prose. I am young, and ye are very old—I have considered all this time my own youth and your aged experience; wherefore I was afraid—Of being thought forward and presumptuous, and so have hitherto forbore to interpose my opinion. I said, Days—That

7 I said, Days should speak, and multitude of years should teach wisdom.

8 But there is a spirit in man: and the inspiration of the Almighty giveth them understanding.

9 Great men are not always wise; neither do the aged understand judgment.

10 Therefore I said, Harken to me; I also will show mine opinion.

11 Behold, I waited for your words; I gave ear to your reasons, while ye searched out what to say.

is, the multitude of days, or men of many days or years, old men; should speak—Namely, wisely and pertinently; and the multitude of years should teach wisdom—Should instruct us that are younger in the paths of wisdom, and concerning the wise counsels and ways of God, about which the present controversy is. But—Hebrew, *אכן*, *achen*, *surely*; it must be confessed; there is a spirit in man—A rational soul, and therefore every man, as man, whether old or young, is able in some measure to discern between truth and falsehood, good and evil; and to judge of men's opinions and discourses: and therefore I also may venture to deliver my opinion. And the inspiration of the Almighty giveth understanding—Instructeth this rational soul in the knowledge of divine things, when that inspiration is sincerely and earnestly asked of God, and received in humility and faith: in other words, I see that heavenly wisdom is not always the property of old age, but that God often imparts it to those that are younger. It is a divine gift, that depends not upon length of years, but is communicated through the influence of the Divine Spirit. It is this that enlightens the dark mind of man, and makes him wise unto salvation: and without this he is still involved in ignorance and error, sin and misery.

Verses 9, 10. Great men are not always wise—That is, men of eminence for age, or learning, or dignity and power, such as Job's three friends seem to have been; neither do the aged (always) understand judgment—What is just and right; or the judgment of God, and the methods and reasons of his administrations. Therefore I said—Within myself, and I now say it with my mouth; Harken to me—Thou Job especially, who art more nearly concerned, and thy friends with thee. I also will show my opinion—I will tell you what I think about this matter.

Verses 11. Behold, I waited for your words—With silence, patience, and diligent attention, which therefore I now expect from you. I gave ear to your reasons—Or, reasonings; Hebrew, *תבונותיכם*, *tebunotheichem*, *your understandings*, or *minds*; the depth and strength of your discourses; your most intelligent and forcible arguments against Job. While you searched out what to say—While you

A. M. 2484. 12 Yea, I attended unto you, and
B. C. 1520.

behold, *there was* none of you that convinced Job, or that answered his words:

13 ^fLest ye should say, We have found out wisdom: God thrusteth him down, not man.

14 Now he hath not ^gdirected *his* words against me: neither will I answer him with your speeches.

15 They were amazed, they answered no more: ^hthey left off speaking.

16 When I had waited, (for they spake not, but stood still, *and* answered no more;)

^f Jeremiah ix. 23; 1 Corinthians i. 29.—^g Or, *order his words*.
^h Heb. *they removed speeches from themselves*.—ⁱ Heb. *words*.
^j Heb. *the spirit of my belly*.

put your inventions upon the rack, and studied to find out all that could be said against him, and to furnish yourselves with the most convincing words and reasons.

Verses 12, 13. *Yea, I attended unto you*—I have duly considered all you have said; *and behold, none of you convinced Job*—I must pronounce you have not confuted him, nor advanced any thing to the purpose in answer to his defence of himself. *Lest you should say, We have found out wisdom*—God has thus left you to your own weakness and mistakes, and shown you your inability to convince him, or even to make good your own arguments by answering his objections, lest you should glory in your own wisdom; lest you should boastingly say, We have discovered and said all that need or can be said in the cause, and what may finally end the controversy; we have said, *God thrusteth him down, not man*, and by his dreadful judgments upon him, shows him to be a hypocrite, and to be guilty of some gross, though secret sins. Or, as the Hebrew אל ירפנו *eel juldpennu*, may be properly rendered, *God must, or will, confute him, not man*; “God only can sift him to the bottom, and know whether his pretences to piety have any thing real in them, or are only hypocritical.” But, says Elihu, this argument does not satisfy me, and therefore bear with me if I seek for a better.

Verse 14. *He hath not directed his words against me*—I am not engaged in this dispute by any provoking words of Job, as you have been, which have excited your passions, and biased your judgments; but I speak merely from zeal for the vindication of God’s honour, and from love to truth and justice, and a sincere desire to administer to Job matter both of conviction and comfort. *Neither will I answer him with your speeches*—With such words or arguments as yours, either weak and impertinent, or opprobrious and provoking. As Job did not direct any of his words against me, so I shall not trouble him with any of your replies.

Verses 15, 16. *They were amazed*—Job’s three friends stood mute, like persons amazed, not knowing what to reply to his arguments, and wondering at his bold and confident assertions concerning his

17 *I said*, I will answer also my part, A. M. 2484.
B. C. 1520.

I also will show mine opinion.

18 For I am full of ^kmatter, ^lthe spirit within me constraineth me.

19 Behold, my belly *is* as wine *which* ^mhath no vent; it is ready to burst like new bottles.

20 I will speak, ⁿthat I may be refreshed: I will open my lips and answer.

21 Let me not, I pray you, ^oaccept any man’s person, neither let me give flattering titles unto man.

22 For I know not to give flattering titles; *in so doing* my Maker would soon take me away.

^k Heb. *is not opened*.—^l Heb. *that I may breathe*.—^m Lev. xix. 15; Deuteronomy i. 17; xvi. 19; Prov. xxiv. 23; Matthew xxii. 16.

integrity, and his interest in the favour of God, under such terrible and manifest tokens, as they thought them, of God’s just displeasure against him. *They answered no more*—Although Job gave them just occasion to confute and reprove him for his intemperate speeches, and his presumptuous and irreverent expressions concerning God. *When I had waited they spake not, &c.*—Which he repeats as a strange and unreasonable thing, that they should be silent when they had such obligations to speak for the vindication both of God’s justice, and of their own truth and reputation.

Verses 17, 18. *I will answer also my part*—I will take my turn and speak what they have omitted. *I am full of matter*—I have many things to say in this cause; *the spirit within me constraineth me*—My spirit, or soul, is so entirely dissatisfied with what hath hitherto been spoken, and so clearly apprehends what may silence Job and end the dispute, that it forceth me to speak. Or rather he means, that God’s Spirit had so enlightened his understanding by discovering the truth of the matter to him, and had so inspired him with zeal, that he was constrained thereby to plead God’s cause against Job. “As he was a young man,” says Heath, “he dared not claim much authority from his own sayings; but he claims it from the inspiration of the Almighty, by whose Spirit he was actuated, and whose oracles he was delivering.”

Verses 19, 20. *Behold, my belly*—That is, my mind or heart; *is as wine which hath no vent*—Is as a bottle filled with wine. Or, my thoughts and affections work within me, like fermenting wine in a bottle, and must have utterance. An elegant similitude, as Mercer observes. The wine is here put, by a metonymy, for the bottle in which it is contained. *It is ready to burst like new bottles*—That is, bottles of new wine; for otherwise, the bottles being made of leather, those that were old were more liable to burst than such as were new. *I will speak, that I may be refreshed*—That I may ease my mind of those thoughts which now oppress it. *I will open my lips, and answer*—I will not utter impertinent words, but solid answers to Job’s arguments.

Verses 21, 22. *Let me not accept any man’s per-*

son—So as, either from fear of, or respect to, any man, to speak otherwise than I think. Do not expect me to speak partially, or by way of flattery, to any one, but bear with my free and plain dealing. As he found himself under a strong impulse to speak, so he would deliver his opinion with all freedom, and without partial inclination to either side. *For I know not to give flattering titles*—That is, I have neither skill nor inclination to flatter Job nor any man, so as to corrupt the truth, or speak falsely for his sake. *In so doing, &c.*—If I should be guilty of

that sin; *my Maker would soon take me away*—Namely, out of this world: God would quickly and sorely punish me for it. Or, without supplying the words, *in so doing*, which are not in the Hebrew, the sense is, I dare not flatter any man, because I must shortly die and go to judgment, to give an account of all my words and actions. “The more closely we eye the majesty of God,” says Henry, “as our Maker, and the more we dread his wrath and justice, the less danger shall we be in of a sinful fearing or flattering of men.”

CHAPTER XXXIII.

Elihu offers himself to Job as the person he had so often wished for, 1-7. He charges him with reflecting upon God, 8-11. He aggravates this by showing him God's sovereign power over man, and the various means he uses to do him good, 12-14; particularly dreams, 15-18; and sickness, 19-30. He requests Job to answer him, or let him go on, 31-33.

A. M. 2484.
B. C. 1520. **WHEREFORE**, Job, I pray thee,

hear my speeches, and hearken

to all my words.

2 Behold, now I have opened my mouth, my tongue hath spoken ¹ in my mouth.

3 My words shall be of the uprightness of my heart: and my lips shall utter knowledge clearly.

¹ Heb. in my palate.—² Gen. ii. 7.—³ Chap. ix. 34; xiii. 20; xxxi. 35.

NOTES ON CHAPTER XXXIII.

Verse 1. *Wherefore, Job, I pray thee, hear my speeches*—Here Elihu addresses his speech to Job alone, (for he considered what the three friends had advanced as having been sufficiently confuted by Job in his discourse with them,) and tells him that, as he had oft desired to have a man to plead with him in God's behalf, he would now do it, and was every way according to Job's wish, being of the same nature with himself, and neither manifesting any dreadful majesty to affright him, nor assuming any power over him. He then begins to reprehend those passages which he thought blameable in Job's speeches; particularly his insisting so much on his integrity, which, however evident, should not have been mentioned without due acknowledgment, that the Sovereign of the world had done him no wrong in thus afflicting him; urging that it was not proper for him to call in question the wisdom and justice of God's providence, because he did not understand it, verses 1-13. That God had, by revelation, declared the way of behaviour which was acceptable to him; which was, for men to put away the evil of their doings, and cast off all pride, verses 14-19. That if he would conform himself to this rule, he might expect, though he was even at death's door, that God would restore him to his health and vigour; more especially if he had a prophet near him, who would show him God's righteousness, in order to his humiliation before God, and the bringing of him to a proper confession of his faults, an acknowledgment of God's justice in his chastisements, and a sincere

4 ^a The Spirit of God hath made me, and the breath of the Almighty hath given me life.

5 If thou canst answer me, set *thy words* in order before me, stand up.

6 ^b Behold, I *am* ² according to thy wish in God's stead: I also am ³ formed out of the clay.

^a Hebrew, according to thy mouth.—³ Hebrew, cut out of the clay.

purpose of amendment, verses 20-28. If he had any objection to make to this, he desires him to make it; if not, to have patience with him, while he showed him the course which, he was persuaded, it was his wisest method to pursue, verse 29 to the end. See Peters and Heath.

Verses 2, 3. *Behold, now I have opened my mouth*—Now I have begun to speak, and intend, with thy good leave, to proceed in my discourse with thee. *My words shall be of the uprightness of my heart*—I will not speak passionately or partially, as one resolved to defend what I have once said, whether true or false, but what I verily believe to be true and important, and from a sincere desire to profit thee. *My lips shall utter knowledge clearly*—What I speak will be plain, not hard to be understood.

Verses 4, 5. *The Spirit of God hath made me, &c.*—First of all, consider that I am thy fellow-creature, made by God's Spirit, (Gen. i. 2,) and quickened by a soul of the same nature with that which God at first breathed into the body of man, and I am ready to discourse with thee upon even terms according to thy desire. *If thou canst answer me*—Thou needest not, therefore, decline the encounter, but if thou art able to answer, *set thy words in order*—I shall allow thee all freedom of discourse; I cannot terrify thee as God would, and I shall not reproach thee, or cavil at thee, as thy friends have done; *stand up*—To oppose and argue with me in this cause.

Verses 6, 7. *Behold, I am, &c., in God's stead*—I will plead with thee in God's name and stead, and

A. M. 2484. 7 ° Behold, my terror shall not make thee afraid, neither shall my hand be heavy upon thee.

8 Surely thou hast spoken 'in my hearing, and I have heard the voice of thy words, saying,

9 ^d I am clean without transgression, I am innocent; neither *is there* iniquity in me.

10 Behold, he findeth occasions against me, ° he counteth me for his enemy.

^c Chap. ix. 34; xiii. 21.—^d Heb. *in mine ears*.—^e Chap. ix. 17; x. 7; xi. 4; xvi. 17; xxiii. 10; xxvii. 5; xxix. 14; xxxi. 1.

on his behalf, which thou hast often wished that some one would do. *I also am formed out of the clay*—I am God's creature, like thyself. *Behold, my terror shall not make thee afraid*—Look upon me: the contest is not unequal, as thou didst complain when thou thoughtest upon God, chap. ix. 34, and xiii. 23. Thou seest no dreadful majesty in me to afflict thee, nor any power to oppress thee.

Verses 8-11. *Surely thou hast spoken in my hearing*—I shall not charge thee with hypocrisy, as thy friends do, which God only can discern; but with those words which I myself have heard from thee; *I am clean without transgression, &c.*—Job had not affirmed this simply and absolutely, for he had often confessed himself to be a sinner; but no such *transgression* as might give God just occasion to punish him so severely, as is signified, where he blames God for *finding occasions against him*, implying that he had given him none by his sins. And thus far Elihu's charge was just, and herein it differs from the charge of Job's three friends, who often accuse him for asserting his own innocence; but they did it because they thought him a hypocrite; whereas Elihu does it upon other grounds, even because Job's justification of himself was accompanied with reflections upon God. *Behold, he findeth occasions against me*—Thou hast said, Behold the Almighty, who, I thought, would have vindicated my innocence, severely marks my defects and faults, that from thence he may take occasion to punish me, notwithstanding my integrity. *He counteth me for his enemy*—Though I have endeavoured to be his faithful servant all my days, yet he treats me like an enemy. *He putteth my feet in the stocks*—He so confines me in the prison of this affliction that I cannot stir: *he marketh all my paths*—Watches me so narrowly that I can find no way to escape. Elihu, though less partial than the other speakers, is, however, too severe in the construction which he puts upon Job's words. The first branch of this passage, *Behold, he findeth occasions against me, or, as Heath and others render it, He inventeth cruelties against me*, is not to be found in Job's speeches; and as for the other branch, which occurs chap. xiii. 24, we have there observed, that though there may be something faulty in the expostulation, yet it is much alleviated by the expressions of humility which precede and follow it. See the note on that place.

11 ^f He putteth my feet in the stocks, A. M. 2484. he marketh all my paths. B. C. 1520.

12 Behold, *in this* thou art not just: I will answer thee, that God is greater than man.

13 Why dost thou ° strive against him? for ^g he giveth not account of any of his matters.

14 ^h For God speaketh once, yea twice, *yet man* perceiveth it not.

^e Chap. xiii. 24; xvi. 9; xix. 11.—^f Chap. xiii. 27; xiv. 16; xxxi. 4.—^g Isa. xlv. 9.—^h Heb. *he answereth not*.—ⁱ Chap. xl. 5; Psa. lxii. 11.

Verse 12. *Behold, in this*—Hebrew, וְהִנֵּה זֶה, *hen zoth, Behold this*; that is, attend to this; mark what I say to thee; *thou art not just*—Or justified. This thy complaining language cannot be excused. Though I do not accuse thee, as thy friends have done, of other sins, yet in this thou art blameable, and I must reprehend thee for it, by reminding thee, *that God is greater than man*—Not only in majesty and power, which thou acknowledgedst, but also in justice, wisdom, and goodness; and, therefore, he ought to be treated by thee with greater reverence; and thou actest very foolishly and presumptuously in contending with him, and censuring his judgments. Thou forgettest thy distance from him, and castest off that veneration and awe which thou oughtest constantly to maintain toward thy sovereign Lord. Elihu's argument is, "Notwithstanding all thy pretensions to purity and innocence, thou art far from perfection; there is human frailty enough in thee, and all mankind, to justify the dealings of God with thee or them, however severe they are; give him therefore the glory: acknowledge the justice of his proceedings." This, in Scripture phrase, is giving God the glory.

Verse 13. *Why dost thou strive against him?*—Upon what grounds, and for what ends? What advantage dost thou expect from it? Why dost thou presume to dispute with him, and call him to an account for his actions? *for he giveth not account of any of his matters*—He revealeth not to us the secrets of his providence. He neither useth, nor is, by any law, obliged to give an account to any of his creatures, of the reasons of his judgments and dispensations, as being the supreme and absolute Governor of all persons and things, in whose will it becomes all men to acquiesce.

Verse 14. *For*—Or, as *chi*, should be rather rendered, *nevertheless God speaketh*—Namely, unto men, by way of instruction or admonition, as appears from the following verses. Although he doth not give men an account of his matters, yet he doth that for them which is much better, and more necessary and important: though he be so high, yet he condescends to teach and admonish them in various ways, that he may withdraw them from such courses as are mischievous and sinful, and bring them to an humble dependance on himself. *Once, yea twice*—Again and again, or oftentimes. When his speaking once does not awaken men God is

A. M. 2484. 15 ⁱ In a dream, in a vision of the
B. C. 1520. night, when deep sleep falleth upon
men, in slumberings upon the bed ;

16 ^k Then ⁶ he openeth the ears of men, and
sealeth their instruction,

17 That he may withdraw man *from his*
⁷ purpose, and hide pride from man.

18 He keepeth back his soul from the pit, and
his life ⁸ from perishing by the sword.

19 He is chastened also with pain upon his

¹ Num. xii. 6 ; Chap. iv. 13.—^k Chap. xxxvi. 10, 15.—⁶ Heb.
he revealeth, or, uncovereth.—⁷ Heb. *work.*

pleased to give them another admonition: though he will not gratify their curiosity, by laying open to their view his secret judgments, yet he will acquaint them with their duty and interest, as far as is proper; what he requires of them, and what they may expect from him. *Yet man perceiveth it not*—He doth not regard it, he doth not discern or understand it; he is not aware that it is the voice of God, nor doth he receive the things revealed, for they are foolishness to him: he stops his ears, stands in his own light, rejects the counsel of God against himself, and is not the wiser, no, not for the dictates of wisdom itself. God speaks to us by conscience, by providence, and by ministers, of all which Elihu here treats at large, to show Job that God was now telling him his mind, and endeavouring to do him good. He shows first, how God admonishes men by their own consciences.

Verse 15. *In a dream, in a vision, or, in a vision of the night*—This he mentions as one usual way of God's revealing his mind and will to men in those days, before God's word was committed to writing; (Gen. xx. 6, and xli. 1, 28;) *when deep sleep falleth upon men*—When men's outward senses are bound up, and their minds are free from all distracting cares and business of the world, and wholly at leisure to receive divine impressions; *in slumberings upon the bed*—This is added because, in this case, man is like one that slumbereth, or is between sleeping and waking, or uncertain in which state he is, as Paul, when he was in his ecstasy, could not tell whether he was in the body or out of the body.

Verses 16, 17. *Then he openeth the ears of men*—When their minds are free from the business and cares of the day, he secretly whispers instruction upon their ears, and imprints it upon their minds, and that in such a manner that they do not let it slip, (as men usually do most things which they hear, either from God or men,) but retain and hold it fast, being fully assured of the truth and importance of it. *That he may withdraw man from his purpose*—That is, from the execution of his purpose. Hebrew, *מַגְנָסוֹ*, *magnasoh*, his work, that is, his evil work, as the Chaldee and LXX. understand it; from sin, which is truly and properly called man's work, because it hath its rise in and from him, and is very agreeable to his nature, in his present corrupt state; as, on the contrary, all the good that is in man is generally and

bed, and the multitude of his bones A. M. 2484.
with strong pain : B. C. 1520.

20 ¹ So that his life abhorreth bread, and his
soul ⁹ dainty meat.

21 His flesh is consumed away, that it cannot
be seen ; and his bones *that* were not seen,
stick out.

22 Yea, his soul draweth near unto the grave,
and his life to the destroyers.

23 If there be a messenger with him, an in-

⁹ Heb. *from passing by the sword.*—¹ Psa. cvii. 18.—⁸ Heb.
meat of desire.

properly ascribed to God in Scripture. *And hide pride from man*—Pride is here mentioned as the root of those evil purposes or works last spoken of, which, for the most part, proceed from haughtiness of spirit, whereby men scorn to submit themselves and their wills and actions to God's authority, but resolve to follow their own wills and corrupt passions, in spite of God, and with contempt of him. By God's *hiding pride from man* may be meant his taking it away, as he is said to hide sin when he removes the guilt and power of it. Or, *pride* may be here put for the occasion of it. And God by this means is said to *hide pride from man*, because, by these glorious representations of his divine majesty to man, he takes him off from the admiration of his own excellency, and brings him to a sight of his own weakness, and to an humble and ready submission to God's will.

Verses 18-22. *He keepeth back his soul from the pit*—By these gracious admonitions, whereby God leads men to humiliation of soul before him, and to repentance, he preserves their lives from death and the grave, and their souls from eternal destruction. *From perishing by the sword*—By some dreadful judgment which was ready to fall upon them. *He is chastened also with pain*—With some painful and dangerous disease, which is the second way whereby God instructs men and excites them to repentance, which also was Job's case. *So that his life abhorreth bread*—In which languishing condition he loathes his food, yea, nauseates that very meat which formerly was his greatest delight. *His flesh is consumed away*—Through pain and pining sickness. *That it cannot be seen*—Because there is little or none left to be seen, but he who before was fat and flourishing is now become a mere skeleton. *His soul draweth near unto the grave*—He seems to himself and others to be past all hopes of recovery: which he adds for Job's comfort in his desperate condition. *And his life to the destroyers*—To the instruments of death and destruction, namely, diseases, which, by God's appointment, are ready to give the fatal blow.

Verses 23, 24. *If there be a messenger with him*—If there be a prophet or teacher with the afflicted man; *an interpreter*—One whose office and work it is to declare to him the mind and will of God, and his design in this dispensation of his providence, and

A. M. 2484. terpreter, one among a thousand, to
B. C. 1520. show unto man his uprightness :

24 Then he is gracious unto him, and saith,
Deliver him from going down to the pit : I have
found ¹⁰ a ransom.

25 His flesh shall be fresher ¹¹ than a child's :
he shall return to the days of his youth :

26 He shall pray unto God, and he will be

¹⁰ Or, an atonement.—¹¹ Heb. than childhood.—¹² Or, he shall
look upon men, and say, I have sinned, &c.—² Sam. xii. 13,

what is the sick man's duty under it. *One of a thousand*—A person rightly qualified for this great and difficult work, such as there are but very few ; to *show unto man his uprightness*—Not man's, but God's uprightness ; namely, his justice in inflicting these sufferings, and the sufferer's desert of condemnation and wrath ; God's way of pardoning and justifying the penitent ; his sincerity and faithfulness to his promises, and the necessity of acquiescing in his will without murmuring or repining, and of walking in the way of faith and holiness. *Then he is gracious unto him*—In that case, or upon the sick man's turning to God in true repentance and faith, God graciously pardons his sins, and saves him, probably from his dangerous disease and from death, but, if not, at least from going down to the pit of hell, and from everlasting destruction. *And saith*—To the messenger ; *deliver him*—Namely, ministerially and declaratively ; assure him that I have pardoned, and will heal him ; *I have found a ransom*—Although I might justly destroy him, yet I will spare him, for I have found out a way of ransoming sinners from death, which is by the death of my Son, the Redeemer of the world, and with respect to which I will pardon them that repent and sue for mercy. Observe how God glories in the invention ! *I have found, I have found a ransom* ; a ransom for poor undone sinners ! I, even I, am he that hath done it. "Some interpret this *Messenger* or *Angel* of Christ himself, the *Interpreter* of God's will to man, the chief among ten thousand of his saints and servants. But as, in general, he comes to men by his messengers or ministers, and as their instructions and encouragements are deduced from his mediation, and are made effectual by his gracious presence, it does not much signify whether we interpret the passage of the messengers of God pointing to the Saviour, or the Saviour revealing himself by their ministry. It is equally immaterial whether the words, *Deliver him from going down to the pit*, be considered as the language of Christ's intercession, pleading the ransom of his blood in behalf of the sinner, or the words of the Father, accepting of his plea and giving command to save the sinner, satisfied with that appointed ransom : for it cannot reasonably be doubted but that Elihu had reference to it ; though he might also intend the sacrifices which prefigured the great atonement."—Scott. Add to this, that it may serve as no small confirmation of our faith in the doctrines of the gospel, that we find the substance, or great outlines of them thus pointed out to men, by divine

favourable unto him : and he shall see ^{A. M. 2484.}
his face with joy : for he will render ^{B. C. 1520.}
unto man his righteousness.

27 ¹² He looketh upon men, and *if any* ^m say,
I have sinned, and perverted *that which was*
right, and it ^m profited me not ;

28 ¹³ He will ^o deliver his soul from going into
the pit, and his life shall see the light.

Prov. xxviii. 13 ; Luke xv. 21 ; 1 John i. 9.—² Rom. vi. 21.
¹² Or, He hath delivered my soul, &c., and my life.—¹³ Isa. xxviii. 17

revelation, in the earliest ages of the world. Some thousands of years have certainly passed since the book of Job was written, and yet we here find the same great truths declared in relation to man and his salvation through Christ, which are so fully revealed in the New Testament.

Verses 25, 26. *His flesh shall be fresher than a child's*—Presently the sick man shall begin to recover : these joyful tidings delivered to him by God's messenger shall revive his spirit, and, by degrees, restore his former health and vigour ; so that he shall become a new man in his body, as well as in his mind : his flesh shall look as fresh as when he was a child ; and *he shall return to the days of his youth*—To the same healthful and strong constitution of body which he had in his youth. *He shall pray unto God*—The sick man shall, being encouraged and engaged so to do, either by the aforesaid gracious message, or by the goodness of God manifested in his miraculous recovery. *And he will be favourable unto him*—In hearing and answering his prayers, which before he seemed to neglect. *And he shall see his face with joy*—God will lift up upon him the light of his reconciled countenance ; whereas, before, he either hid his face from him, or seemed to frown upon him : in other words, he shall now be sensible that God looks graciously upon and is pleased with him. *For he will render unto man his righteousness*—He will deal with him as with one now reconciled to him through the Mediator, and turning from sin to righteousness.

Verses 27, 28. *He looketh upon men*—God diligently observes all mankind, and the conduct of every one, especially of every one in sickness and distress. *If any say, I have sinned*—If any one sincerely, humbly, and penitently confess and forsake his sins : *I have perverted that which was right*—I have judged perversely of the just and righteous ways of God, censuring his proceedings against me, as too rigorous and severe ; whereas, in truth, I only was to be blamed ; or I have swerved from the right and good way of God's commands, and have made to myself crooked paths ; *and it profited me not*—I got no good by so doing, as I vainly supposed I should, but got much hurt by it, and that both in body and mind, which was the just fruit of my sins. *He will deliver his soul from going into the pit*—The pit of hell : iniquity shall not be his everlasting ruin ; *and his life shall see the light*—The light of this world, *the light of the living*, verse 30. His life, which was endangered, shall be restored and con-

A. M. 2484. 29 Lo, all these things worketh
B. C. 1520. God ¹⁴ oftentimes with man,
30 ^p To bring back his soul from the pit, to be
enlightened with the light of the living.
31 Mark well, O Job, hearken unto me:

¹⁴ Heb. twice and thrice.

tinued: yea, further, *his life*, his ever living and immortal soul, shall see and enjoy light, all good in the vision and fruition of God for ever.

Verses 29, 30. *All these things worketh God*—All these ways and methods does God take to awaken, convince, and save sinners; *oftentimes with man*—One way with one man, and another with another; or, using these several methods with the same man, trying by various means, one after another, to lead him to repentance, and prepare him for deliverance. *To bring back his soul from the pit*—That he may save men from being for ever miserable, and make them for ever happy. “Lord, what is man, that thou shouldst thus visit him? This should engage us to comply with God’s designs, to work with him for our own good, and not to counterwork him. And this will render those that perish inexcusable, that so much was done to save them and they would not be healed.” So Mr. Henry. Excellent words!

hold thy peace, and I will speak. A. M. 2484.
B. C. 1520. 32 If thou hast any thing to say, answer me: speak, for I desire to justify thee.
33 If not, ^q hearken unto me: hold thy peace, and I shall teach thee wisdom.

^p Verse 28; Psa. lvi. 13.—^q Psa. xxxiv. 11.

But utterly irreconcilable with the doctrine of absolute, unconditional predestination.

Verses 31–33. *Mark well, O Job*—Consider what I have already said, for it very much concerns thee; *hearken unto me; hold thy peace*—Attend to what I have further to say to thee with patience and silence. *If thou hast any thing to say*—For thy own justification, or in answer to the charge I have already brought against thee; *speak, for I desire to justify thee*—Namely, as far as may consist with truth and justice. I do not speak with an evil design, or as one resolved to condemn thee whatsoever thou sayest, and, therefore, I shall be glad to hear any thing from thee which may make for thy just vindication. *If not, hearken to me*—If thou hast no exception to make against my discourse, then continue thy attention, and silently listen to me; *and I shall teach thee wisdom*—That is, what thy wisdom and duty are in thy circumstances.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

Elihu, proceeding, bespeaks the attention of the company, 1–4. Charges Job with other indecent expressions, 5–9. Shows God’s justice, sovereignty, power, omniscience, 10–25. His severity against sinners, 26–28. His overruling providence, 29, 30. Teaches Job what he ought to say, 31, 32. Appeals to his own conscience, and concludes with reproving him for murmuring, 33–37.

A. M. 2484. **FURTHERMORE** Elihu answered and said,
B. C. 1520. 2 Hear my words, O ye wise men; and give

^a Chap. vi. 30; xii. 11.

NOTES ON CHAPTER XXXIV.

Verse 1. *Furthermore Elihu answered and said*—Job making no reply to what Elihu had said, probably because he saw that he had touched the particular point in which he was especially defective, Elihu carries the charge a little higher, and tells him, with more sharpness than before, that there were some words in his discourse which sounded in his ears as if he accused God’s justice and goodness: for what else did he mean when he complained that God did not do him right, and that he destroyed alike both good and bad? Which rash assertions Elihu overthrows from the consideration of the sovereign dominion, power, righteousness, and wisdom of God. That it was impossible God could act unjustly: for were he so disposed, what could hinder him from annihilating the whole human race at once? He needed only withdraw his preserving power, and they would instantly fall into dust. Since, then, he did not act in this manner,

2

ear unto me, ye that have knowledge. A. M. 2484.
B. C. 1520. 3 ^a For the ear trieth words, as the ¹ mouth tasteth meat.

¹ Heb. palate.

but his ways were perfectly agreeable to righteousness, he was not to be addressed in so rude a manner as Job had made use of. Reverence and respect were due to earthly princes; how much more to Him in whose sight the prince and beggar were the same! for he was the Maker of them all. That though God would look with a merciful eye on the infirmities of human nature, when accompanied with humility, yet the arrogant were sure to find no favour at his hands; he would not fail to execute his vengeance on them, that they might be an example to others. That submission and resignation were the behaviour fit for man in the presence of God; and therefore, toward the conclusion of the chapter, he represents to Job what behaviour and discourse would have better become him than that which he had used.

Verses 2–4. *Hear my words O ye wise men*—Who are here present: do you judge whether what I have said, and have still further to say, be not rea-

621

A. M. 2484. 4 Let us choose to us judgment: let us
B. C. 1520. know among ourselves what is good.

5 For Job hath said, ^b I am righteous: and
° God hath taken away my judgment.

6 ^d Should I lie against my right? ² my wound
is incurable without transgression.

7 What man is like Job, ° who drinketh up
scorning like water;

8 Which goeth in company with the workers
of iniquity, and walketh with wicked men?

9 For ^f he hath said, It profiteth a man no-
thing that he should delight himself with God.

^b Chap. xxxiii. 9.—^c Chapter xxvii. 2.—^d Chapter ix. 17.
^e Heb. *mine arrow*, Chapter vi. 4; xvi. 13.—^f Chapter xv. 16.
^g Chap. ix. 22, 23, 30; xxxv. 3; Mal. iii. 14.—^h Heb. *men of heart*.—ⁱ Gen. xviii. 25; Deut. xxxii. 4; 2 Chron. xix. 7; Chap.

sonable and true. *For the ear trieth words*—Man's mind judgeth of the truth and propriety of things spoken and heard; *as the mouth tasteth meat*—And distinguishes what is sweet and palatable from what is otherwise. The ear is put for the mind, to which things are conveyed by it. *Let us choose to us judgment*—Let us agree to examine the business, that we may be able to pronounce a righteous judgment. Let us not contend for victory, but for truth and justice. *Let us know among ourselves what is good*—Let us show one another who hath the best cause.

Verses 5, 6. *Job hath said, I am righteous*—I am so far righteous that I have not deserved, nor had any reason to expect, such hard usage from God. *God hath taken away my judgment*—So Job had said, chap. xxvii. 2; that is, he denies me that which is just and equal, namely, to give me a fair hearing. *Should I lie against my right*—Thus Job had spoken in effect, chap. xxvii. 4–6. Should I falsely accuse myself of sins of which I am not guilty? Should I betray mine own cause, and deny that integrity which I am conscious I possess? *My wound is incurable without transgression*—Without any such crying sin as might reasonably bring down such terrible judgments upon my head.

Verse 7–9. *Who drinketh up scorning like water*—That is, abundantly and greedily: who doth so break forth into scornful expressions, not only against his friends, but, in some sort, even against God himself. The Hebrew may be interpreted, *What man, being like Job, would drink up scorning?* &c. That a wicked or foolish man should act thus, is not strange; but that a man of such piety, gravity, wisdom, and authority, as Job, should be guilty of such a sin, this is wonderful. *Which walketh with wicked men*—Although I dare not say he is a wicked man, yet in this matter he speaks and acts like one of the wicked. *For he hath said*—Not absolutely, and in express terms, but by consequence, *It profiteth a man nothing, &c.*—That though a man study to please God, he shall not be profited by it. For he said that good men were no less, nay, sometimes more miserable here than the wicked, chap. ix. 22,

10 Therefore hearken unto me, ye ^{A. M. 2484.}
^{B. C. 1520.} ³ men of understanding: ⁴ far be it

from God, *that he should do*, wickedness; and
from the Almighty, *that he should commit*
iniquity.

11 ^b For the work of a man shall he render
unto him, and cause every man to find accord-
ing to *his ways*.

12 Yea, surely God will not do wickedly, nei-
ther will the Almighty ⁱ pervert judgment.

13 Who hath given him a charge over the
earth? or who hath disposed ⁴ the whole world?

viii. 3; xxxvi. 23; Psa. xcii. 15; Rom. ix. 14.—^b Psalm lxxii. 12; Prov. xxiv. 12; Jer. xxxii. 19; Ezek. xxxiii. 20; Matt. xvi. 27; Romans ii. 6; 2 Cor. v. 10; 1 Peter i. 17; Rev. xxii. 12.
ⁱ Chap. viii. 3.—⁴ Heb. *all of it*.

and xxx. 26. And that, for his part, he was no gainer, as to this life, by his piety, but a loser, and that God showed him no more kindness and compassion than he usually did to the vilest of men.

Verses 10–12. *Hearken to me, ye men of understanding*—Ye who are present, and understand these things, do you judge between Job and me. *Far be it from God that he should do wickedness*—This I must lay down as a principle, that the righteous and holy God neither does nor can deal unjustly with Job, or with any man, as Job insinuates that God hath dealt with him. *For the work of a man*—That is, the reward of his work; *shall he render unto him, &c.*—Job's afflictions, though great and distressing, are not undeserved, but justly inflicted upon him, both for the original corruption of his nature, and for many actual transgressions, which are known to God, though Job, through partiality, may not see them. And Job's piety shall be recompensed, it may be, in this life, but undoubtedly in the next; and therefore piety is not unprofitable, as Job signifies. *Neither will the Almighty pervert judgment*—As Job hath erroneously affirmed.

Verse 13. *Who hath given him a charge over the earth?*—Over the inhabitants of the earth, to rule them according to his laws, and to give an account to him thereof? Who or where is his superior, that made the world, and then delivered the government of it to God? There is no such person. God himself is the sole Creator, the supreme, absolute Lord of all, and therefore cannot act unjustly; because the Creator and Lord of the world must needs have all possible perfections in himself, and, among others, perfect justice; and because he is of himself all-sufficient, and independent of all other beings, and able to do and procure whatsoever he pleaseth; and therefore as he hath no inclination, so he hath no temptation to any unrighteous action; this being generally the reason of all the unrighteous actions in the world, that the persons who do them either are obliged to do them to gratify some superior who commands them, or else they want or desire something which they cannot justly obtain. For he would be a monster, and not a man, who would take away

A. M. 2494. B. C. 1520. 14 If he set his heart ^a upon man, *if* he ^k gather unto himself his spirit and his breath ;

15 ^l All flesh shall perish together, and man shall turn again unto dust.

16 If now *thou hast* understanding, hear this : hearken to the voice of my words.

17 ^m Shall even he that hateth right ^o govern? and wilt thou condemn him that is most just ?

18 ⁿ *Is it fit to say to a king, Thou art*

^a Heb. upon him.—^k Psa. civ. 29.—^l Gen. iii. 19; Eccles. xii. 7.—^m Gen. xviii. 25; 2 Sam. xxiii. 3.—ⁿ Hebrew, bind.—^o Exod. xxii. 29.

any thing by injustice or violence which he might have by right. *Or who hath disposed the whole world?*—"He did not receive the government of the world from any above himself; nor is there any higher being, whose authority he may be thought to dread, and for fear of whom he may be tempted to act unjustly."—Bishop Patrick. The Hebrew of the former clause, כִּי פָקַד עָלָיו אֲמִצָּה, *mi pakad gnalaiv artzah*, the phraseology of which is rather peculiar, is rendered by Chappelow, *Who enjoined him to create the earth?* and by some others, *Who on earth can be his overseer?* The meaning evidently is, as Dr. Dodd observes from Schultens and Heath, "Who on earth hath authority sufficient to examine into and control his proceedings."

Verses 14, 15. *If he set his heart upon man*—Hebrew, עָלָיו, *eelav*, upon him, meaning man, doubtless. If his eye and heart be upon man, and he diligently observe him and all his ways, and whatsoever is amiss in him, and therefore resolve to punish him: or, *if he set his heart against him*, (as the word may properly be, and often is rendered,) and therefore resolve to cut him off: *if he gather*—Or, without *if*, which is not in the Hebrew, *he will gather unto himself his spirit and his breath*—Namely, by death, by which God is said to *take away men's breath*, Psa. civ. 29, and to *gather their souls*, Psa. xxvi. 9. *All flesh*—All mankind, who are called *flesh*, Gen. vi. 3, 17; Isa. xl. 6; *shall perish together*—Or, *alike*, without any exception, be they high or low, wise or foolish, good or bad; if God design to destroy them, they cannot withstand his power, but must needs perish by his stroke. The design of this and the foregoing verse is the same with that of verse 13, namely, to declare God's absolute and uncontrollable sovereignty over all men, to dispose of them either for life or death as it pleases him; and consequently to show that Job had cause to be thankful unto God, who had continued his life so long to him, and had no cause to complain, or tax God with any injustice for afflicting him.

Verses 16, 17. *If thou hast understanding, hear this*—As thou art a man of understanding, hear and consider what I say. *Shall even he that hateth right*—That is unrighteous; *govern*—Hebrew, יָרַשׁ, *jachabosh*, bind, as the word properly signifies, but is fitly rendered *govern* by most interpreters, because governors have a power to bind their subjects

wicked? and to princes, *Ye are ungodly?* A. M. 2484. B. C. 1520.

19 *How much less to him* that ^o accepteth not the persons of princes, nor regardeth the rich more than the poor? for ^p they all *are* the work of his hands.

20 In a moment shall they die, and the people shall be troubled ^q at midnight, and pass away: and ^r the mighty shall be taken away without hand.

^o Deut. x. 17; 2 Chron. xix. 7; Acts x. 34; Rom. ii. 11; Gal. ii. 6; Eph. vi. 9; Col. iii. 25; 1 Pet. i. 17.—^p Chap. xxxi. 15.—^q Exod. xii. 29, 30.—^r Heb. they shall take away the mighty.

by laws and penalties, and they are the ligaments by which societies are bound and kept together, which, without them, would be dissolved and broken to pieces. Elihu's argument is the same with that of Abraham, Gen. xviii. 25, and that of St. Paul, Rom. iii. 5, 6. *If God be unrighteous, how shall he judge, or govern the world?* And the argument is undeniable; if God were unjust, there would be nothing but injustice and confusion in the world; whereas we see there is a great deal of justice administered in the world, and all this must proceed from Him who is the fountain of all justice, and rule, and authority. And as the psalmist says, *He that formed the eye, shall he not see?* so we may say, *He that makes men just, shall he be unjust?* *Wilt thou condemn him that is most just?*—God, who hath given so many clear and unquestionable evidences of his justice, in giving just and holy laws, in encouraging and rewarding righteous persons in this life, and inflicting dreadful judgments upon tyrants and oppressors.

Verses 18, 19. *Is it fit to say to a king, Thou art wicked?*—Hebrew, *Belial*, or a son of Belial. Though a king may be wicked, yet his subjects neither may nor dare call him so, Exod. xxii. 28. And therefore if any evil thought did arise in thee, thou oughtest to have been afraid to utter it, and bring forth such unworthy expressions against God. *That accepteth not the persons of any*—Who respecteth not the greatest princes, so as to do any unjust thing to gain their favour, or avoid their displeasure, and to whom princes and peasants are equally subject, and infinitely inferior; who, therefore, is free from all temptation to injustice, which commonly proceeds from respect of persons; and to whom therefore thou didst owe more reverence than thy words have expressed. *For they all are the work of his hands*—And therefore of equal worth and price with him, and equally subject to his power and pleasure.

Verses 20, 21. *In a moment shall they die*—Whensoever God doth but give the word, and send his summons for them. The rich and the prince, no less than the poor, must submit to the law of death, which God hath imposed upon all men without exception. *And the people shall be troubled*—Hebrew, יַעֲנֹשׁוּ, *jegognashu*, concutientur, tremiscent, shall be shaken, shall tremble, at the approach of death, or through the calamities which God will bring upon them.

A. M. 2484. 21 ^r For his eyes *are* upon the ways
B. C. 1520. of man, and he seeth all his goings.

22 ^a *There is* no darkness, nor shadow of death,
where the workers of iniquity may hide them-
selves.

23 For he will not lay upon man *more than right*;
that he should ^b enter into judgment with God.

24 ^c He shall break in pieces mighty men
^d without number, and set others in their stead.

25 Therefore he knoweth their works, and he
overturneth *them* in the night, so that they are
^e destroyed.

^r 2 Chron. xvi. 9; Chap. xxxi. 4; Psa. xxxiv. 15; Prov. v. 21;
xv. 3; Jer. xvi. 17; xxxii. 19. — ^a Psa. cxix. 12; Amos ix. 2,
3; Heb. iv. 13. — ^b Heb. go. — ^c Dan. ii. 21. — ^d Heb. with-
out searching out.

Whole nations, or *people*, are no less subject to God's power than any particular persons: their number cannot secure them from his hand. *At midnight*—Suddenly or unexpectedly, when they are most secure. *And the mighty shall be taken away*—From their place or power, or out of this life; *without hand*—Without any hand or instrumentality of man; by some secret act or judgment of God, which he often inflicts upon those who are out of the reach of men. *For his eyes are upon the ways of man*—"There is no one passage of man's life but God is acquainted with it, and therefore cannot be suspected, through ignorance of their actions, (any more than through fear of their persons,) to overlook their crimes, or to do them any injustice."—Patrick. God doth not destroy either prince or people unjustly, no, nor out of his mere pleasure, but for their sins, which he sees exactly, although they use all possible arts to hide them.

Verses 22, 23. *There is no darkness, &c.*—The workers of iniquity may flatter themselves, or deceive others, by covering their wicked actions with plausible pretences and professions, but they cannot deceive God, nor conceal their ways or hearts from his inspection. *He will not lay upon man more than right*—More or heavier punishments than they deserve, or than are proportionable to their sins, which he accurately observes, and therefore can adapt punishments to them; *that he should enter into judgment, &c.*—Thereby to give him any pretence or occasion of entering into judgment with him, or of condemning his proceedings, for which there might seem to be some colour, if God did lay upon man more than is right.

Verses 24–26. *He shall break in pieces mighty men, &c.*—Neither their greatness nor their numbers can secure them from the stroke of God's justice; *and set others in their stead*—Give away their power and dignity to others, who shall come in their place. *Therefore he knoweth their works*—That is, it appears from this that he knows all their evil works, because he judges and punishes them for them; *and he overturneth them in the night*—When they are at rest and secure; or, he turneth or bring-

26 He striketh them as wicked men A. M. 2484.
¹¹ in the open sight of others; B. C. 1520.

27 Because they ^a turned back ¹² from him,
and ^b would not consider any of his ways:

28 So that they ^c cause the cry of the poor to come
unto him, and he ^d heareth the cry of the afflicted.

29 When he giveth quietness, who then can
make trouble? and when he hideth *his* face,
who then can behold him? whether *it be done*
against a nation, or against a man only:

30 That the hypocrite reign not, lest ^e the
people be insnared.

¹¹ Heb. crushed. — ¹² Heb. in the place of beholders. — ^a 1 Sam. xv. 11. — ^b Heb. from after him. — ^c Psa. xxviii. 5; Isa. v. 12. ^d Chap. xxxv. 9; James v. 4. — ^e Exod. xxii. 23. — 1 Kings xii. 28, 30; 2 Kings xxi. 9.

eth upon them the night, namely, of calamity and tribulation, as the next words explain it, and as the words light and darkness are often used. *He striketh them as wicked men*—That is, as he useth to smite wicked men; or, as תחל, *tachal*, rather means here, according to Ab. Ezra, *inter improbos, among the wicked*, or, *for wicked men*; that is, *because they are wicked men*, therefore he destroys them without any regard to their quality; *in the open sight of others*—In public view, for their greater shame, for the greater glory of God's justice, and for the greater terror of other wicked persons.

Verses 27, 28. *Because they turned back from him*—From God, whom they or their progenitors had owned; and from his laws, which God had written on their minds, Rom. ii. 14; and from the practice of true religion, to sin and folly. *And would not consider any of his ways*—So as to walk in them. Hebrew, לא הישכילו, *lo hischilu*, *they would not understand, or consider them wisely*, so as to make a proper and wise use of their knowledge of them. *They cause the cry of the poor to come to him*—To God, as the following words imply, it being God's work to *hear the cry*, and plead the cause, of the afflicted or oppressed. Their case is bad who have the prayers and tears of the poor against them; for these will draw down vengeance, sooner or later, on the heads of their oppressors.

Verses 29, 30. *When he giveth quietness*—Either to the poor and oppressed persons last mentioned, or to any other persons or people, as it follows; *who then can make trouble?*—No man or creature can hinder God's design; *and when he hideth his face*—Withdraws his favour and help from them, and thereby exposes them to oppressions and calamities; *who then can behold him?*—Who can enjoy the light of his countenance, or look up to him with cheerfulness and confidence, to desire or expect his help? *whether it be done against a nation or a man only*—God can carry on his work, either of mercy or justice, as easily and as irresistibly upon a whole nation as upon one particular person. *That the hypocrite reign not*—May not continue his tyranny; *lest the people be insnared*—Lest the people should be longer

A. M. 2184. 31 Surely it is meet to be said unto
B. C. 1520. God, ^b I have borne chastisement, I
will not offend any more :

32 *That which I see not, teach thou me* : if I
have done iniquity, I will do no more.

33 ¹³ *Should it be according to thy mind?* he
will recompense it, whether thou refuse, or whe-
ther thou choose; and not I: therefore speak
what thou knowest.

34 Let men ¹⁴ of understanding tell me,

^b Dan. ix. 7-14. — ¹² Heb. Should it be from with thee? — ¹⁴ Heb.

kept in the snares of oppression; God doth this to
free poor oppressed people from the snares which
ungodly men lay for them.

Verses 31, 32. *Surely it is meet to be said unto
God*—It is certainly but fit and reasonable that man,
a weak and sinful creature, should speak thus to his
Maker and supreme Lord, who is so much superior
to him, and so mighty and righteous in all his ways;
“*have borne chastisement*—Or, *I do, or shall bear it*,
namely, quietly and contentedly; I will bear the
Lord’s indignation, and accept of the punishment of
my own iniquity, and not accuse God falsely and
foolishly, as I have done; *I will not offend any more*
—Hebrew, *לא אחרל, lo echbol, I will not corrupt*,
namely, myself, or my ways; or, *I will take, or de-
mand no pledge*, in which sense also this word is
often used, and so the meaning will be, “I confess I
have been too bold with God in desiring that he
would come with me into judgment, and that I might
have a pledge that he would do so; but I will no
longer desire it, but will submit myself wholly to
him.” *That which I see not, teach thou me*—I will
no longer maintain my innocence, but from thy
judgments I will conclude that there are some se-
cret sins in me, for which thou dost chastise me, and
which I, through my ignorance or partiality, cannot
yet discover, and therefore I beg that, through thy
Spirit, thou wouldst manifest them to me. *If I have
done iniquity, I will do no more*—I will amend my
former errors.

Verse 33. *Should it be according to thy mind?*—
Having advised and directed Job how to conduct
himself, and what to say to God in his afflicted state,
he now proceeds to enforce his advice with solid ar-
guments; *should it*—Namely, God’s chastening of
thee, about which the great controversy was; *be ac-
cording to thy mind?*—Or, as thou wouldst have it?
Shall thy opinion or affection give laws and measures
to God, that he shall afflict only such persons, and in
such a manner and measure, and so long, as thou
choosest? Does God need, or should he seek for,
thy advice how to govern the world, and whom and
when to reward or punish? Dost thou quarrel with
him because he chastises thee more severely and
longer than thou expectedst? *He will recompense
it*—Namely, thy iniquity, expressed verse 32; *whe-
ther thou choose, or whether thou refuse*—Whether
thou art satisfied with his dispensations, and patiently
submittest thereto, or whether thou art offended with

and let a wise man hearken unto A. M. 2184.
me. B. C. 1520.

35 ^o Job hath spoken without knowledge, and
his words were without wisdom.

36 ¹⁵ My desire is that Job may be tried unto
the end, because of his answers for wicked
men.

37 For he addeth rebellion unto his sin, he
clappeth his hands among us, and multiplieth
his words against God.

of heart. — ^c Chap. xxxv. 16. — ¹⁵ Or, My father, let Job be tried.

them, and rebellest against them; and not I—It is
not I nor thou, that must prescribe to God, but he
will do what he pleaseth. Or, the Hebrew, *אני אלהי,*
velo ani, may be rendered, *But not I*, and then the
sense of the clause will be, *Do thou choose or re-
fuse as thou pleasest, and contend with God for ac-
ting otherwise with thee than according to thy opin-
ion he ought to act; but so would not I do, if it were
my case; and I can say nothing for such a course:*
but do thou speak what thou knowest, or what thou
canst say for it, as it follows. The reader will ob-
serve, that the preceding exposition of this obscure
verse is given according to our present translation,
some of the first words of which, however, namely,
those in Italic letters, are not in the Hebrew, and are
thought by some learned men to be improperly sup-
plied. Heath, Dodd, and many others, leaving out
those words, propose to read the verse thus: *It is he
will recompense that which proceedeth from thee,
whether thou refusest or whether thou choosest, and
not I.* The words, they think, were intended to in-
duce Job to make confession of his sins, and, in or-
der thereto, include this argument: It is God who is
to punish thy sins, and not man: as he, therefore, is
perfectly acquainted with them, there is no reason
why thou shouldst not make an ample confession of
them, since, whether thou comply or refuse, thou
wilt receive the same retribution of thy actions.

Verses 34-36. *Let men of understanding tell me*
—I am content that any wise man should judge of
my words. Let any such tell us what is their opin-
ion. *Job hath spoken without knowledge*—Job seems
to me to be very much mistaken, and his discourse
to be inconsiderate, and without reason. *My desire
is, that Job may be tried*—That his words and mat-
ters, which I am now debating, may be examined
and sifted; *unto the end*—Thoroughly and exactly,
till the cause be brought to an issue; *because of his
answers for wicked men*—Because of his replies or
discourses on their behalf: he hath put arguments
into their mouths against God and his providence.

Verse 37. *He addeth rebellion unto his sin*—He
sinned before by impatience under his afflictions, but
now he is grown obstinate, and, instead of humbling
himself for his sins, he justifies himself, and accuses
the blessed God. *He clappeth his hands among us*
—In token of victory, insulting and triumphing; and
multiplieth his words against God—In effect, though
not directly.