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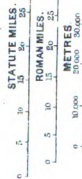




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# HOLY LAND

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2. Gethse
3. Beth
4. Jericho
5. Tabor
6. Beth
7. Lachish
8. Hazor
9. Makkedah

### II. SIMEON.

1. Be'er
2. Be'er
3. Be'er
4. Be'er

### III. BENJAMIN.

1. Be'er
2. Be'er
3. Be'er
4. Be'er

### IV. DAN.

### V. EPHRAIM.

### VI. MANASSEH.

### VII. ISSACHAR.

### VIII. ZEBULON.

### IX. ASHER.

### X. NAPHTHALI.

### XI. MANASSEH.

### XII. GAD.

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### MEASUREMENTS.

### OF READING.

### OF DISTANCE.

### OF AREA.

### OF VOLUME.

### OF WEIGHT.

### OF TEMPERATURE.

### OF TIME.

### OF LENGTH.

### OF BREADTH.

### OF DEPTH.

### OF HEIGHT.









COMMENTARY  
OF  
THE OLD TESTAMENT.

*VOL. III.—JOSHUA to II. SAMUEL.*

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BOOK OF JOSHUA,

By D. STEELE, D.D.

BOOKS OF JUDGES TO II. SAMUEL,

By REV. M. S. TERRY, A.M.

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D. D. WHEDON, LL.D., EDITOR.

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## PREFACE.

THE present volume is one of a series intended to furnish a Manual Commentary on the Old Testament corresponding with Whedon's on the New. It is designed, in accordance with the plan of the entire series, to be strictly and concisely exegetical; treating the true text of Scripture as divinely inspired and authoritative, and embodying the latest results of sound biblical criticism and research.

The Notes on Joshua and the first three chapters of Judges were first prepared by Dr. Steele; but, under the pressure of numerous official duties as Professor and Vice-President of the Syracuse University, he felt unable to complete Judges and revise Joshua without greatly delaying the work. Upon his recommendation, and by approval of the general Editor, the entire volume, with Dr. Steele's manuscript, was assigned to the present writer to prepare for the press. In this final revision many changes have been made both by erasure and addition. The principal additions are inclosed in brackets [-] and braces { - }, the latter designating notes added by the general Editor. Special thanks are due to Dr. Strong, of Drew Theological Seminary, for many valuable suggestions.

All accessible works, ancient and modern, bearing on this portion of Holy Scripture, have been duly consulted. Among those principally used, such as have been constantly on our table, consulted at nearly every step, and frequently referred to in the notes, the most important are the following.

#### Commentaries.

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And especially **SMITH's** *Dictionary of the Bible*, **KITTO's** *Cyclopædia of Biblical Literature*, (New Edition,) and **M'CLINTOCK** and **STRONG's** *Cyclopædia of Biblical, Theological, and Ecclesiastical Literature*.

Of more general works, **KITTO's** *Daily Bible Illustrations*, **STANLEY's** *History of the Jewish Church*, and **EWALD's** *History of Israel*, are worthy of particular mention; and various *Theological Reviews*, both American and Foreign, have often been of great service.

M. S. T.

# INTRODUCTION TO THE BOOK OF JOSHUA.

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## General Character of the Historical Books.

IN the Hebrew Canon the Book of Joshua is the first of the *Prior Prophets*, which division comprises the Books of Joshua, Judges, Samuel, and Kings. These books were probably so named because they were written by prophets, and are so largely devoted to the history and work of the prophetic order in Israel. And a deeper reason may be found in the fact that they are a history written from the prophetic or theocratic stand-point. In the arrangement of books in our English Bible they form, together with Ruth, Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah, and Esther, the division appropriately called the "Historical Books of the Old Testament;" but they contain THEOCRATIC HISTORY, and through them all, as through the other Scriptures, runs a unity of purpose and of general form in which we may trace the gradual unfolding of the plan of man's redemption. None but prophets could write such books as these; none but those who have communion and fellowship with the Holy Spirit can read them with proper appreciation. The inspired penmen wrote not in order to preserve great historical facts from oblivion, nor to furnish an exhaustive record of their times and people, but to show the hand of God in all the affairs of men—Jehovah in history.

Very noticeable is the anonymous character of these sacred books. The writers sought not to immortalize themselves as authors, nor seem they to have once thought that their readers in after times would be curious to know their names. But, whether conscious or unconscious of the purpose they were serving, they have written books of instruction for all time. More than a hundred generations have already found them "profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness."

We are not to suppose that these writers attempted to compose an *original* history, in the modern sense: still less should we presume to test the value of these ancient records by the standard of modern historical composition, or assume that in any event the narrator has given us a full account of all he knew. The sacred writers evidently had within their reach a large number of books and documents, from which they gathered such material as suited their purpose. Old documents, such as genealogical tables, songs, public addresses, and perhaps, in some

cases, narratives of particular events, were transferred entire, or with slight modification, to their pages. Sometimes the writer acknowledged his sources of information or of quotation, and sometimes not. It serves no useful purpose to attempt, with De Wette, Ewald, and other kindred spirits, to decide on purely subjective grounds the date and authorship of all the ancient sources from which the present books of Scripture were compiled. The results of such criticism are at best only a confusing mass of more or less plausible conjectures.

The biblical writers often omit the details of many interesting facts of which they evidently had abundant knowledge, and aim to give prominence to such persons and events as noticeably helped or hindered the cause of divine truth. Thus Keil truly says: "All the efforts of the people to perfect trades, arts, and sciences, also domestic, municipal, and political arrangements, are either passed over entirely, or are intimated briefly, and only in so far as they stand in connexion with the higher aims of the theocracy." Hence they are truly a sacred history, and not merely a secular history of a chosen race. But while magnifying the wonders of the Lord's hand, there is ample reason for believing that they never deviate from the strictest fidelity to fact. They seek to hide no sin of their immortal heroes, nor to cover any reproach that ever visited the chosen people. And herein lies much of the real greatness and imperishable worth of these inspired histories.

As to the general *style* of the Hebrew historians, several peculiarities in the matter of arrangement and chronology are very noticeable, and attention to them will often obviate difficulties which some critics have been prone to magnify. The exact order of events is often disregarded, and facts with their moral lessons are made prominent, as if the writer took it for granted that his readers would either know the order of events, or at least need no information on that point. The very fact that the Hebrew language has only two tenses, past and future, is evidence of a lack of precision among the Hebrews in their habits of designating time and the succession of events. In commencing a narrative the Old Testament writers sometimes announce a summary, or else the result of the whole affair, and then go on to record details in a way that might easily lead to the impression that they had passed on to narrate other events, when in fact they are only enlarging on the details of events already in substance told. At other times they anticipate events, and record them out of their proper chronological order because they are associated, in place, name, or other circumstance, with what the writer has at the time in hand. Hence the order in which a series of events is narrated is not in all cases a certain guide to the chronology of the several events.

The Historical Books, and other parts of the Old Testament Canon, contain much internal evidence to show that they were edited and arranged in their present form by a later hand. An ancient and very probable tradition assigns that work to Ezra and the Great Synagogue.

### Name, Author, and Date.

The Book of Joshua takes its name from the great hero whose achievements in the conquest and settlement of the Promised Land it records. "It is not often," says Stanley, "either in sacred or common history, that we are justified in pausing on anything so outward, and usually so accidental, as a name. But if ever there be an exception, it is in the case of Joshua. His original name *Hoshea* (Salvation) is transformed into *Jehosua* or *Joshua*, (God's Salvation;) and this, according to the modification which Hebrew names underwent in their passage through the Greek language, took, in the later ages of the Jewish Church, sometimes the form of *Jason*, but more frequently that which has now become indelibly impressed upon history as the greatest of all names—JESUS. (Heb. iv, 8.) The first Joshua was to save his people from their actual foes; the second was to 'save his people from their sins.'" Among most Christian nations human reverence has long prevented its bestowal, in its New Testament form, on any human individual. (See note, Matt. i, 21.)

The distinguished chieftain of whom this history treats is already familiar to the reader of the last four books of Moses. He may be humanly styled the Conqueror of Canaan. Born about the time of Moses' flight to Midian, he must have grown up a serf in the brick-yards of Egypt, and afterwards have witnessed the miracles of the Exodus. His first appearance is in the war with Amalek, (Exod. xvii, 9,) and it is noticeable that he is there introduced to us as already a valiant soldier of Jehovah. During the sublime events at Sinai he repeatedly appears as the confidential servant and companion of Moses, (Exod. xxiv, 13; xxxii, 17; xxxiii, 11;) and before the death of the great lawgiver Joshua was solemnly invested with authority, and designated as his successor. Num. xxvii, 18–23; Deut. xxxi, 23. His courage, sagacity, and faith appear conspicuously in the minority report which he and Caleb boldly urged after exploring the land of the Canaanites, (Num. xiv, 6–10,) and for their noble faith and heroism on that occasion they only, of all the thousands of Israel, twenty years old and upwards, who saw the miracles of the Exodus, were permitted to enter the Land of Promise. Num. xiv, 30. In his history of the Vandal War, Procopius relates that when the Phenicians found Joshua's invading forces irresistible, they migrated first to Egypt, and thence

westward along the northern coast of Africa, and built Tingis in Mauritania, near which, in the sixth century, was found a monument bearing in the Phenician language the inscription, "We are those who fled from the face of Joshua the robber, the son of Nun." But modern scholars quite generally reject the whole story.

It does not follow, because the book bears the name of Joshua, that it was written by that great commander; but portions of it bear evidence of having been composed by an eye-witness of the events it records. Chap. v, 1, 6. The concluding portion, containing the account of Joshua's death, must, of course, have been written by a later hand; and Keil very plausibly supposes that the entire work was written by one of the elders who outlived Joshua. He argues, quite conclusively, that the conquest of Hebron by Caleb, of Debir by Othniel, and of Leshem by the Danites, did not take place during Joshua's life-time. Comp. chap. xv, 13-19, and xix, 47, with Judges i, 10-15, and xviii. But the date of the book must be before the time of David, for the Jebusites still held the citadel of Jerusalem, (chap. xv, 63;) and even before the death of Rahab, for, according to chap. vi, 25, she was still dwelling in Israel when our author wrote. The oft-recurring phrase, *unto this day*, cannot be used to prove a date long after Joshua's time, nor even after his death; for in chap. xxii, 3, 17, and chap. xxiii, 9, it is used of time previous to his death, and in no instance in the book is its use incompatible with the supposition that Joshua was still living. The authorship cannot be authoritatively decided. There is much to render probable the Jewish tradition that the main portion of the book was written at various times by Joshua; but a later hand appended the account of Joshua's death, and inserted a few other passages in different parts of the work. We may reasonably suppose that Moses' minister succeeded his master in the use of the pen, as well as in command.

### Design and Value of the Book of Joshua.

The design of this book was evidently to record the leading events in the history of Israel from the death of Moses to the death of Joshua; to record the conquest and settlement of Canaan; and especially to magnify the inviolable faithfulness of Jehovah as a covenant-keeping God. The central idea on which the whole work rests is announced in Joshua's divine commission at the very beginning of the book. Chap. i, 1-9. Hence the importance of this book as a connecting link between the Book of the Law and the subsequent history of Israel in Palestine cannot be over estimated. It holds a relation to the Pentateuch similar to that which the Acts of the Apostles holds to the four Gospels.

A large portion of the work is invaluable for the study of sacred



geography. It is a complete Doomsday-book of Palestine, and all modern research and discovery tend more and more to confirm its accuracy.

The general authenticity of the narrative has not been questioned except in its supernatural events. But the *à priori* assumption that "no amount of testimony can render a miracle credible," precludes all argument so far as these records are concerned, and the discussion of the possibility of miracles is beside the purpose of this work. The alleged contradictions and discrepancies of the Book of Joshua are fully explained in our notes on the passages where they occur.

The book is readily divided into Two Parts, the first containing the History of the Conquest, the second the Allotment of the Promised Land. The following Table of Contents will serve both for an analysis and a convenient index of the whole:

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# THE BOOK OF JOSHUA.

## CHAPTER I.

**N**OW after the death of Moses the servant of the LORD it came to

*a* Exod. 24. 13; Deut. 1. 38.

## PART FIRST.

### CONQUEST OF CANAAN.

#### CHAPTERS I-XII.

## CHAPTER I.

### JOSHUA'S DIVINE COMMISSION, 1-9.

The date of these events is, according to the common chronology, 1451 years before Christ. The place was Shittim, in the plains of Moab, about seven miles east of the Jordan, and opposite Jericho. Num. xxxiii, 49. Here, in the shade of the acacia groves, Israel had been beguiled to licentiousness by the Midianites, "in the matter of Peor," (Num. xv;) here they had been visited by the Divine judgments for their sin; and here they had witnessed the last works and received the last counsels of Moses.

1. **Now**—More properly, *and it came to pass*. Heb. וַיָּבֹא. With this formula most of the historical books begin. It indicates in each case an intimate connection of the narrative with what immediately precedes. Perhaps the Book of Joshua originally began with the last chapter of Deuteronomy, and, for the purpose of completing the biography of Moses, that chapter, containing the details of his death and burial, was accustomed to be read with the scroll of Deuteronomy, and finally, for convenience, was appended to it. **After the death of Moses**—These words include the thirty days of mourning in honour of the great lawgiver. Deut. xxxiv, 8. At the end of these days the succession to the leadership was revealed by the Lord. A long interregnum would have been perilous to a

pass, that the Lord spake unto Joshua the son of Nun, Moses' minister, saying, **2** <sup>b</sup> Moses my servant is dead;

*b* Deut. 34. 5.

people so inexperienced in the art of self-government. **The Lord spake**—Whether by a direct communication through his angel, as in v, 13-15, (see vi, 2,) or by the urim of the high priest, is uncertain, but probably the latter, inasmuch as this manner of speaking is prescribed to him in Num. xxvii, 21. The urim (*lights*) and thummim (*perfections*) are always alluded to as well known, but nowhere described. They were a part of the ephod, the sacred robe of the high priest, and were either the twelve gems on the breastplate or some objects intimately connected with them, and were a divinely appointed medium of revelation. Whether the gems became luminous, or whether there was an audible voice, or whether the priest when arrayed in the ephod was endowed with a miraculous insight similar to the vision of the inspired prophet, cannot now be determined. See note on Exod. xxviii, 30. **Joshua**—Before the death of Moses this great warrior had been clothed with authority and designated as the commander-in-chief of the Israelitish armies. See Introduction. **Son of Nun**—Nothing more is known of Nun than that he was of the tribe of Ephraim. Great military genius is often cradled in obscurity. Nun lived and died undistinguished from the thousands of his brethren, who passed all their days in the Egyptian bondage; but his son, by his valour and piety, rescued his father's servile name from oblivion. So the poet Horace, by his genius, immortalized the Roman bondman who begat him. **Moses' minister**—Not his menial, but his premier in peace, his

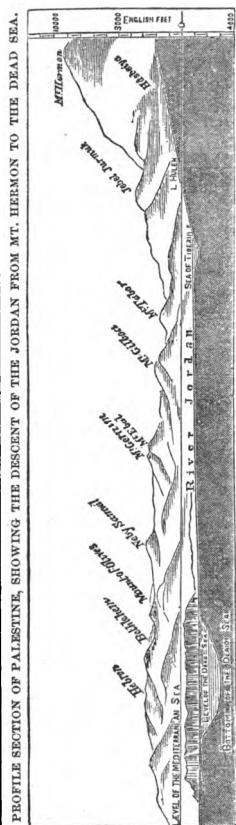
now therefore arise, go over this Jordan,

thou, and all this people, unto the land

lieutenant in war. It was customary for great prophets to be thus attended by ministers or servants, as Elijah was ministered to by Elisha. In this relation Joshua had witnessed Moses' conversation face to face with Jehovah, (Exod. xxxiii. 11,) and had been pavilioned with his master in the cloud of Sinai. Exod. xxiv. 13. Thus had he been trained in the best possible school, and the people were prepared, by the public honour bestowed upon him, to yield him obedience when their great emancipator was taken away.

[In this verse we notice that Moses is called the *servant of Jehovah*, and Joshua *minister of Moses*. A servant is less honourable than a minister, but it is unspeakably greater to be Jehovah's servant than merely the prime minister of any earthly potentate however good and mighty. The phrase *servant of Jehovah* is applied in the Old Testament to patriarchs, prophets, kings, the whole body of the chosen people, and in some prophetic passages to Messiah. The highest type of man under the Law was a *servant of God*; it was reserved for the Gospel to develop the *son of God*, and *perfect man in Christ*.]

**2. This Jordan**—This celebrated river was in full view from the elevation on which the Israelites were encamped. Thus far in Scripture history the Jordan has acquired no special importance. But henceforth, in Jewish and Christian literature, in sacred song and figurative expression of Christian hope, this humble stream occupies a larger place in the world's thinking than the broad Amazon or the majestic Mississippi. In the poetic language of Tacitus, "The Lebanon nourishes and pours out the Jordan." It flows entire through the first and second lake, and is retained by the third. These lakes (each with a triple name) are the Merom of the Old Testament, called Samochonitis in ancient classics, and Huleh in modern geography; the second the Sea of Galilee, or Lake of Gennesaret, called also Tiberias; the third lake is the Dead Sea, called in the Old Testament the Salt Sea and the Sea of the Plain. The



river, which in most of its course flows in a deep trench, is at the Dead Sea 1308 feet below the level of the Mediterranean. The general course of its current is to the south, but the river has a number of sharp bends, which deflect the regular flow of its waters. From the rapidity of the flow it may be styled almost a continuous cataract. From the first lake to the second, a distance of less than 9 miles, is a descent of 600 feet; and from the Lake of Tiberias to the Dead Sea are 27 great rap-

ids, besides a great many of less magnitude. The average descent through its whole course is nearly twelve feet in a mile, justifying the name of "the Descender." Its length is about two hundred miles from the roots of Anti-Lebanon, where it bursts forth in all its purity, to the Sea of Salt, where it is lost in a briny, seething caldron. Yet the distance by a straight line between these points is less than ninety miles. There are shallows where it can be forded. It is subject to periodical overflows when the snows of Leb-

which I do give to them, *even* to the children of Israel. **3** Every place that the sole of your foot shall tread upon, that have I given unto you, as I said

c Deut. 11. 24; chap. 14. 9.

anon melt. At these times it overflows the first of the two terraces which constitute its banks. Within its lowest banks it varies in width from seventy feet, where it enters the Sea of Galilee, to one hundred and eighty yards at the Dead Sea. **All this people**—Numbering, according to the last census, 601,730, from twenty years old and upwards. See Num. xxvi, 51. Migrations on so vast a scale are not without parallel in the East. As late as the last century a whole nomadic people—400,000 Tatars—retreated under cover of a single night from the confines of Russia into their native deserts. **The land which I do give to them**—Canaan, or the Land of Promise; so called because it had been promised to the patriarchs centuries before.

**3. Every place that the sole of your foot shall tread upon**—Compare the similar language in Deut. xi, 24. The entire land was before them, and their own faith and courage were to decide how much of it they would actually possess.

**4. The wilderness**—This word is especially applied to that desert of Arabia Petraea in which the Israelites sojourned under Moses. It stretches from Mount Sinai northward between the two branches of the Red Sea to the Dead Sea, Palestine, and the Mediterranean. Its eastern boundary is Arabia Deserta and Arabia Felix; its western, Egypt and the western arm of the Red Sea. It is a rolling desert, covered generally with loose gravel and stones, and every-where furrowed and torn with torrents. Says Dr. Robinson, "A more frightful desert it had hardly been our lot to behold. Through the deep gorge on the eastern side, extending from the Gulf of Akaba to the Dead Sea, there is every indication that the Jordan once flowed before the great convulsion which depressed the Dead Sea." **This Lebanon**—A double range of mountains, with a valley called Coele (*hollow*)

unto Moses. **4** From the wilderness and this Lebanon even unto the great river, the river Euphrates, all the land of the Hittites, and unto the great sea

d Gen. 15. 18; Exod. 23. 31; Num. 34 3-12.

Syria between, constituting the eastern limit of Phenicia and the northern limit of Palestine. The eastern spur, called Anti-Lebanon, terminates on the south in Mount Hermon, and was visible from Shittim. Hence the expression *this Lebanon*, like *this Jordan* in verse 2, because, though at a distance, it could be pointed out as a definite landmark. The name, which signifies *white*, is derived from the white appearance caused both by the limestone rocks and the snows. The height is about ten thousand feet. (See note on Hermon xi, 3.) **The Hittites**—Or children of Heth. A tribe of Canaanites living in Abraham's time in Hebron and its vicinity, in the southern part of the Land of Promise. As they had been an especial terror to the twelve spies, or to the craven ten, whose report disheartened the people, they are here mentioned by name, and put for the whole body of the Canaanites—Ye shall possess the land of even the dreaded Hittites. This designation of Canaan as "the land of the Hittites" occurs in the Bible only in this passage, though frequently used in the Egyptian records of Rameses II., in which Cheta or Chita appears to denote the whole country of lower and middle Syria. **The Euphrates**—"The great river" of western Asia, one thousand four hundred miles in length, is mentioned in connection with the garden of Eden, (Gen. ii, 14.) and throughout the Scripture history is often mentioned with this adjective. **Great sea**—The Mediterranean, called *great* in comparison with the small inland bodies of water, such as Genesareth and the Dead Sea. **Your coast**—Your boundaries. These included a larger territory than the Hebrews ever possessed, except for a short time during the reigns of David and Solomon. The breadth from Lebanon on the north to the desert on the south is one hundred and forty miles; the length from the Mediterranean to



toward the going down of the sun, shall be your coast. **5** \*There shall not any man be able to stand before thee all the days of thy life: 'as I was with Moses, so 'I will be with thee: 'I will not fail thee, nor forsake thee. **6** 'Be strong and of a good courage: for 'unto this

*e* Deut. 7. 24.—*f* Exod. 3. 12.—*g* Deut. 31. 8, 23; verses 9. 17; chap. 3. 7; 6. 27; Isa. 43. 2, 5.—*h* Deut. 31. 6, 8; Heb. 13. 5.—*i* Deut. 31. 7. 23.

the Euphrates is about four hundred miles, making an area of fifty-six thousand square miles, equal to the States of New York and Vermont. But Canaan proper, or Palestine, was only one hundred and forty miles by forty—an area smaller than the State of New Jersey. Jehovah devised liberal things for his people, but they failed through unbelief and cowardice to come into immediate possession of the munificent gift.

**5. Not any man be able to stand before thee**—Literally, *There shall not place himself a man before thee*, that is, for the purpose of opposition. Compare Deut. vii, 24; ix, 2; xi, 25. Divine promises often imply a condition. In this case the condition is found in the next verse—"Be strong." **I will be with thee**—He needs no other allies who is allied with the Almighty. All that He has done for Moses He pledges to do for Joshua, and all his successors who possess like precious faith. Joshua needed these strong and cheering assurances; for he appreciated the magnitude of the nation's loss in the death of Moses, and knew that a crisis had arrived in the history of the Hebrew nation. They had advanced to the borders of the Promised Land, and found it bristling with armed foes. Years of peril, warfare, and suffering were awaiting them. Although Moses had laid his hands upon him, consecrating him to the headship of his people, (Num. xxvii, 18,) he was justified in waiting for the imposition of a mightier hand.

**6. Be strong and of a good courage**—[Better, *Be strong and firm*. Michaelis remarks that the verb *קָיָה*, *to be strong*, denotes strength of hand and arm to lay hold of and retain any thing within one's grasp; while *יָצָה*, *to be firm*, denotes rather firmness in the

people shalt thou divide for an inheritance the land, which I sware unto their fathers to give them. **7** Only be thou strong and very courageous, that thou mayest observe to do according to all the law, \*which Moses my servant commanded thee: 'turn not from it to the

*1* Or, *thou shalt cause this people to inherit the land, &c.*—*k* Num. 27. 23; Deut. 31. 7; chap. 11. 18.—*l* Deut. 5. 32; 28. 14.

knees, and ability to maintain one's position against the attack of foes. The expression occurs with increasing emphasis four times in this chapter, and is rather a command than an exhortation. Compare Isa. xxxv, 3: "Strengthen ye the weak hands, and confirm the feeble knees." It is a command as imperative as any in the Decalogue, for strength of will and indomitable firmness must constitute the state of mind out of which all acts of obedience spring. **For unto this people shalt thou divide**—Or, *thou shalt cause this people to inherit the land*. The Lord would inspire Joshua with strength of soul by disclosing to him the grandeur of his mission. He reveals to him that his agency is the last link in the chain which unites prophecy and fulfilment, hope and fruition; that all the glorious possibilities of his nation hinge upon his own personal valor and fidelity.

**7. All the law**—The Torah, the body of moral, ceremonial, and political precepts given from Jehovah by the hand of Moses. The very conception of a moral agent involves the idea of a law. They who have not the written law are a law unto themselves. Their own conscience perceives the immutable distinction between right and wrong. In addition to this, God has added positive commands and prohibitions. These from the days of our first parents till the completion of the Torah, were of a fragmentary character; as, for example, the penalties against murder, adultery, and fornication, (Gen. ix, 6, and xxxviii, 24,) the Levirate law, (Gen. xxxviii, 8,) the distinctions of the clean and unclean beasts, (Gen. viii, 20,) and the sacredness of the Sabbath, (Exod. xvi, 23-29.) The first revelation of the law in any thing like a perfect form is found in the Book of

right hand or to the left, that thou mayest prosper whithersoever thou goest. 8 "This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein: for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then

thou shalt have good success. 9 "Have not I commanded thee? Be strong and of a good courage; be not afraid, neither be thou dismayed: for the Lord thy God is with thee whithersoever thou goest.

10 Then Joshua commanded the officers of the people, saying, 11 Pass

2 Or, *do wisely*. Deut. 29. 9.—*m* Deut. 17. 18, 19.  
n Psa. 1. 2; 19. 14; 119. 11, 15; Prov. 2. 1, 5.

3 Or, *do wisely*, verse 7.—*o* Deut. 31. 7, 8, 23.  
p Psa. 27. 1; Jer. 1. 8.

Deuteronomy at a period when the people, educated to freedom and national responsibility, were prepared to receive it, and carry it with them to the land of promise. In this present passage we are assured that it was written in the form of a book, and appealed to as of supreme authority. When we consider the reverence with which all subsequent generations of Hebrews have regarded this "book of the law"—their jealous care lest it should be corrupted, counting the words and letters, and recording their number, indicating the middle word and the middle letter by peculiar signs—the argument amounts to a certainty that we have in our Hebrew Biblos the very Torah which Joshua is here commanded to take as his authoritative guide. Add to these considerations the respect which Jesus Christ always pays to the law, which he came not to destroy but to fulfil, and we can reasonably demand no stronger proof of the authoritative character of the Torah as a rule of life for us in all things which are not manifestly ceremonial. **To the right... or to the left**—Perfect obedience is represented by a straight line, and a course of sin by a crooked way. Hence the terms *righteousness*, *rectitude*, *uprightness*, and, in matters of opinion, *orthodox*; while the word *wrong* is etymologically akin to *wrung*, twisted. **That thou mayest prosper**—Rather, *act wisely*. Sin is the highest folly, virtue is the only true wisdom.

8. **This book of the law**—Already had revelation solidified itself into a book form. The wisdom of God in selecting this form will be evident when we consider, (1) That the human race instinctively put into monumental form all the great truths, laws, discoveries, and historic events which they wish to perpetuate; (2) The untrustworthy

character of oral traditions; (3) The difficulty of corrupting documents intrusted to the guardianship of a class solemnly set apart for that purpose, and imbued with a religious awe for the very letter of the sacred manuscript, or as published to the world by the multiplication of copies scattered abroad through all lands. **Shall not depart**—The written divine law shall be a theme of constant study, thought, and conversation, the rule of both his private and official life. **Shalt meditate**—The Hebrew word *הִתְחַלֵּץ* sometimes means *to mutter*, speak aloud, but "we are not to think of this meditation as a learned study, nor as a 'reading aloud,' as Bunsen explains it, but rather as a mature reflection upon the law, by which Joshua should penetrate more deeply into its meaning."—*Fay*. Happy is the nation of Bible readers ruled by one who receives the law at the mouth of God! **Have good success**—Rather, *act wisely*. Compare verse 7.

[9. **Have not I commanded thee?**—Such an emphatic interrogation is often the strongest possible form of affirmation. **Thy God is with thee**—As the soldier's valour is stimulated by the eye of his captain, so a vivid realization of the immediate presence of God is the best safeguard against unmanly terror.]

PREPARATIONS FOR THE MARCH, 10, 11.

[10. **Officers of the people**—*Shotrim*; subordinate magistrates or scribes among the Israelites, and more or less intimately associated with the administration of justice. They assisted the Egyptian taskmasters in apportioning and supervising the work of the Israelitish bondmen, (Exod. v, 10, 14, 15,) were associated with the elders (Num. xi, 16) and with the judges, (Josh.

through the host, and command the people, saying, Prepare you victuals; for 'within three days ye shall pass over this Jordan, to go in to possess the land, which the LORD your God giveth you to possess it.

q Chap. 3. 2; see Deut. 9. 1; 11. 81.

viii, 33,) acted as overseers of levies, (Deut. xx, 5,) and from this verse, compared with chapters iii, 2, and viii, 33, it seems to have been a part of their work to notify the tribes of any public order, and prepare them for action in any emergency.]

11. **Prepare you victuals**—Provision for a journey; natural produce; not manna, for this became putrid on the second day. The manna did not cease to fall till they had entered Canaan and eaten of the corn of the land. Chap. v, 12. But it was in harmony with the divine economy that the supernatural supply should diminish as the natural supply increased in the fertile trans-Jordanic region. God never works miracles as a premium to indolence. **Within three days ye shall pass over this Jordan**—If we follow the order of the narrative, and allow that the spies were sent out after this proclamation to the officers, we shall find that the Israelites did not cross the Jordan within three days. The spies were gone three days, and the people paused on the river's bank three days more, so that the crossing could not have taken place till the seventh day. To meet this difficulty some suppose that the spies had been sent out previous to Joshua's proclamation to the officers; see note on chap. ii, 1. [But it is not necessary to understand these words of Joshua as a positive prediction that all the people would actually cross over the Jordan and be in the Promised Land within these three days. The words are literally *ye crossing*, that is, ye will be on your march to cross. He proposed within three days to break up the camp at Shittim and be on his way over the Jordan, and this is all the words can necessarily be made to mean. Keil supposes that because the two spies were detained, and obliged to hide

12 And to the Reubenites, and to the Gadites, and to half the tribe of Manasseh, spake Joshua, saying, 13 Remember the word which Moses the servant of the LORD commanded you, saying, The LORD your God hath given you

r Num. 32. 20-26; chap. 22. 2, 3, 4.

three days in the mountain, (chap. ii, 22,) Joshua was thereby hindered from carrying out his purpose as he at first designed. But why is it necessary to maintain that the spies returned to Joshua at the camp at Shittim? It is not so written, (see chap. ii, 23,) and we may possibly suppose that when they returned to Joshua they found him arrived at the Jordan. But even granting that they returned to the camp at Shittim, as the history most naturally implies, the three days they hid in the mountain may have been only parts of three days. See note on chap. ii, 22.] The inspired writers directed their attention more to *facts* than to *chronological order*. In this command Joshua displays a remarkable degree of that faith and courage to which he had just been exhorted. The rapid Jordan, at its flood, is before him, and he has no boats, no bridge, no pontoon train, but he assures that vast host that they and their wives and children and flocks shall, within a few days, safely cross that angry torrent.

#### ADDRESS TO THE TRANS-JORDANIC TRIBES, 12-15.

Palestine, east of the Jordan, had already been conquered, and allotted, at their earnest request, to the tribes of Reuben, Gad, and the half tribe of Manasseh, in the order here enumerated, passing from the south toward the north. Num. xxxii, 23. It was a more fertile and attractive country than "the mountain," as Western Palestine is sometimes appropriately called.

13. **The Lord... hath given you rest**—He has permitted you to settle your families in fixed abodes on the express condition that you should assist in the subjugation of the land on the western side of Jordan. Num. xxxii, 16-22. The promise of these two and a half tribes, solemnly made to Moses,

rest, and hath given you this land. **14** Your wives, your little ones, and your cattle, shall remain in the land which Moses gave you on this side Jordan; but ye shall pass before your brethren 'armed, all the mighty men of valour, and help them; **15** Until the LORD have given your brethren rest, as he hath given you, and they also have possessed the land which the LORD your God giveth them: then ye shall return unto the land of your possession, and

<sup>4</sup> Heb. *marshalled by fives*. See Exod. 13. 18.  
<sup>5</sup> Chap. 22. 4. &c.

must now be fulfilled. **This land**—Like the expressions *this Jordan* and *this Lebanon*, (verses 2, 4,) the land immediately around them east of Jordan, in which all Israel was yet encamped.

**14. [This side Jordan]**—An incorrect translation of *בְּעֵבֶר הַיַּרְדֵּן*, which can only mean *beyond the Jordan*. Our translators were governed, in their rendering, by the position of Joshua at the time of this address; but the Book of Joshua was written after the conquest and settlement of Palestine when *beyond the Jordan* was the common term for the country east of the Jordan, and so the writer simply follows the *usus loquendi* of his time. This eastern section, which in our Saviour's time was called Perea, and was the region of much of his ministry, (see notes on Matt. iv, 25; Luke ix, 51,) is designated in verse 15 as (Heb.) *beyond Jordan towards the sunrise*; and in chap. v, 1 Western Palestine is called *beyond Jordan towards the sea*.] **Mighty men of valour**—The more valiant of the two and a half tribes, not their entire military strength. From chap. iv. 13 we learn that only forty thousand of them were required to cross to the western side; the remainder—probably about seventy thousand, (see Num. xxvi,)—remaining on the eastern side of the river to protect the families and substance of the two and a half tribes from the incursions of their still numerous though defeated enemies dwelling in the wide eastern plains. **Armed**—Scholars differ as to the meaning of this word. Some assert that it signifies "girt about the loins;" hence "ready, equipped, drawn up for battle." Others, on very

enjoy it, which Moses the LORD'S servant gave you on this side Jordan toward the sunrise.

**16** And they answered Joshua, saying, 'All that thou commandest us we will do, and whithersoever thou sendest us, we will go. **17** According as we hearkened unto Moses in all things, so will we hearken unto thee: only the LORD thy God "be with thee, as he was with Moses. **18** Whosoever he be that doth rebel against thy commandment,

<sup>1</sup> Num. 32. 25; Deut. 5. 27; Rom. 13. 1, 5.  
<sup>2</sup> Verse 5; 1 Sam. 20. 13; 1 Kings 1. 37.

good grounds, believe that it means "in five divisions, namely, the centre, two wings, vanguard, and rearguard," according to the usual form in which an army marches into battle. In Exod. xiii, 18 (see note) it is rendered *harnessed*.

**15. Until the Lord have given**—Observe how early Joshua inculcates the idea of national unity. Perhaps he already had forebodings of the alienation of the eastern from the western tribes, in consequence of the deep trench of the Jordanic valley, the modern Ghor. It is an historic fact that this geographic insulation caused the eastern tribes to cherish a national feeling far less intense than that which animated their western brethren. Reuben, "unstable as water," (Gen. xlix, 4,) in consequence of his separation from the main body of the nation became a roving Bedouin tribe.

**OATH OF ALLEGIANCE TO JOSHUA, 16-18.**

**16. That thou commandest we will do**—A response not only from the eastern tribes, but also, probably, from the entire nation, encouraging to the spirit of the new commander. He must have regarded it as a formal expression of their loyalty to his authority. Like true patriots, in their nation's extremity they volunteer under their great captain.

**17. Only the Lord... be with thee**—By this language they do not avow a qualified and conditional allegiance, but only responsively reiterate with myriads of tongues the brief and stirring exhortation given by God, "Be strong and of a good courage." It is because they believe that Jehovah is with Joshua that they bind themselves to obey him.

**18. Against thy commandment**—

O. T.

and will not hearken unto thy words in all that thou commandest him, he shall be put to death: only 'be strong and of a good courage.

v Ezra 10. 4; Eph. 6. 10.

Literally, *Every man who rebels against thy mouth*; that is, who shows contempt for thy commands. **Shall be put to death**—A righteous verdict against the rebel, and in accordance with the law of the Most High. Deut. xvii, 12. Resistance to His chosen representative is a crime no less heinous than avowed rebellion against His sovereignty. So long as a government is subserving its ends in administering justice and conserving human society, the attempt to subvert it by violence is a crime of the greatest enormity, striking at the very foundation of all the earthly interests of mankind, and opening wide the floodgates of civil war. Notes Rom. xiii, 1-7.

## CHAPTER II.

### THE ADVENTURES OF THE TWO SPIES, 1-24.

[Some forty years before this date Moses had sent out from the wilderness of Paran twelve spies, and among them Joshua, to search the Land of Promise. It was not a secret movement then, but the chosen twelve were prominent chiefs, "heads of the children of Israel." Num. xiii, 3. Only two of the twelve brought back an encouraging report, and it is noticeable that Joshua, one of the old spies, and now Moses' successor, sends only two to spy out Jericho. For so dangerous a mission two were better than twelve.

1. **Sent out**—Some render *had sent*, as in the margin, and suppose that the spies had been sent out some days before the events of the last chapter. But the *vav* consecutive with which this verse begins (וַיִּשְׁלַח) is properly rendered *Then sent* Joshua, etc., and a perfect rendering will not materially relieve the difficulty stated in chap. i, 11. "Even if the spies had been despatched before the events narrated in chap. i, 10-18, it would not be grammatically correct to render וַיִּשְׁלַח as a pluper-

## CHAPTER II.

**AND** Joshua the son of Nun <sup>1</sup>sent <sup>2</sup>out of Shittim two men to spy secretly, saying, Go view the land, even

1 Or, *had sent*.—a Num. 25. 1.

fect; and much less is this allowable if such a supposition be unfounded."—*Keil*.] **Shittim**—The plain of acacia shrubs at the foot of the mountains on the eastern side of the Jordan, directly opposite Jericho, in which Moses had last pitched the Israelitish camp. Num. xxv, 1; xxxiii, 49. **Secretly**—The Masoretic conjunctive accent connects this word with *saying*, rather than with *to spy*, as is done in the English version; but the word is best understood as qualifying Joshua's whole procedure. He communicated his orders to the two men, and also **sent** them out **secretly** in order to avoid betrayal by any evil-minded person in his own camp. All spying necessarily involves secrecy, and in this case the perilous business was a military necessity. An unexplored land was before them, and the number and spirit of the enemy, and his military preparations and plans, were utterly unknown to Joshua. Faith always uses means. **Even Jericho**—The command may be better rendered *Go view the land, and particularly Jericho*. This ancient town, (called also the "City of Palm Trees,") was situated in a plain of the same name about six miles west of the Jordan, near where it enters into the Dead Sea, and about nineteen miles northeast of Jerusalem. It was a walled city, rich and populous, having commerce with Babylon and the far East. According to Stanley it was the only important town in the Jordan valley, and its situation must always have rendered its occupation necessary to any invader from the east. "It was the key of western Palestine, as standing at the entrance of the two main passes into the central mountains. From the issues of the torrent Kelt, on the south, to the copious spring, afterwards called the 'Fountain of Elisha,' on the north, the ancient city ran along the base of the mountains, and thus commanded the oasis of the desert valley, the garden of verdure, which

Jericho. And they went, and <sup>b</sup>came into a harlot's house, named <sup>c</sup>Rahab, and <sup>d</sup>lodged there. **2** And <sup>e</sup>it was told the king of Jericho, saying, Behold, there came men in hither to night of the children of Israel to search out the country.

<sup>b</sup> Heb. 11. 31; James 2. 25.—<sup>c</sup> Matt. 1. 5.  
<sup>d</sup> Heb. *lay*.

**3** And the king of Jericho sent unto Rahab, saying, Bring forth the men that are come to thee, which are entered into thine house: for they be come to search out all the country. **4** <sup>e</sup>And the woman took the two men, and hid them, and

<sup>d</sup> Psa. 127. 1; Prov. 21. 30.—<sup>e</sup> See 2 Sam. 17. 19, 20.

clustering around these waters has, through the various stages of its long existence, secured its prosperity and grandeur." The modern village Rihah is, by some travellers, identified with ancient Jericho, and is described by Dr. Olin as one of the meanest and foulest of Palestine, containing about forty houses, with a sickly, indolent, and vicious population. **Came into a harlot's house**—[Literally, *into the house of a woman, a harlot*. Their entrance into such a house would excite less suspicion, and, her house being upon the wall, (ver. 15,) their escape from the city in case of necessity would be more easy. Knobel supposes that, as it was evening twilight when the spies reached Jericho, the time when harlots were wont to walk the streets, (Job xxiv, 15; Prov. vii, 9; Isa. xxiii, 16,) they met with Rahab at some corner and followed her to her house.] Josephus and other Jewish writers, and also some Christian commentators, unwilling to believe that these spies, intrusted with such a responsible mission, would have gone to a harlot's house, or that Rahab, who married Salmon and became an ancestress of our Lord, and is commended by an apostle, could have been a woman of ill-fame, maintain that she was not a harlot, but a *hostess* or inn-keeper. But the Hebrew word *וְרֵחַ* means always, elsewhere, a *harlot*, and is so rendered in the Septuagint and Vulgate. Also in the New Testament she is called emphatically *the harlot*, ἡ πόρνη, (Heb. xi 31; James ii, 25.) And not only on philological grounds is the rendering *hostess* untenable, but oriental customs are against such an interpretation. In the east there are no proper inns, but as a kind of substitute there are khans or caravansaries (See note and cut at Luke ii, 7.) It would have been a thing without parallel in

that land for a single woman, or even a man, to be found keeping a public house. Rahab was probably unmarried; for though she had father and mother, brothers and sisters, (verse 13,) there is no hint that she had husband or child, and it is notorious that in the east rarely any but disreputable women remain single. On her falsehoods and her faith see note on verse 5. **Lodged there**—Rather, *they lay down there*. Verse 8 shows that they ascended the house top to pass the night there.

**2. It was told the king**—The chief of each great city, and even of each petty clan, is in the Old Testament dignified by the appellation of *king*. At this time of alarm, when the invading foe was only a few miles off, a shrewd king would naturally give orders to watch closely every suspicious-looking stranger. **There came men . . . to search out the country**—The peculiar Hebrew physiognomy of the two spies, and perhaps, also, their entering the eastern gate, were strong grounds of suspicion.

**3. Sent unto Rahab**—The spies had been traced to the harlot's house, and possibly Rahab had also, by open avowal of her belief in the approaching triumph of the Hebrews, already drawn suspicion on herself.

**4. Hid them**—Literally, *hid him*. Hebrew usage shows many such sudden transitions from plural to singular. Perhaps we may see in this instance an intimation of the haste with which she concealed the men, hiding one of them herself with the flax (verse 6) and leaving the other to cover himself. Some think she had taken the precaution to conceal the men before the king's messengers arrived, and verse 6 seems to favor the supposition. **I wist not whence they were**—Better, *I knew not*, for the verb *wist* is obso-

said thus, There came men unto me, but I wist not whence they were: 5 And it came to pass *about the time* of shutting of the gate, when it was dark, that the men went out; whither the men went,

f See Exod. 1. 17;

lete. Rahab could not safely deny that the men had entered her house, for other eyes than hers had seen them; but it is difficult to believe that she knew not whence they were. She may not, however, have had positive knowledge that they were spies.

5. [The men went out—This statement was a wilful falsehood, and cannot be justified by saying that oriental hospitality required a person to utter falsehood if necessary to defend a guest. It may, indeed, relieve the case somewhat to urge that before the Gospel strict truth, in Jew or heathen, was a virtue utterly unknown; but it is altogether superfluous to attempt either to apologize for Rahab's previous harlotry or to justify her falsehoods. We must distinguish, however, between her vices and her virtues. The sacred writers record her vices without a word of comment or apology. Even with this alloy, however, they attest the justifying power of her faith. The epistle to the Hebrews (xi, 31) extols her faith in Israel's God, and James (ii, 25) makes mention of her praiseworthy works of hospitality. The one declares that her faith saved her from perishing with the unbelieving inhabitants of Jericho; the other shows that her faith was not without its appropriate fruits.] { Verse 11, however, shows that Rahab had long entertained a sincere faith in Jehovah as the true God, and her conduct toward the spies was the imperfect manifestation of that faith which resulted in her true incorporation into Israel, and obtaining a place in the genealogy of the Messiah. Matt. i, 5. Her falsehood on the pres-

I wot not: pursue after them quickly; for ye shall overtake them. 6 But she had brought them up to the roof of the house, and hid them with the stalks of flax, which she had laid in order upon

2 Sam. 17. 19.

ent occasion was far less condemning than that of Abraham on two occasions. Gen. xii, 13; xx, 2. It was also a stratagem of war, which even our Christian civilization has hardly attained the virtue of disusing. }

6. She had brought them up to the roof of the house—This verse more fully explains verse 4, by detailing the place and manner of her concealing the spies. Eastern houses have flat roofs, surrounded with a parapet to prevent falling off. Dent. xxviii, 8. Here the family often sleep, sit, walk, and store such articles as will not be damaged by the exposure. Sometimes the roof is shaded by means of an awning supported by posts. See note on Acts x, 9. **Stalks of flax**—Heb. *flax of the tree*; that is, flax in the tree or stalk. Some render these words stalks or pods of cotton, but without sufficient authority. Flax is said to grow in Egypt to a great size, and its stalks attain the thickness of a



FLAX. (*Linum usitatissimum*.)

cane, and so it doubtless did in the rich plain of Jericho. To dry stalks of such thickness much exposure to the sun would be necessary, and they were laid out in such abundance on

the roof. **7** And the men pursued after them the way to Jordan unto the fords: and as soon as they which pursued after them were gone out, they shut the gate. **8** And before they were laid down, she came up unto them upon the roof; **9** And she said unto the men, I know that the Lord hath given you the land,

<sup>g</sup> Gen. 35. 5; Exod. 23. 27; Deut. 2. 25; 11. 25.  
<sup>h</sup> Heb. *melt*; Exod. 15. 15.

Rahab's house that the two men could be easily concealed among them.

**7. The men pursued after them**—That is, the men of Jericho pursued, as they thought, after the spies. **The way to Jordan**—The most direct way to the Jordan, the way which they naturally thought the spies, in their hasty flight, would take. **Unto the fords**—Heb., *the crossing places*; certain well-known places of shallow water where the Jordan might be waded. There is no intimation that the pursuers crossed the fords. As the plural is used, we infer that there were several places of this kind near Jericho, and that the pursuers took different routes to insure the capture of the fugitives. **They shut the gate**—To prevent the escape of the spies should they still be in the city, and to secure the city against the ingress of foes by night.

**8. Before they were laid down**—That is, to sleep. They had been hidden where it was uncomfortable to sleep; but now that their pursuers are put upon the wrong track, they come forth from their hiding places.

**9. I know that the Lord hath given you the land**—Mark the strength of her affirmation: not *I believe*, but *I know*. Rahab now discloses unto them the cause of her hospitality, her firm conviction that the Hebrews were destined to overthrow her people. This belief arose from the miraculous passage of the Red Sea, and the easy conquest of Eastern Palestine. With characteristic womanly penetration she had read the secret fears of her countrymen, and had interpreted them as tokens of coming defeat to her people. Thus the very knowledge which Joshua was most desirous of attaining, namely, the state of feeling among the Canaanites, is freely communicated to the spies. To dis-

and that 'your terror is fallen upon us, and that all the inhabitants of the land <sup>a</sup>faint because of you. **10** For we have heard how the Lord <sup>b</sup>dried up the water of the Red Sea for you, when ye came out of Egypt; and 'what ye did unto the two kings of the Amorites, that *were* on the other side Jordan, Sihon

<sup>a</sup> Exod. 14. 21; chap. 4. 23.  
<sup>b</sup> Num. 21. 24, 34, 35

hearten a nation is to conquer it. **Your terror**—Fear of you has paralyzed us. Moses, in his last discourse, had predicted this result. Deut. ii, 25; xi, 25. **All the inhabitants of the land faint**—For faint, the Hebrew reads, *are melted*; an expression showing the utter prostration of their confidence and resolution. This despair of the people, whether natural or supernatural, prevented them from making any combination to resist the invading host at the best place for such resistance—the passage of the Jordan.

**10. We have heard**—An event so wonderful filled the world with amazement. Traders and caravans passing from Egypt through the deserts would frequently pass through Jericho, and spread the tidings of the Hebrews' triumphs. Of all the miracles which attended the exodus from Egypt, none was capable of producing so profound an impression upon all surrounding nations as the drying up of the Red Sea, the safe passage of the Israelites, and the destruction of the Egyptian host by the rolling back of the parted surges. Exod. xiv, 15–31. The lapse of forty years had not effaced that deep impression—an incidental proof of the magnitude of the miracle. Events more recent and nearer to them had increased their alarm. **The Amorites** east of the Jordan, who had evinced their martial prowess by conquering the king of Moab and seizing his land, were in turn subdued by the resistless arms of the Israelites. The Amorites were the most powerful and distinguished of the Canaanitish nations, and occupied a tract on both sides of the Jordan. Those on the east side were under **two kings, Sihon and Og**. The former refused passage to the Hebrews through his territory, came to Jahaz, fought, and was



and Og, whom ye utterly destroyed. **11** And as soon as we had <sup>heard these things,</sup> our hearts did melt, neither <sup>did</sup> there remain any more courage in any man, because of you: for <sup>the</sup> LORD your God, he <sup>is</sup> God in heaven above, and in earth beneath. **12** Now therefore, I pray you, <sup>swear unto me by the</sup> LORD, since I have showed you kindness, that ye will also show kindness unto <sup>my father's</sup> house, and <sup>give me</sup>

*k* Exod. 15. 14, 15.—*l* Chap. 5. 1; 7. 5; Isa. 13. 7.—*4* Heb. *rose up*.—*m* Deut. 4. 39.—*n* See 1 Sam. 20. 14, 15, 17.

defeated. Og also gave battle at Edrei, and was totally routed. See on Num. xxi, 21–35.

**11. For the Lord your God, he is God in heaven above, and in earth beneath**—This is the full profession of Rahab's faith in the God of Israel. It was a complete renunciation of her idolatry and harlotry. It was a change in belief, feeling, will, and action, which brought her to the worship of the true God, and to a maternity of the Messiah in David's royal line. However alloyed by one imperfection, it was a true faith working out its true results. And the wide-spread terror of these nations, as described in the last verse, and Rahab's faith, were in accordance with God's purpose in raising up Pharaoh and diffusing his "name." Note on Rom. ix, 17.

**12. Swear unto me**—She gives still stronger proof of her confidence in the success of the Israelites by wishing to enter into covenant with the spies for the salvation of herself and her father's family. She feels that if they swear by Israel's mighty God they will not dare prove false. Her faith assumes a practical character, and shows itself by works. It impels her to bargain for her deliverance from the destruction which she sees impending over the city. **Since I have showed you kindness**—Rahab here makes a good application of the Golden Rule. **Give me a true token**—Some visible, material proof of the oath; some object which she may keep and produce as evidence that such a solemn compact has been entered into by the parties. This token was a substitute for a written covenant bearing their signatures.

a true token: **13** And *that* ye will save alive my father, and my mother, and my brethren, and my sisters, and all that they have, and deliver our lives from death. **14** And the men answered her, Our life <sup>for yours,</sup> if ye utter not this our business. And it shall be, when the LORD hath given us the land, that <sup>we will deal kindly and truly with</sup> thee. **15** Then she <sup>let them down by</sup> a cord through the window: for her

*o* See 1 Tim. 5. 8.—*p* Verse 18.—*5* Heb. *instead of you to die*.—*q* Judg. 1. 24; Matt. 5. 7.—*r* Acts 9. 35.

**13. And that ye will save alive my father**—The English version wrongly supplies *that*. Read, *And ye shall save alive*, etc. She was by no means destitute of natural affection. That she does not stipulate for the salvation of the entire state of Jericho is no evidence of her want of patriotism. She was too deeply impressed with the belief of the coming overthrow to ask so much. Our ties of consanguinity should induce us to make extraordinary efforts for the conversion of our kindred to God. This is the highest purpose of the creation of such ties in the human soul. **All that they have**—It is not necessary to limit this clause to persons only; it may include portable possessions also. Comp. chap. vi, 23, note.

**14. Our life for yours**—According to Osiander, this form of oath may be thus paraphrased: "We place our life and soul in the hand of God as a pledge for thee, in order that he may destroy us if any one injures thee or thine." **If ye utter not this our business**—This is the indispensable condition on which their oath and her deliverance depend.

**15. Then she let them down by a cord**—[Many interpreters are of opinion that there is a confusion in the order of verses here, and that this verse should follow the first sentence of verse 21. For it is improbable, they urge, that Rahab and the spies continued to converse after the latter were let down from the window, inasmuch as such conversation would have led to their detection and exposure. But against such an opinion are the words, *Thou didst let us down*, (verse 18; ) and as for the confusion of verses, Keil well re-

house *was* upon the town wall, and she dwelt upon the wall. **16** And she said unto them, "Get you to the mountain, lest the pursuers meet you; and hide yourselves there three days, until the pursuers be returned: and afterward may ye go your way. **17** And the men

s1 Sam. 23, 14, 29.—t Exod. 20. 7

marks that "the Hebrews often connect together the principal circumstances attending any particular event, and, after fully describing these, proceed to fill up the details of minor importance. This, however, is not a confusion in the order of events, but an anticipation of the result consequent upon a well-arranged division of the subject-matter." Some have thought that it was impossible that she could let them down alone, and they have furnished her with "friends or domestics" to assist her. But there is no need of this assistance. By fastening the cord to something within the room they could descend, sailor-like, even without aid from within. Paul was



said unto her, We *will be* 'blameless of this thine oath which thou hast made us swear. **18** "Behold, *when* we come into the land, thou shalt bind this line of scarlet thread in the window which thou didst let us down by: 'and thou shalt 'bring thy father, and thy mother, and

u Verse 12.—s Chap. 6 23.—6 Heb. gather.

let down in a basket. (2 Cor. xi, 33.)

**Her house was upon the town wall**—בֵּיתָהּ הָיְתָה עַל הַחֹמָה, *in the depth of the wall.*

Her house was so constructed that the city wall formed also the back wall of the house. **She dwelt upon the wall**—For her house was built on the wall, and projected beyond its outer edge, so that from one of its outer windows the men could be let down beyond the walls of the city. (See note on Acts ix, 25.)

**16. Get you to the mountain**—Heb. *Mountainwards go ye.* By the device of going westward to the mountains behind the city, instead of eastward toward the Jordan, they would avoid pursuit, and secure a hiding place in some of their caverns till the pursuers had returned.

**17. We will be blameless of this thine oath**—That is, released from the oath which we have taken, provided you do not fulfil the following conditions.

**18. Thou shalt bind this line of scarlet thread in the window**—A small rope or cord composed of crimson threads. The English version conveys the idea that this cord was used in letting down the spies. But the Hebrew, Septuagint, and Vulgate make the window the antecedent of *which*, thus—*the window through which* thou didst let us down. The scarlet cord was probably the *token* (ver. 12) given to Rahab in proof of their oath. But the **scarlet** of the thread by which she and her house were to be saved, though a suggestive emblem of the blood of the atonement, (as advanced by St. Clement,) can hardly be considered, like the blood of the paschal lamb on the door post, an appointed type. **And thou shalt bring thy father**—The persons to whom deliverance is pledged must be separated from the mass of the peo-

thy brethren, and all thy father's household, home unto thee. **19** And it shall be, *that* <sup>v</sup>whosoever shall go out of the doors of thy house into the street, his blood *shall be* upon his head, and we *will be* guiltless: and whosoever shall be with thee in the house, <sup>v</sup>his blood *shall be* on our head, if *any* hand be upon him. **20** And <sup>v</sup>if thou utter this our business, then we will be quit of thine oath which thou hast made us to swear. **21** And she said, According unto your words, so *be* it. And she sent them away, and they departed: and she

<sup>v</sup>Exod. 12, 13, 23; 1 Kings 2, 36, 42.—<sup>a</sup>Matt. 27, 25.—<sup>v</sup>Prov. 11, 13.—<sup>a</sup>1 Sam. 19, 10, 12;

ple and gathered within the house of Rahab, otherwise they must perish in the impending universal destruction. So must those who hope to escape the general doom of this sinful world be gathered into the house of God, the Church of Jesus Christ.

**19. [His blood shall be upon his head]**—A technical formula of retribution indicating the punishment of death when justly brought upon one's self, and equivalent to, Let the guilt of his death fall back upon himself. See note on Acts xviii, 6.] **If any hand be upon him**—That is, to injure or to slay.

**20. Quit of thine oath**—Released from its obligation. The condition mentioned in verse 14 is here repeated as if to give it emphasis.

**21. And she bound the scarlet line in the window**—This statement is here made to complete the account, not to indicate that she bound the line in the window as soon as the spies were gone. She did this on the approach of the Hebrew host, in season to secure the deliverance of which this was the token. To have displayed it immediately would have been unnecessary, and would have incurred the suspicions of her watchful countrymen.

**22. Abode there three days**—In reckoning time, the Jews count as whole days the parts of days which may be included in a given period. Hence the body of Jesus was said to be in the tomb three days, though it was laid there on Friday evening and he came forth on Sunday morning—a space of thirty-six hours. See note on Matt. xii, 40. [So these spies may have re-

bound the scarlet line in the window. **22** And they went, and came unto the mountain, and abode there three days, until the pursuers were returned: and the pursuers sought *them* throughout all the way, but <sup>v</sup>found *them* not. **23** So the two men returned, and descended from the mountain, and passed over, and came to Joshua the son of Nun, and told him all *things* that befell them: **24** And they said unto Joshua, Truly <sup>v</sup>the Lord hath delivered into our hands all the land; for even all the inhabitants of the country do <sup>v</sup>faint because of us.

2 Sam. 17, 20; Psa. 32, 7.—<sup>a</sup>Exod. 23, 31; chap. 6, 2; 21, 44.—<sup>v</sup>7 Heb. *mett*, verse 9.

mained in the caverns of the mountains only parts of three days, and the entire time of their absence from the camp at Shittim fell within the three days at the end of which, if not before, Joshua intended to be on his march across the Jordan. See note on chap. i, 11.]

**23. Passed over**—That is, Jordan. These scouts were probably expert in swimming, for the Jordan was then at its flood. **Came to Joshua**—It is not necessary to suppose that they returned to the camp at Shittim. But the history most naturally implies this.

**24. Truly the Lord hath delivered into our hands all the land**—A nation palsied with despair is already conquered. The result of the mission of the spies was very encouraging to Joshua. The principal thing they reported, and probably that which it had been their chief object to ascertain, was the fear and trembling which prevailed among the idolatrous inhabitants of the land.

### CHAPTER III.

#### THE PASSAGE OF THE JORDAN. 1-17.

Immediately after the return of the spies, or possibly before this event, the Israelites leave their long occupied camp at Shittim, and move to the banks of the Jordan. A nation moving toward a swollen and angry river with perfect confidence that they should cross it, and yet in perfect ignorance of the manner of such an achievement, is a spectacle of thrilling moral sublimity. Thus marched Moses with the Hebrew people to the Red Sea.

## CHAPTER III.

**A**ND Joshua rose early in the morning; and they removed from Shittim, and came to Jordan, he and all the children of Israel, and lodged there before they passed over. **2** And it came to pass after three days, that the officers went through the host; **3** And they

*a* Chap. 2, 1. — *b* Chap. 1, 10, 11. — *c* See

**1. Rose early in the morning**—According to a necessary custom in hot countries to work by night or early dawn and rest at noonday. Compare Gen. xix, 2, 27; xx, 3; xxviii, 18. **Came to Jordan**—Not close up to the brink of the river, but within some two thousand cubits of it. Ver. 4. **Lodged there**—Not merely *spent one night there*, as some understand, but *abode there* (for *so* often has this sense) three days, as the next verse most naturally explains.

**2. [After three days]**—Obviously three days after they came to the Jordan, near whose banks they lodged for this length of time, probably to make preparations for crossing. Their camp consisted not merely of armed men, but of the entire population, including women and children, with all their possessions, and a delay of three days before crossing into the enemy's country might have been useful for many reasons now unknown to us. To identify these three days with those mentioned chap. i, 11, is altogether unnecessary, and never would have been attempted but for the supposition, wholly untenable, that Joshua completed the passage of the Jordan within three days from his giving the order to prepare to cross. See notes on chaps. i, 11, and ii, 22. Strangely have some rationalistic critics argued that because the historian records in one place an order for the people to prepare to cross the Jordan in three days, and afterwards states that they stopped at the river three days, therefore his narrative was compiled from two different and contradictory documents, and these two periods of three days each were confounded by him! **Officers**—See note chap. i, 10.

**3. When ye see the ark of the covenant**—This was a chest made of shittim or acacia wood, four feet in

commanded the people, saying, 'When ye see the ark of the covenant of the Lord your God, and the priests the Levites bearing it, then ye shall remove from your place, and go after it. **4** 'Yet there shall be a space between you and it, about two thousand cubits by measure: come not near unto it, that ye may

Num. 10, 33. — *d* Deut. 31, 9, 25. — *e* Exod. 19, 12.

length, and two and one third feet in breadth and depth. It was overlaid with gold within and without. The cover, which was edged with gold, was called the mercy-seat. Standing on this lid were the cherubim with outstretched wings. The ark was borne upon the shoulders by means of rods passing through two rings on each of the two sides. When transported, it was enveloped in the veil of the dismantled tabernacle, the curtain of badger skins, and the blue cloth, (Num. iv, 5, 6,) and was therefore not seen. Its name is derived from its chief contents, the "covenant of Sinai"—the two tables of stone, on which was the Decalogue, written by the finger of God. From Heb. ix, 4, we learn that it contained also "the pot of manna," and "Aaron's rod that budded." It was never seen save by the high priest, thus symbolizing the invisible Jehovah. See on Exod. xxv, 10–22. **And the priests the Levites**—The *Levite-priests*, as distinguished from all irregular priests who are not Levitical. Such occasionally arose in times of apostasy from the law. On ordinary occasions the Levites of the house of Kohath, by special command, bore the ark. But when removed from within the veil, or when borne on festive occasions of extraordinary interest, the priests, the offspring of Aaron, were the bearers. Chap. vi, 6 and 1 Kings viii, 3, 6. **Go after it**—Let the ark of God be your leader, and move ye as the ark moves. Heretofore it stood at the centre when Israel was encamped, and in mid army when they marched. The ark now led them, as heretofore the pillar of fire.

**4. Space . . . two thousand cubits**—The design of this space of a thousand yards—more than half a mile—was that the people might see the way to

know the way by which ye must go: for ye have not passed *this way* <sup>1</sup>heretofore. **5** And Joshua said unto the people, 'Sanctify yourselves: for to morrow the Lord will do wonders among you. **6** And Joshua spake unto the priests, saying, 'Take up the ark of the covenant, and pass over before the people. And they took up the ark of the covenant, and went before the people.

<sup>1</sup> Heb. *since yesterday, and the third day.*  
<sup>2</sup> Exod. 19, 10, 14, 15; Lev. 20, 7; Num. 11, 18; chap. 7, 13; 1 Sam. 16, 5; Joel 2, 16.

the opened passage through the Jordan. Some have supposed that this space was required on account of the sacredness of the ark. But it is not stated in the text, nor was such a space ever required during all their journeyings in the wilderness, nor ever afterwards. In this case the miraculous division of waters would be more impressive because the required space would render it visible to all. **For ye have not passed this way heretofore**—The Heb. *yesterday and the day before* is equivalent to *previously*. The Greeks have a similar expression: *χθὺς τε καὶ πρότερον*. *Homer's Iliad*, ii, 303.

**5. Sanctify yourselves**—By sacred ablutions and observances, and by a change of raiment where the washing of the raiment was impracticable. Compare the marginal references. **The Lord will do wonders among you**—He will open a passage through the Jordan as he did through the Red Sea, and lead his people through dry-shod. The miracle of the Red Sea was a wonder whose name had been noised abroad for forty years, (chap. ii, 10,) and this at the Jordan was to be like it.

**6. Take up the ark**—This command was among the announcements relating to the order of crossing, and not to the crossing itself, which took place on the next day. **And they took up the ark**—A statement which is, according to the rules of modern composition, brought in before its proper place, which would naturally be between verses 13 and 14. For the message from God to Joshua, and the address of the latter, must have been given before the priests moved. But this is the manner of the Hebrew historians,

**7** And the Lord said unto Joshua, This day will I begin to <sup>a</sup>magnify thee in the sight of all Israel, that they may know that, 'as I was with Moses, so I will be with thee. **8** And thou shalt command <sup>a</sup>the priests that bear the ark of the covenant, saying, When ye are come to the brink of the water of Jordan, 'ye shall stand still in Jordan. **9** And Joshua said unto the children of Israel, Come

<sup>a</sup> Num. 4, 15.—<sup>b</sup> Chap. 4, 14; 1 Chron. 29, 25; 2 Chron. 1, 1.—<sup>c</sup> Chap. 1, 5.—<sup>d</sup> Verse 3.—<sup>e</sup> Verse 17.

who often thus mention the fulfilment of a prophecy or the execution of a command in the immediate connection.

**7. This day will I begin to magnify thee**—This was only the *beginning* of a glorious succession of miracles attesting the divine commission of Joshua. Jehovah pledges to make Joshua great in the estimation of the people, and thus secure to him their promised loyalty and obedience. Compare chap. i, 17. **As I was with Moses**—As I crowned Moses with divine honour when, at the outstretching of his rod, I divided the waters of the Red Sea, so will I honour thee by rolling back the Jordan, when, at thy command, the symbol of my presence shall be borne to the river's brink. Special honour had been put upon Joshua when he was permitted to accompany Moses up the Mount, but it was eclipsed by the greater honour of his master, who alone was permitted to enter the cloud of the glory of the Lord. Exod. xxiv, 13-16. Moses on a former occasion (Deut. xxxi, 7) had magnified Joshua in the sight of all Israel, but now a Greater than Moses is about to magnify him in the sight of all mankind.

**8. The brink of the water**—Heb. *end of the water*, that is, the eastern margin of the river. It is evident from Joshua's address to the people, which immediately follows, that all the Lord's words to Joshua are not reported here. The abbreviation is to prevent repetition. The main point is to show that the whole order of the crossing was arranged by the Lord and not by Joshua. **Stand still in Jordan**—As a solemn and impressive indication to the passing host that the miracle is wrought

hither, and hear the words of the Lord your God. **10** And Joshua said, Hereby ye shall know that <sup>m</sup>the living God

<sup>m</sup> Deut. 5. 26; 1 Sam. 17. 26; 2 Kings 19. 4;  
Hos. 1. 10; Matt. 16. 16; 1 Thess. 1. 9.

by Jehovah, whose chosen ministers are the priests, and the symbol of whose presence is the ark.

**9. Unto the children of Israel—**The objection that Colenso urges against these addresses to the children of Israel by Moses and by Joshua, that it was a physical impossibility for so vast an encampment to hear the words of one speaker, falls to the ground when we reflect that all the people were addressed, not personally *en masse*, but representatively, as specified verse 2 and chap. i, 10, 16, through the heads and officers of their tribes.

**10. The living God is among you**—The adjective *living* is here and elsewhere applied to God in the sense of *true*, in opposition to the *false* pagan gods; and also in the sense of *efficient*, in opposition to the *dead* idols of the heathen world. In Psa. cvi, 28, the heathen are spoken of as eating the sacrifices of the dead—that is, dead idol gods. Jeremiah (x. 3-10) gives a detailed account of the process of manufacturing an idol, and then, in striking contrast, sets forth Jehovah as the *living* God. We may also with equal truth affirm that the attribute *living* signifies the *providential* care of the *personal* God, instead of the blind, impersonal force, the nondescript agency, which, entombed in matter, is indifferent to the wants and progress of men. The design of Joshua is to inspire faith and courage in the hearts of his people. Hence he represents to them that God will demonstrate by a series of astonishing miracles that he dwells not in serene repose, careless of their good, but that he is *alive* to their interests, and will overrule the laws of nature to secure their triumph. **Without fail drive out**—A strong promise, yet not unconditional. When man fails, God refuses. See notes on chap. i, 4, 5, 6.

Seven tribes are now enumerated, who shall, by the faithful co-operation

*is* among you, and *that* he will without fail <sup>n</sup>drive out from before you the Canaanites, and the Hittites, and the

<sup>n</sup> Exod. 33. 2; Deut. 7. 1;  
Psa. 44. 2.

of Israel with Jehovah, be driven from the Land of Promise. All of these tribes are of the same stock as the Phenicians. "It is startling to be reminded that the detested and accursed race, as it appears in the books of Joshua and Judges, is the same as that to which from Greece we look back as the parent of letters, of commerce, of civilization."—*Stanley*. See note on Acts viii, 40. Their character, as portrayed by Gentile writers, coincides substantially with that delineated by the Scriptures—their dusky complexion, their southern origin, their preservation of monarchical, federal, and aristocratic institutions, their superiority to surrounding nations in social arts, and their human sacrifices, licentious orgies, and multitudes of gods. In Gen. xv, 19-21, *ten* nations are mentioned, whose land was promised to the seed of Abraham. It is impossible at present to tell the exact location of all these tribes. Some of them seem to have become divided, and, like the tribes of Dan and Manasseh in Israel, become settled in different parts of the land. The **Canaanites** were, strictly speaking, the *lowlanders*, who inhabited the lower tracts of Palestine, on the sea-coast and western bank of the Jordan. Num xii, 29. But this term is often used in a wider sense, including all the tribes west of the Jordan and in Phenicia deriving their descent from Canaan. Gen. x, 15-18. **Hittites**—Or, *Chittites*. Of these Abraham purchased Machpelah, (Gen. xxiii, 10,) and among them Esau married two wives. Gen. xxvi, 34. See note on chap. i, 4. **Hivites**—Or, the *Chivite*. The Hebrew name is always in the singular. This tribe dwelt at the foot of Hermon, (chap. xi, 3,) and "in mount Lebanon, from mount Baalhermon unto the entering in of Hamath," (Judg. iii, 3;) also at Gibeon (chap. ix, 7; xi, 19) and at Shechem. Gen. xxxiv, 2. Gesenius and Fürst

Hivites, and the Perizzites, and the Girgashites, and the Amorites, and the

explain the name as *villagers*. Ewald explains it as *midlanders*, and supposes that "they loved peaceful occupations and trading pursuits in well-ordered communities and fortified cities, and located themselves principally in districts the most suitable for peaceful civil life, and such as have from the earliest times possessed the most flourishing inland cities." **Perizzites**—Heb., *rustics* or *countrymen*. They inhabited the mountainous regions subsequently allotted to Judah and Ephraim, a part of which was afterwards called Samaria. Chap. xi, 13; xvii, 15. They were engaged in agricultural pursuits. Hence in a wider sense the term **Perizzites** sometimes includes all the agricultural Canaanites, in distinction from those engaged in trade and commerce.—

**Girgashites**—The residence of this tribe is not distinctly specified in the Old Testament. Eusebius affirms that they dwelt east of the Jordan, and many writers incline to locate them east of lake Gennesaret. For here, according to Matt. viii, 28, lay "the country of the *Gergesenes*," identical with the name of this tribe, as given in the Septuagint and Vulgate versions.] **Amorites**—The *mountaineers*; the largest, most powerful, and wide-spread tribe of all. Therefore their name is sometimes taken in a wide sense, to include all the Canaanitish tribes, as in chap. xxiv, 18. A part of them dwelt in the mountainous tract afterwards allotted to Judah, and were subject to five kings. Chap. x, 5. Another part had possession of the region



east of the Jordan, between the Arnon and the Jabbok. See note on chap. ii, 10. **The Jebusites** inhabited the city and neighbouring mountains of *Jebus*—ancient Jerusalem. They were not expelled from the city till the time of David. 2 Sam. v, 6, 8.

Jebusites. **11** Behold, the ark of the covenant of °the Lord of all the earth passeth over before you into Jordan. **12** Now therefore °take you twelve men out of the tribes of Israel, out of every tribe a man. **13** And it shall come to,

o Verse 13; Micah 4. 13; Zech. 4. 14; 6. 5.

**11. The ark of the covenant of the Lord of all the earth**—Here are four words grammatically dependent on one another, though slightly separated by the disjunctive accent. But this Hebrew accent by no means requires so strange a translation as that adopted by some scholars, which makes *Lord of all the earth* in apposition with *ark of the covenant*. { This would be to make the ark of Jehovah identical with Jehovah. } This claim of universal dominion for Jehovah, in contrast with the limited sway of the local gods of the pagans, not only enthrones Jehovah over all nations, but also over the forces of the material world. Perhaps no miracle of Jesus inspired such overwhelming awe in his disciples as his control of the winds and the waves.

**12. [Now therefore take you twelve men**—Emphasis is put on **now**. The election of these twelve men is to take place immediately, not after they cross the Jordan. The purpose for which they are selected is shown in chap. iv, 4, 5, where it will be seen that a visible memorial of this miracle is provided for before it takes place. The men were designated at this time because they could not be elected while the people were crossing, and afterwards there would be too little time. Hence the assumption of some that this verse is brought in by mistake, being disconnected from the succeeding chapter, is utterly groundless. The men are mentioned before the moving of the ark because they were chosen then.] **Out of every tribe a man**—This was done that every tribe might be represented in the memorial, and have its accredited witness of the great event.

**13. The Lord**—Heb., *Jehovah*. **The Lord of all the earth**—The efficient cause of the miracle. **Shall rest in**

pass, 'as soon as the soles of the feet of the priests that bear the ark of the Lord, 'the Lord of all the earth, shall rest in the waters of Jordan, *that* the waters of Jordan shall be cut off *from* the waters that come down from above; and they

p Chap. 4. 2.—q Verses 15, 16.—r Verse 11.

**the waters**—The Jordan had two, and in some places three, banks. See cut and note Matt. iii, 6. At its flood it overflowed the first and second banks, and covered the whole space between the terraces formed by the second and third banks. The waters on each side would be comparatively shallow. Here the priests were to stand or rest in the shoal water on the eastern bank until the waves receded, and the river's channel was made bare; then they advanced into the midst of the channel of the Jordan, and there stood until all the people had crossed. Verse 17. **The waters of Jordan shall be cut off from the waters that come down**—Grammatically, **waters that come down** is in apposition with **waters of Jordan**, and the word **from**, supplied in our English version, is incorrect and misleading. It is better to omit **from**, and substitute *namely*, and render, *The waters of Jordan shall be cut off, namely, the waters that come down from above. And they shall stand upon a heap*—Or, *stand up, one mass*. The word for **heap** is best understood by referring to its use in the description of the division of the Red Sea in Exod. xv, 8, and in Psa. lxxviii, 13. By comparing these passages with Exod. xiv, 22, where it is said, "The waters were a wall unto them on their right hand and on their left," we arrive at the conclusion that the phenomenon presented by the word **heap** was that of an upright mass of water held back by Omnipotence. { We take the meaning to be that just above the crossing the waters were "congealed," or solidified, as if dammed up by an invisible perpendicular wall across the channel, causing the waters above to overflow all the banks. Below the miraculous dam the channel ran dry to the Dead Sea. } Compare note on verse 16. No natural agent was employed in the working of this miracle.



\*shall stand upon a heap. **14** And it came to pass, when the people removed from their tents, to pass over Jordan, and the priests bearing the 'ark of the covenant before the people; **15** And as

*s* Psa. 78. 13; 114. 3.—*t* Acts 7. 45.  
*u* Verse 13.

In the division of the Red Sea the Lord caused a strong east wind to blow all night, when Moses stretched out his hand over the sea. Exod. xiv. 21. But in the passage of the Jordan "there was neither wind nor tide, to the agency of which the effect could be attributed; and if the river was actually passed, at a high stage of its waters, without boats or bridges, the evidence of the miracle was irresistible—the current must have been suspended by supernatural power." In the most degenerate periods of Jewish history this great miracle was never once questioned. So far as we know even the skeptical and materialistic Sadducees, who sifted the traditions of the elders with a destructiveness rivaling the German rationalists, never assailed this manifest token of supernatural power in their nation's induction into the Land of Promise.

**14. And the priests bearing the ark**—The word **priests** is the grammatical subject of the implied verb, *were*. [Verses 14–16 should be rendered thus: And it came to pass while the people were removing from their tents to cross the Jordan, and the priests bearing the ark of the covenant were before the people, and as those bearing the ark came to the Jordan, and the feet of the priests bearing the ark were dipped in the edge of the waters, (and the Jordan was full over all its banks all the days of harvest,) then stood the waters which came down from above; they rose up, one mass, very far away, in Adam, the city which is beside Zarthan, and those [waters] which came down upon the Sea of the Wilderness, the Salt Sea, were entirely cut off, and the people crossed in front of Jericho.]

**15. Overfloweth all his banks**—The Jordan flows in a deep valley about three quarters of a mile wide, and about fifty feet deeper than the

they that bare the ark were come unto Jordan, and "the feet of the priests that bare the ark were dipped in the brim of the water, (for 'Jordan overfloweth all his banks "all the time of harvest,)

*v* 1 Chron. 12. 15; Jer. 12. 5; 49. 19.  
*w* Chap. 4. 18; 5. 10, 12.

wide plain (the Ghor) in which it lies. In this lower valley a narrow fringe of canes, intermingled with trees, runs along the edge of the river. In the ordinary swellings of Jordan the water overflows this strip of vegetation, driving the beasts of prey from their dens to ravage the surrounding country. Jer. xii. 5. Ordinarily the lower terrace of the river was dry, and the people went unto the Jordan for wood. 2 Kings vi. 2; also see note on Matt. iii. 6. Dr. Robinson visited the Jordan on the 12th of May, and found the stream so swollen that the water reached to the very top of the banks, and in some places flowed a little over and covered the roots of the bushes. The river was then about forty yards wide, and from ten to twelve feet deep. But when the Israelites crossed the waters must have been higher, as it is distinctly said that they overflowed all the banks. The idea that the river was forded by this multitude is inadmissible. The fact that the spies swam the river, and that the Arabs of modern times pass over in the rainy season in a few places known only to themselves, can by no means disprove this striking and well-attested miracle. **All the time of harvest**—The Hebrew word for **harvest**, according to Gesenius, here designates the grain harvest, in distinction from the fruit harvest. We are informed by Robinson that the barley harvest precedes the wheat harvest about two weeks. At Jericho, in the depressed valley of the Jordan, the barley was cut in the last half of April, and the wheat in the first half of May, about three weeks earlier than on the mountains of Hebron and Carmel. The reason for the overflow at this time instead of the winter—which, in that latitude, is the rainy season—is because "the snow on the Lebanon, "which nourishes and pours out the

**16** That the waters which came down from above stood *and* rose up upon a heap very far from the city Adam, that is beside <sup>2</sup> Zaretan; and those that came down <sup>3</sup> toward the sea of the plain, *even*

α1 Kings 4. 12; 7. 46.—γ Deut. 3. 17.

Jordan," melts at that time with the increasing heat of the summer.

Blunt observes here some undesigned coincidences with the books of Moses, which clearly demonstrate the reality and truth of this narration. In Exod. ix, 31–32, we read that the hail, which fell a few days before the first passover in Egypt, smote the *flax* and the *barley*; "for the barley was in the ear, and the flax was balled. But the wheat and the rye were not smitten, for they were not grown up." Now the Jordan was passed on the 10th of Abib, four days before the passover, when we find the *barley* harvesting going on in the Jordan valley. This small circumstance, trifling though it be, confirms the truth of the account. So minute a coincidence between two histories would not have been designed by those perpetrating literary forgeries. Again, flax is cut or pulled when in the boll, as it was in Egypt when the hail cut it down. Forty years afterwards, in about the same latitude, at the same time of the year, Rahab covers the two spies to Jericho with *stalks of flax* which she had spread to cure on the roof. "How very minute is this incident! Could the historian have contemplated for one moment the effect which a trifle about a flax stalk might have in corroboration of his account of the passage of the Jordan? Is it possible for the most jealous examiner of human testimony to imagine that these flax stalks were fixed upon above all things in the world for the covering of the spies, because they were known to be ripe with the barley, and the barley was known to be ripe at the passover, and the passover was known to be the season when the Israelites set foot in Canaan?"

**16. The city Adam, that is beside Zaretan**—It is impossible to locate these cities; no traces of them remain. The latter city is elsewhere

the salt sea, failed, *and* were cut off: and the people passed over right against Jericho. **17** And the priests that bare the ark of the covenant of the Lord stood firm on dry ground in the midst

α Gen. 14. 3; Num. 34. 2.

more correctly spelled *Zarthan*. There is in the Hebrew a marginal reading which is generally preferred by the critics: "The waters stood and rose up upon one heap very far off—by Adam, the city that is by the side of Zarthan." In accordance with this reading many commentators suppose that the entire channel of the Jordan was dry for many miles above the place of crossing, and that the waters were rolled back and piled up in a place many miles distant towards, or near, the Sea of Tiberias. The following is Stanley's graphic description: "On the broken edge of the swollen stream the band of priests stood, with the ark on their shoulders. Suddenly the full bed of the Jordan was dried before them. High up the river, far, far away, in Adam, (that is, at a distance of thirty miles from the encampment,) the waters stood which 'descended' from the heights above; stood, and rose up as if gathered into a waterskin, as if in a barrier or heap, as if congealed, (LXX;) and those that descended toward the Sea of the Desert, the Salt Sea, failed, and were cut off. Thus the scene presented is of the 'descending stream,' (Jordan, etymologically, means the *Descender*;) not parted asunder, as we generally fancy, but, as the Psalm expresses it, (cxiv, 3,) 'turned backwards;' the whole bed of the river left dry from north to south, through its long windings; the huge stones lying bare here and there, embedded in the soft bottom; or the shingly pebbles drifted along the course of the channel." To this theory of the miracle, which is also that of Dr. A. Clarke, we object. We see no reason for heaping up the waters in a far-distant place where there were no Hebrew witnesses.

**17. The priests . . . stood firm on dry ground**—The priests stood above, near the wall of waters, and the people passed below. The ark,

of Jordan, "and all the Israelites passed over on dry ground, until all the people were passed clean over Jordan.

#### CHAPTER IV.

AND it came to pass, when all the people were clean passed <sup>a</sup>over Jordan, that the LORD spake unto Joshua, saying, **2** <sup>b</sup>Take you twelve men out of the people, out of every tribe a man, **3** And command ye them, saying,

<sup>n</sup> See Exod. 14. 29.—<sup>a</sup> Deut. 27. 2; chap. 3. 17.  
<sup>b</sup> Chap. 3. 12.

the symbol of the presence of Jehovah, was the instrument of the miracle, as the rod of Moses had been in the division of the Red Sea. Thus God honours his own ordinances. **Dry ground**—Not hard and dusty ground, but dry only in the sense of being drained of water. See note on chap. iv, 18. { **All the Israelites passed . . . clean over Jordan**—The Jordan is now passed, and *Canaan is attained!* The forty years' sojourn is closed, and for the first ecstatic moment the feet of the tribes are standing on the Promised Land! Their departure from Egypt and their arrival in Canaan are signalized by parallel miracles of sea and river. Both at their exit and at their entrance Jehovah leads them through a watery gate, by cleaving the waves asunder. Through all ages the Church has seen in the desert sojourn the symbol of our probationary life, and in the crossing the Jordan the symbol of death. Yet is there this memorable difference: the crossing the Jordan was to Israel the commencement of a new warfare; the transit of Christian death is into eternal repose. }

#### CHAPTER IV.

##### BUILDING MONUMENTS.—1-24.

[This chapter, more than many others, affords us a noticeable example of the style of the Hebrew historian. While the central theme of the whole chapter is the building of the stone monument in Gilgal, observe how further particulars of the passage of the Jordan are recorded, which the writer did not wish to interrupt the order of his narrative, in chapter iii, to

Take you hence out of the midst of Jordan, out of the place where <sup>c</sup>the priests' feet stood firm, twelve stones, and ye shall carry them over with you, and leave them in <sup>d</sup>the lodging place, where ye shall lodge this night. **4** Then Joshua called the twelve men, whom he <sup>e</sup>had prepared of the children of Israel, out of every tribe a man: **5** And Joshua said unto them, Pass over before the ark of the LORD your God into the midst of

<sup>c</sup> Chap. 3. 13.—<sup>d</sup> Verses 19, 20.  
<sup>e</sup> Mark 3. 14-19.

tell. Strict chronological order is not sought after by him, but rather a record of the facts, leaving the reader's common sense to infer the order; or rather, treating the order of events as of little moment. See Introduction.]

**1. All the people**—All the people of the nine and a half tribes which afterwards permanently occupied Western Palestine, and the forty thousand picked soldiers of the Eastern tribes.

**[2. Take you twelve men**—These men were surely not elected after the people had crossed the Jordan and while the priests were standing in the river bed, but previously, as chapter iii, 12 clearly implies. See note there. The command there given to Joshua was to elect the twelve men *now*—that is, before crossing—and the exact repetition of the command in this place is only in keeping with the simple style of the Hebrew historian. The choosing of the twelve men, which was, perhaps, done by a popular election, took place before they crossed over; the orders to take each man a stone from the midst of the Jordan were given after all the people had crossed.]

**3. The place where the priests' feet stood firm**—After the waters had rolled away at the touch of the priests' feet, they bore the ark into the middle and deepest part of the channel. See note on chap. iii, 13. This is also implied in the command, "Come ye up out of Jordan." Verse 17. **Lodging place**—Gilgal<sup>1</sup>, six miles west of the Jordan. See verses 19, 20. They lodged at Gilgal not one night only, but many days.

**5. Pass over before the ark**—Advance to a position immediately in

Jordan, and take you up every man of you a stone upon his shoulder, according unto the number of the tribes of the children of Israel: 6 That this may be a sign among you, *that* 'when your children ask *their fathers* 'in time to come, saying, *What mean ye* by these stones? 7 Then ye shall answer them, That 'the waters of Jordan were cut off before the ark of the covenant of the LORD; when it passed over Jordan, the

waters of Jordan were cut off: and these stones shall be for <sup>a</sup> memorial unto the children of Israel for ever. 8 And the children of Israel did so as Joshua commanded, and took up twelve stones out of the midst of Jordan, as the LORD spake unto Joshua, according to the number of the tribes of the children of Israel, and carried them over with them unto the place where they lodged, and laid them down there. 9 And Joshua

f Verse 21; Exod. 13, 26; 13, 14; Deut. 6, 20; Psa. 44, 1; 73, 3-6.

1 Heb. *to-morrow*.—<sup>g</sup> Chap. 3, 13, 16.  
h Exod. 12, 14; Num. 16, 40.

front of the ark, and take up the stones. As this order seems to have been given after the people had crossed, we naturally understand that the twelve men passed back again to the place where the ark rested, and thence transported the stones, while all Israel stood beholding them. **According unto the number of the tribes**—A memorial not only of the wonderful interposition of Jehovah, but of the federal unity of the nation—one composed of twelve.

6. **That this may be a sign among you**—By this simple device two grand purposes are subserved: (1.) The preservation of national history and religious knowledge; (2.) The religious education of the young. The inquisitiveness of the children is not to be repressed, but rather stimulated by impressive monuments of historical events, and by symbols of religious truths. "Object teaching," which has recently been brought forward in the art of education, is here introduced as a method of instruction by God himself. By the presentation of visible objects to the eye, divine truth may be most vividly photographed upon the soul. Hence the value of travel in historic lands as an educator. Renan says: "Seeing Palestine is the fifth gospel."

7. **Memorial . . . for ever**—The Hebrew word here used is the strongest one in the language to express *eternity*. But it is often used in a popular way to indicate not absolute eternity, but a period indefinitely long, especially when the "speaker is led by his strong desire to overlook the fact that what he is speaking of must have an end."—*Keil*.

The importance of this memorial

as a proof of the miraculous passage of the Jordan is thus set forth by Mr. Leslie: "Let us suppose that there never was any such thing as that passage over Jordan; that these stones at Gilgal were set up on some other occasion; and that some designing man in an after age invented this book of Joshua, affirmed that it was written at the time of that imaginary event by Joshua himself, and adduced this pile of stones as a testimony of the truth of it; would not every body say to him, 'We know this pile very well; but we never before heard of this reason for it, nor of this book of Joshua; where has it lain concealed all this while, and where and how came you, after so many ages, to find it? Besides, this book tells us that this passage over Jordan was ordained to be taught our children from age to age, and therefore that they were always to be instructed in the meaning of this particular monument as a memorial of it; but we were never so taught when we were children, nor did we ever teach our children any such thing; and it is in the highest degree improbable that such an emphatic ordinance should have been forgotten, during the continuance of so remarkable a pile, set up for the express purpose of perpetuating its remembrance.'"

8. **Israel did so**—They did so by their twelve representatives, according to the old law-maxim: *Qui facit per alium, facit per se*—"He who acts through another acts through himself." **And laid them down**—They did not construct them into a monument. This Joshua did afterwards. Verse 20.

9. **And Joshua set up twelve**

O. T.

set up 'twelve stones in the midst of Jordan, in the place where the feet of the priests which bare the ark of the covenant stood: and they are there unto this day. **10** For the priests which

4 Exod. 28. 21;

**stones in the midst of Jordan**—[The **and** at the beginning of this verse, and **twelve stones**, without the article, indicate with sufficient clearness that these twelve stones were different from those just mentioned in verse 8. This is still more evident from the fact that these were set up **in the midst of Jordan**, those *in Gilgal*. Verse 20. The fact that we find no record of any command from God to Joshua to erect this monument in the river does not disprove the existence of such a command, which a concise writer may omit, and yet describe its execution. See note on chap. iii, 6. Or we may suppose that Joshua and the elders erected this river monument for their own satisfaction, and not by divine command.] But if these stones were set up in the midst of the river they must have been covered by the returning waters and probably swept away; how, then, could our author have known that they were there in his day? We reply that even if the pile was always below the surface of the water it might be seen or felt by careful examination, and be a thing of deep interest, especially to the men of that generation. But it is probable that these stones were not limited in size to the carrying capacity of one man; and they may have been placed upon an elevated base of rocks, so that they would ordinarily rise above the top of the water. It is very certain that our author, perhaps himself an eye-witness of the crossing of the Jordan, had more means of ascertaining the truth of his statements than we of the present day can possibly have to contradict his testimony. The word for **set up** signifies *rear up*, *erect*, and implies that the monument was of considerable height. As the memorial at Gilgal indicated very definitely the place of the passage, the monument to show the spot where the priests stood with the

bare the ark stood in the midst of Jordan, until every thing was finished that the Lord commanded Joshua to speak unto the people, according to all that Moses commanded Joshua: and the

1 Kings 18. 31.

ark on their shoulders needed not to be very conspicuous. **And they are there unto this day**—This implies that the stones were for years visible either beneath or above the waters; otherwise the presence of the monument at a later day could not be asserted. On the theory that Joshua is the author of this book in its present form, having written it in his last years, it was about twenty years after these events that this memorial was existing. But if these words were added by a later hand they show the still longer continuance of the monument.

**10. The priests . . . stood . . . until every thing was finished**—It is not necessary to suppose that the building of the river monument took place *after* the people had passed, but it could have been built *while* they were hastening across the dry channel. This would abbreviate the time of the priests standing still and supporting the ark. **According to all that Moses commanded Joshua**—We do not find in the books of Moses any directions respecting the manner of passing over the Jordan, and of perpetuating the remembrance of that event. The meaning of this passage must be that Joshua obeyed Jehovah as Moses had commanded him, without being enjoined any special duty in this case. Num. xxvii, 23; Deut. iii, 28, and xxxi, 23. In accordance with the precept of his illustrious predecessor, he had been very attentive to the words of God. **And the people hastened**—There were obvious reasons for their haste. The priests were in a painful attitude, bearing the ark with the tables of stone within. The waters, rising up above, with no visible barrier to keep them from dashing suddenly down upon the people in the channel, would produce a trepidation in the beholders, and quicken their pace. Haste was also necessary in order that the entire na-

people<sup>a</sup> hasted and passed over. **11** And it came to pass, when all the people were clean passed over, that the ark of the Lord passed over, and the priests, in the presence of the people. **12** And the children of Reuben, and the children of Gad, and half the tribe of Manasseh, passed over armed before the children of Israel, as Moses spake unto them: **13** About forty thousand<sup>2</sup> prepared for war passed over before the Lord unto battle, to the plains of Jericho. **14** On that day the Lord<sup>m</sup> magnified Joshua in the sight of all Israel;

<sup>a</sup> Exod. 12. 39; Psa. 119. 60; Eccl. 9. 10.—  
<sup>2</sup> Num. 32. 20, 27, 28.—<sup>2</sup> Or, *ready armed*.

tion, with all their possessions, might cross in one day. The supernatural never supersedes the fullest exercise of our natural abilities.

**11. The ark of the Lord passed over**—Great prominence is given to the ark as the visible instrument of the miracle, the first to enter and the last to leave the bed of the Jordan. **In the presence of the people**—Who, after their own hasty passage, were now standing on the western bank, contemplating the wonderful spectacle. This greatest miracle of the Old Testament had at least a million eye-witnesses.

**12. And the children of Reuben**—The conjunction **and** does not indicate the order of events, but the historian wishes by repetition to give emphasis to the statement that the eastern tribes had already passed over to assist their brethren in the conquest of the land. **Armed**—See chap. i, 14, note. **Before**—That is, in sight of. They were, perhaps, placed in the van to ensure the fulfilling of their promise, or because they were unencumbered with their families and flocks, which they had left on the eastern side of the river.

**13. Forty thousand**—For their entire military strength see chap. i, 14, note. **Plains of Jericho**—A part of the Ghor or Arabah near Jericho. The mountains on the west fall back considerably to the south of the entrance into the Wady Kelt, and sweep toward the southwest, and then turn again toward the Dead Sea. The valley on the west of the Jordan is at this point seven miles wide.

and they feared him, as they feared Moses, all the days of his life. **15** And the Lord spake unto Joshua, saying, **16** Command the priests that bear<sup>a</sup> the ark of the testimony, that they come up out of Jordan. **17** Joshua therefore commanded the priests, saying, Come ye up out of Jordan. **18** And it came to pass, when the priests that bare the ark of the covenant of the Lord were come up out of the midst of Jordan, and the soles of the priests' feet were<sup>b</sup> lifted up unto the dry land, that the waters of Jordan returned unto their place,<sup>c</sup> and

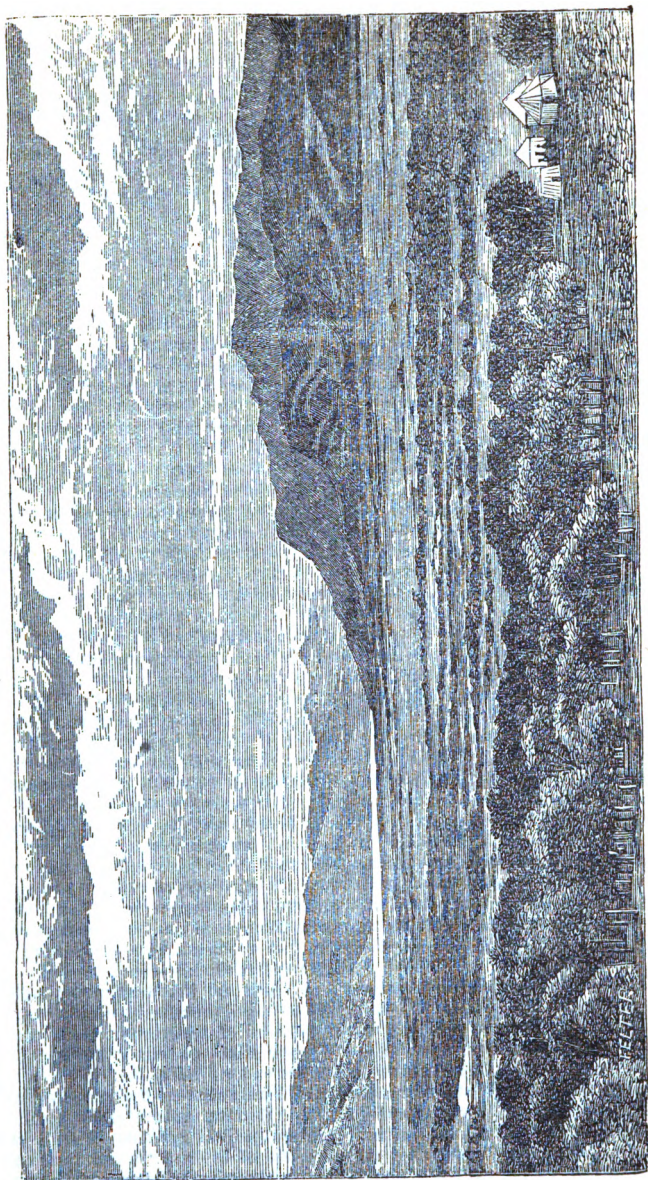
<sup>m</sup> Chap. 3. 7.—<sup>n</sup> Exod. 25. 16, 22.—<sup>3</sup> Heb. *plucked up*.—<sup>o</sup> Chap. 3. 15.

**14. The Lord magnified Joshua**—This is the fulfilment of the promise in chap. iii, 7. See the note. **And they feared him, as they feared Moses**—"This was not, indeed, the chief design of the miracle, to exalt the power and authority of Joshua. But as it was of the greatest importance to the people generally that the government of Joshua should be firmly established, it is very properly mentioned as the crowning advantage resulting from it, that he was, as it were, invested with sacred insignia, which produced such veneration among the people that no one dared to despise him."—*Calvin*. **All the days of his life**—Joshua's life.

**15. The Lord spake unto Joshua**—The Hebrew having no pluperfect, this may be rendered *had spoken*. This repetition of what has been previously described is for the purpose of showing how Joshua was magnified, by connecting his agency with the miracle. "The priests did not quit their station till Joshua, who had ordered them thither, ordered them thence; nor did he thus order them until the Lord commanded him: so obedient were all parties to the word of God."—*Scott*.

**16. Ark of the testimony**—This was so called because it contained the two tables of testimony. Deut. xxxi, 18; see note on chap. iii, 3. Gesenius renders, *ark of the law*.

**18. The soles of the priests' feet were lifted up unto the dry land**—Hebrew, *plucked up*, that is, from the miry bed of the river, which was **dry** only in the sense of being drained of water. **The waters of Jordan**



PLAINS OF JERICHO.

'flowed over all his banks, as *they did* before. **19** And the people came up out of Jordan on the tenth *day* of the first month, and encamped <sup>9</sup> in Gilgal, in the east border of Jericho. **20** And <sup>10</sup> those twelve stones, which they took out of Jordan, did Joshua pitch in Gilgal. **21** And he spake unto the children of Israel, saying, <sup>11</sup> When your children shall ask their fathers <sup>12</sup> in time to come, saying, What *mean* these stones? **22** Then ye shall let your children know, saying, <sup>13</sup> Israel came over this Jordan on dry land. **23** For the LORD your God

<sup>4</sup> Heb. *went*.—<sup>p</sup> Chap. 5. 9.—<sup>q</sup> Verse 8.—<sup>r</sup> Verse 6.—<sup>5</sup> Heb. *to morrow*.—<sup>s</sup> Chap. 3. 17.—<sup>t</sup> Exod. 14. 21.—<sup>u</sup> 1 Kings 8. 42, 43; 2 Kings

**returned**—As the waters suddenly stopped when the ark was borne into them, and flowed onward again when the ark left the bed of the river, the wonderful miracle must be ascribed to the ark as the instrument, and to God as the efficient cause.

**19. The tenth day of the first month**—In chap. v, 10, we learn that the passover, the anniversary of the Exodus, occurred on the fourteenth of the same month, so that there were forty years, wanting four days, between the departure from Egypt and the entrance into Canaan. They did not enter earlier because of their unbelief. Heb. iii, 19. **Gilgal**—On the significance which the Israelites afterwards attached to this name, see note on chap. v, 9. According to Josephus, Gilgal was fifty stadia, about six miles, from the Jordan, and ten stadia, exceeding a mile, from Jericho. No trace of the name or site now remains. This Gilgal must be carefully distinguished from another Gilgal in Central Palestine, known by the modern name *Jiljilia*. See note on chap. ix, 6. Gilgal is noted as the first encampment of Israel in Canaan. Here was the scene of the circumcision, here the first passover was celebrated in the land, and here the manna ceased to fall.

**20. Did Joshua pitch in Gilgal**—The Hebrew word here rendered **pitch** is precisely the same as that rendered *set up* in verse 9, where see note. These twelve memorial stones were here built up by Joshua into a perpetual monument, resting,

dried up the waters of Jordan from before you, until ye were passed over, as the LORD your God did to the Red Sea, <sup>14</sup> which he dried up from before us, until we were gone over: **24** <sup>15</sup> That all the people of the earth might know the hand of the LORD, that it ~~is~~ <sup>16</sup> mighty: that ye might <sup>17</sup> fear the LORD your God <sup>18</sup> for ever.

## CHAPTER V.

**A**ND it came to pass, when all the kings of the Amorites, which *were* on the side of Jordan westward,

19. 19; Psa. 106. 8.—<sup>v</sup> Exod. 15. 16; 1 Chron. 29. 12; Psa. 89. 13.—<sup>w</sup> Exod. 49. 31; Deut. 6. 2; Psa. 89. 7; Jer. 10. 7.—<sup>5</sup> Heb. *all days*.

doubtless, upon a pedestal, to render it more conspicuous. More than six hundred years afterwards the Minor Prophets, Hosea (iv, 15; ix, 15; xii, 11) and Amos, (iv, 4; v, 5,) repeatedly reprove the Jews for going to Gilgal "to multiply transgression;" and Stanley, in his History of the Jewish Church, suggests that this monument came to be regarded with idolatrous veneration, like the worship of the cross among the Papists.

**24. All the people of the earth**—We need not limit this expression to mean merely the nations of the land of Canaan, for this amazing miracle was doubtless designed to teach impressive lessons of divine power to the nations of all coming ages.

## CHAPTER V.

CONSTERNATION OF THE CANAANITES, 1.

**1. It came to pass**—Immediately after the Israelites had crossed, the miracle was heralded to all the kings of the land. This verse is closely related to the last verse of the preceding chapter, showing how the miracle of the Jordan at once made the neighbouring nations know the power of Jehovah's hand. It also serves to show why Joshua might, without fear of attack, embrace this opportunity to circumcise the people. **Amorites**—See note on chap. ii, 10. **On the side of Jordan westward**—Literally, *beyond Jordan seaward*. The Amorites east of the Jordan, ruled by Sihon and Og, had been already defeated. **The**



and all the kings of the Canaanites, <sup>a</sup> which *were* by the sea, <sup>b</sup> heard that the Lord had dried up the waters of Jordan from before the children of Israel, until we were passed over, that their heart melted, <sup>c</sup> neither was there spirit in them

<sup>a</sup> Num. 13. 39. — <sup>b</sup> Exod. 15. 14, 15; Chap. 2, 9, 10, 11; Psa. 48. 6; Ezek. 21. 7.

### Canaanites, which were by the sea

—The various heathen tribes and nations along the Mediterranean Sea. A narrow plain extends along this sea from Gaza in the south to the northern limits of Phenicia. The Amorites and Canaanites, because of their superiority in numbers and political power, are put here apparently for all the nations of the land. **We were passed over**—This expression naturally implies that the writer was an eye-witness of the scene described. **Their heart melted**—Their hope and courage died within them, for they despaired of conquering an almighty foe.

### CIRCUMCISION RESTORED, 2-9.

[It seems at first sight strange that the chosen people for forty years neglected circumcision. The clue to a proper explanation of this neglect is furnished in the following verses, especially in verse 9, where allusion is made to *the reproach of Egypt*. This reproach is explained, in Exod. xxxii, 12; Num. xiv, 13-16; Deut. ix, 28, as the scoffing words and ridicule which the Egyptians would so naturally utter against the Hebrews when the latter suffered from God's anger. After the rebellion and murmuring at Kadesh, Jehovah condemned that generation to perish in the wilderness. Num. xiv, 29-34. During the forty years that followed they were under the ban of that sweeping curse, and observed neither circumcision nor the passover. These sacraments were sacred seals of their covenant with Jehovah, and, the covenant being broken by their rebellion, that cursed generation could not renew it. See further on verses 5 and 6. But the mighty miracle of the Jordan, which now spread terror among the nations, silenced this reproach, and hence the propriety of renewing the covenant in Gilgal.]

any more, because of the children of Israel.

**2** At that time the Lord said unto Joshua, Make thee <sup>1</sup> *sharp knives*, and circumcise again the children of Israel the second time. **3** And Joshua made

<sup>c</sup> 1 Kings 10. 5. — <sup>1</sup> Or, *knives of flints*.  
<sup>d</sup> Exod. 4. 25.

**2. At that time**—That is, during the interval of four days between the passage of Jordan and the passover, (see chap. iv, 19, note,) and while their foes are dismayed and panic-stricken. This was a very opportune occasion to perform the rite of circumcision, which for a season unfitted its subjects for military duty. **Circumcise again . . . the second time**—This does not imply that there had been a previous time of general circumcising, as some say, at Sinai, but a previous *state* of circumcision. See verse 5. The rite was not performed twice on the same individual, but the sense is, Resume again the rite of circumcision as it was practiced forty years ago. **The children of Israel**—All the males who were born after the Hebrews left Egypt. **Sharp knives**—Hebrew, *knives of rocks, stones, or flints*. Such an instrument was used by Zipporah in circumcising the son of Moses. Exod. iv, 25. Knives among rude barbarians are first made of flint. It is probable that this was used in the first circumcision by the patriarchs, and the same instrument was used by Joshua not from necessity—for he had iron tools—but from deference to ancient custom. It is said also that the wound made with a sharp stone is less liable to inflammation than one made with metal. These knives were to be made for the occasion, as it would not be proper to use in a religious rite instruments employed in common uses. Knives that had been used for other purposes might inoculate the circumcised person with the virus of some disease. Hiob Ludolph, in his history of the Ethiopians, speaks of a tribe of the Alnæi who performed the rite with stone knives as recently as one hundred and sixty years ago. According to the Septuagint version of Joshua xxiv, 30, the stone knives used on this occasion were deposited in the

nim sharp knives, and circumcised the children of Israel at <sup>2</sup>the hill of the foreskins. **4** And this ~~is~~ the cause why Joshua did circumcise: 'All the people that came out of Egypt, *that were* males, *even* all the men of war, died in the wilderness by the way, after they came out of Egypt. **5** Now all the people that came out were circumcised; but all the people *that were* born in the wilderness by the way as they came forth out of Egypt, *them* 'they had not circumcised. **6** For the children of Israel walked

<sup>2</sup> Or, *Gibeath-haaraloth*.—<sup>e</sup> Num. 14. 29; 26. 64, 65; Deut. 2. 16.—<sup>f</sup> Deut. 12. 8, 9; Hosea 6. 6, 7.

tomb of Joshua as sacred relics. Perhaps some modern geologists would consider them relics of a "stone age."

**3. Hill of the foreskins**—The hill on which this rite occurred, one of the many argillaceous hills on the terrace of the valley, receives its name from the prepuces buried in it, and not, as the Rabbins say, from the quantity piled up there.

**4. And this is the cause**—As this book contains not only a record of events, but also ascribes a rational cause to each, it may be classed among philosophical histories. **All the people**—This expression is limited first to the males, and then to those of military age, from twenty years old and upwards. Num. xiv. 29–32. **Died in the wilderness**—Because of their rebellion against Jehovah, and the cowardice displayed when the panic-stricken spies made their exaggerated report. Num. xiv. 21–35. Caleb and Joshua were the only exceptions to this sweeping sentence. Num. xxvi. 64, 65.

**5. All the people that came out were circumcised**—That is, had been circumcised in infancy. Lev. xii. 3. **The people... born in the wilderness... they had not circumcised**—Various reasons have been assigned for the neglect in the wilderness of this rite, which was so scrupulously performed in Egypt. The fact that they were in an unsettled condition is not a sufficient reason, for they dwelt for months together in one place. The most satisfactory account of the matter is that, while under the sentence of the

'**forty years in the wilderness, till all the people that were** men of war, which came out of Egypt, were consumed, because they obeyed not the voice of the LORD: unto whom the LORD swore that <sup>a</sup>he would not show them the land, which the LORD swore unto their fathers that he would give us, 'a land that floweth with milk and honey. **7** And <sup>b</sup>their children *whom* he raised up in their stead, *them* Joshua circumcised: for they were uncircumcised, because they had not circumcised them by the

<sup>c</sup> Num. 14. 33; Deut. 1. 3; 2. 7, 14; Psa. 95. 10. —<sup>d</sup> Num. 14. 23; Psa. 95. 11; Heb. 3. 11.—<sup>e</sup> Exod. 3. 8.—<sup>f</sup> Num. 14. 31; Deut. 1. 39.

divine displeasure for forty years, the nation was temporarily rejected by its divine Head, and prohibited from impressing upon their sons the sign of the covenant. See note introductory to verse 2.

**6. Forty years in the wilderness**

—This verse assigns the reason why circumcision had not been performed, namely, their disobedience and punishment. As the sentence of exclusion from the favour of Jehovah had now expired, the nation is again admitted to the privilege of using the sign of his covenant. While in exile they were the objects of his care, and even of his supernatural providence, but not of his *approval*; just as sinners under the Gospel dispensation enjoy the bounty of God, but not the covenant of his pardoning grace. **Till all the people... were consumed**—The word for **people** is that which is always used to designate a heathen nation, a Gentile race, in distinction from the peculiar people, Israel. This confirms the explanation that Israel was excluded from covenant relations during the forty years' wandering. **The Lord swore that he would not show them the land**—That is, cause them to see, and hence to enter and enjoy, the land. **A land that floweth with milk and honey**—This phrase represents the great fertility and loveliness of the Land of Promise; it was a land rich in grass for herds, hence there was an abundance of milk; it was profuse in flowers, hence bees and wild honey were very plentiful, (Judg. xiv. 8; Matt. iii. 4,) and they still are found, in

way. **8** And it came to pass, <sup>a</sup>when they had done circumcising all the people, that they abode in their places in the camp, <sup>b</sup>till they were whole. **9** And the LORD said unto Joshua, This day have I rolled away <sup>c</sup>the reproach of

<sup>3</sup> Heb. *when the people had made an end to be circumcised*.—<sup>4</sup> See Genesis 34. 25.—<sup>a</sup> m Genesis 34. 14; 1 Samuel 14. 6; see Leviticus

spite of the lack of cultivation and the desolation of Palestine. Milk and its various products constituted the chief sustenance of the ancient Hebrews. In Palestine the bees do actually deposit honey in the holes of the rocks in so great quantities that it flows out and is gathered in vessels placed beneath.

**8. Circumcising all the people—**Objection is made that it was impossible to circumcise so many, probably six or seven hundred thousand, in one day. But according to the most accurate estimates there were between two and three hundred thousand circumcised men to administer the rite, so that each would have but three or four subjects requiring the ordinance.

**They abode in their places in the camp—**Hebrew, *they sat under themselves*; that is, they remained on that spot which was under them when they first sat down. Exod. xvi. 29. **Till they were whole—**According to the Talmud the wound was immediately treated with oil, which diminished the pain and induced a speedy healing. It is not probable that their cure was entirely effected so early as the third day, the passover; nor would it be necessary for them to be free from physical disability in order to celebrate that ordinance, since there were enough who were able to perform the labour of preparing the paschal lamb. For at least one fourth of the men had been previously circumcised, and two small families could unite. Exod. xii. 14.

**9. I rolled away the reproach of Egypt—**The reproach which Egypt has cast upon you; for Egypt is here subjective and not objective. Compare Isa. li. 7; Ezek. xvi. 57, and xxxvi. 15. Many are the explanations of this reproach. Some say it was Egyptian bondage; others, the state of

Egypt from off you. Wherefore the name of the place is called <sup>a</sup>"Gilgal unto this day."

**10** And the children of Israel encamped in Gilgal, and kept the passover <sup>b</sup>on the fourteenth day of the month at

18. 3; chapter 24. 14; Ezekiel 20. 7; 23. 8, 8.—<sup>4</sup> That is, *Rolling*.—<sup>a</sup> n Chapter 4. 19.—<sup>c</sup> Exodus 12. 6; Numbers 9. 5.

being uncircumcised, which implies, what cannot be proved, that the Egyptians were circumcised; still others, that the Hebrews were unfit for war. But we find the reproach in Exod. xxxii. 12: "Wherefore should the Egyptians speak, and say, For mischief did he bring them out, to slay them in the mountains, and to consume them from the face of the earth?" They had been exposed to this reproach for forty years, for God had been destroying them during that time. But with the restoration of covenant relations, whereof circumcision was the sign, the reproach of Egypt is rolled away from them. The malicious taunt is now no longer true.

[**Called Gilgal—**The place may have been called Gilgal before this event, and there were other places in the land of the same name; but as the word **Gilgal** means a *wheel* or *circle*, and is so easily associated with the idea of *rolling*, the Israelites naturally gave it the symbolical meaning here stated, because their renewal of the covenant by circumcision had rolled away the reproach of Egypt.]

#### THE THIRD PASSOVER AND CEASING OF THE MANNA, 10-12.

**10. And kept the passover—**This institution was in memory of their deliverance from the plague which had destroyed the firstborn in Egypt, (Exod. xii.) and was the second feast which had been observed since leaving that land of bondage. The first was at Sinai, in the second year of their journey in the desert. Num. ix. There was no observance of it in the desert subsequent to this, on account of the rejection of Israel from the covenant. See on verse 6 and note introductory to verse 2. **On the fourteenth day of the month—**This was the month Abib, the first month of the

even in the plains of Jericho. **11** And they did eat of the old corn of the land on the morrow after the passover, unleavened cakes, and parched corn in the self-same day. **12** And <sup>p</sup>the manna ceased on the morrow after they had eaten of the old corn of the land; neither had the children of Israel manna

<sup>p</sup> Exod. 16, 35; Neh. 9, 20, 21; Rev. 7, 16, 17.  
<sup>q</sup> Prov. 13, 22; Isa. 65, 13, 14; John 4, 33.

Hebrew year. After the captivity it was called *Nisan*. The fourteenth of this month corresponded with about the middle of our April.

### 11. The old corn of the land—

There is no authority in the Hebrew for the word **old**. They ate of the *produce* of the land. The word **old** was inserted by our translators because it was unlawful to eat of the new grain before the sheaf was waved before Jehovah on the morrow of the Sabbath. Lev. xxiii, 14-16. [But here is a difficulty. *The morrow after the passover* is used in Num. xxxiii, 3, for the fifteenth of Nisan, the day after the evening on which the paschal lamb was eaten. But according to Lev. xxiii, 7, this day was to be celebrated by a holy convocation, and on it no servile work performed. How, then, shall we account for Israel's eating the new fruit of the land on the morrow after the passover? The simplest explanation is that of Keil, who understands the word *pass-over* here, as in several other places, to mean not simply the paschal supper but the entire feast connected with it, which lasted seven days. **Parched corn**—Ears of grain baked at the fire, an article of food still much relished by the Arabs. See note on Ruth ii, 14.]

**12 Manna**—This was always regarded as a miraculous gift directly from God, and not a product of nature. It is described in Exod. xvi, 14-36, where see notes. It fell upon the encampment six times each week during forty years. As each man had an omer—three quarts—a day, there must have been 15,000,000 pounds a week. The natural product of the Arabian deserts, the tamarisk-manna, called by the same name, differs in the following partic-

any more; but <sup>s</sup>they did eat of the fruit of the land of Canaan that year.

**13** And it came to pass, when Joshua was by Jericho, that he lifted up his eyes and looked, and, behold, there stood <sup>a</sup>a man over against him <sup>s</sup>with his sword drawn in his hand: and Joshua went unto him, and said

<sup>r</sup> Gen. 18, 2; 32, 94; Exod. 23, 23; Zech. 1, 8;  
Acts 1, 10.—<sup>s</sup> Num. 22, 28.

ulars: it is purgative, and not nutritious; it is produced only three or four months, and not all the year; it is found in small quantities; it can be kept good for a long time, and is not corrupted by being kept over the Sabbath; nor would a natural product cease at once and forever. It now ceased because it was no more needed. See chap. i, 11, note.

### THE CAPTAIN OF THE LORD'S HOST REVEALED, v, 13-vi, 5.

[The chosen people have now by circumcision renewed their covenant with Jehovah; they have eaten the pass-over within the limits of the Land of Promise; they have tasted the new corn of the land. The time now approaches for them to proceed to the work of conquest, and the angel of Jehovah appears to Joshua, and reveals the divine plan for the destruction of Jericho.]

**13. When Joshua was by Jericho**—He was apparently making a personal and private *reconnaissance* of the city, which was the key to the whole land of Canaan. See note on chap. ii, 1. **A man over against him**—The subsequent account shows that he was a man only in form. **With his sword drawn**—The sword is a symbol of high executive power. The drawn sword intimates that that power is to be immediately exercised. Hence Joshua's anxiety to know in whose behalf the mysterious stranger has drawn his sword. **Joshua went unto him**—Here is a remarkable display of courage on the part of Joshua. Good men, because of their faith in God, confront danger without fear. **Art thou for us, or for our adversaries?**—The idea of neutrality in the contest does not occur to Joshua

unto him, *Art thou for us, or for our adversaries?* **14** And he said, Nay; but *as* <sup>a</sup> captain of the host of the LORD am I now come. And Joshua <sup>b</sup>fell on his face to the earth, and did worship, and said unto him, What saith my lord unto his servant? **15** And the captain of the LORD's host said unto Joshua,

<sup>c</sup> Or, *prince*; see Exod. 23, 20; Dan. 10, 13, 21; 12, 1; Rev. 12, 7; 19, 11, 14.—<sup>d</sup> Gen. 17, 3.

as a possibility. In God's battles there can be no neutrals. "He that is not with me is against me."

**14. And he said, Nay**—This answer has reference to the last clause, or second part, of the question, "I am not for your adversaries." In the sense that he was not an Israelite, some think that it may be referred to both members of the question. The reading which makes *nay* a pronoun, *to him*, though adopted by the Septuagint and the Syriac, cannot be sustained.

**Captain of the host of the Lord**—*Prince of the army of Jehovah*. The army of heaven is here meant, not the Israelitish host. [This prince of the angelic host was not Michael, nor any other created being, but the Word of God, the Divine Logos or Revealer, who in the fulness of time became flesh, (John i.) and even then declared that he came not to send peace on earth, but a sword. Matt. x, 34. Hence in chap. vi, 2, he is called the LORD, (that is, Jehovah,) and hence, too, Joshua was required to put off his shoes, (verse 15,) for, like Moses at the bush, (Exod. iii, 5,) he was standing on ground made holy by the presence of the Holy One. This same angel was "entertained unawares" by Abraham in the plains of Mamre, (Gen. xviii.) just after that patriarch had circumcised his son Ishmael; but before he left him he proved to be his covenant God, Jehovah. It was very meet that this great Prince should now confer with his lieutenant, and give directions for the conquest of the first great city of Canaan which offered resistance to the Hebrew army.] **And did worship**—This act of low obeisance, or of bodily prostration, is commonly practiced in the East to superiors, and does not necessarily involve the rendering

"Loose thy shoe from off thy foot; for the place whereon thou standest *is* holy. And Joshua did so.

## CHAPTER VI.

**N**OW Jericho <sup>a</sup>was straitly shut up because of the children of Israel: none went out, and none came in.

<sup>b</sup> Exod. 3, 5; Acts 7, 33.—<sup>c</sup> 1 Heb. *did shut up, and was shut up*.

of divine honours. Joshua thought that some distinguished military chieftain had appeared on the theater of war. The fact that the stranger received worship from Joshua without reproof (Rev. xxii, 9) indicates that he was a superior being. How incompatible is this whole account with the rationalistic exegesis which makes the appearance of the Angel only an inward vision or trance! Joshua *sees* the warrior at a distance, *approaches* and *addresses* him, and *receives* a reply. Such a description could not have been rationally given of an internal vision

## CHAPTER VI.

There is no more unfortunate division of chapters in the Bible than occurs here. The conversation between the Captain and his lieutenant is cut in twain, and the revelation of the warrior in chap. v is without any perceptible result. But the new chapter should commence at chap. v, 13, and the first verse of chap. vi should be in a parenthesis. Then it will clearly appear that the revelation of the Captain of the Lord's host is an introduction to the history of the conquest of Jericho.

**1. Now Jericho was straitly shut up**—Heb. *shutting* (the gates) and *firmly shut up*. The active participle may describe the act of the people within, and the passive that of the besiegers without. Or the sense may be: Jericho closed her gates, and fastened them up with bolts and bars. Both expressions also indicate the continuance of this condition, which is further explained by the words **None went out, and none came in**—The city was effectually blockaded. On Jericho see note at chap. ii, 1.

**2** And the LORD said unto Joshua, See, <sup>a</sup>I have given into thine hand Jericho, and the <sup>b</sup>king thereof, and the mighty men of valour. **3** And ye shall compass the city, all *ye* men of war, and go

*a* Chap. 2, 9, 24; 8. 1.—*b* Dent. 7. 24.

**2. The Lord said**—The Hebrew word for Lord is *Jehovah*. The identity of Jehovah with the Captain of the host of the Lord is too plain to be disputed by any sound biblical scholar. See chap. v, 14, note. **I have given**—The past tense here strongly expresses the certainty of the future event. In the divine mind the act is already accomplished. **Mighty men of valour**—*Heroes of might*. An appositive of Jericho and its king. Their warlike character is here attested by Jehovah.

**3. Ye shall compass the city**—Here is a peculiar and unprecedented mode of reducing a walled town—to carry a small chest containing, not the enginery of death, but a few religious relics, attended by a band of priests blowing on their trumpets, and followed by the whole army marching in procession. We may not assign with certainty the reason of this strange command, but we plainly see at least four objects attained: (1) The whole army is honoured as a subordinate agent in the conquest of the city. (2) God, the efficient cause, is magnified before all men. (3) His ark and his ministers, by their prominence at the head of the procession, are especially honoured in the eyes of Israelite and Canaanite. (4) A course of proceeding so unmilitary and apparently absurd was a severe test of the faith of the Israelites in Jehovah.

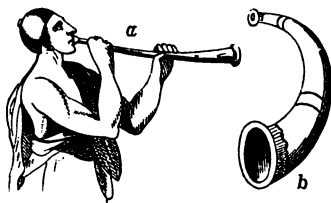
**4. Seven trumpets of rams' horns**—[Or, *seven trumpets of alarms*; that is, signal trumpets. The Hebrew word here rendered *rams' horns* is *יִבְלֵי*.

*yobel*, and Fürst still adheres to this explanation, which is also that of the Targum and the Rabbins. But according to Gesenius *yobel* is an onomatopoetic word, signifying a joyful sound, (*jubilum*), and hence some scholars hold that the trumpet of *yobel* was so called be-

round about the city once. Thus shalt thou do six days. **4** And seven priests shall bear before the ark seven <sup>c</sup>trumpets <sup>a</sup>of rams' horns: and the seventh day ye shall compass the city seven times, and

*c* See Judg. 7. 16, 22.—<sup>a</sup> Heb. *of jubilee*.

cause it was used to proclaim through the land the return of the *year of jubilee*. Lev. xxv, 9–13. But long before the sabbatical year was instituted the trumpet that sounded from Sinai was called the *yobel*, (Exod. xix, 13,) and hence it is but natural to infer that the year of jubilee took its name from the trumpet, not the trumpet from the year. The best supported etymology of *yobel* is that which gives it the sense of a loud and startling sound, and hence we adopt the rendering *signal trumpet*. In verse 5 occurs the expression *horn of yobel*, so that the words *trumpet* (*shophar*) and *horn* (*keren*) are here used interchangeably. The common opinion is that the *shophar* was a long straight



ANCIENT CORNETS: *a*, from Herculaneum; *b*, from Calmet.

instrument, and the *keren* a crooked one.] Eustathius says that an instrument in the form of a bent trumpet was in use among the Egyptians for the purpose of calling the people together to the sacrifices. It is not quite certain whether the trumpet of jubilee was made of the horn of an ox or of metal; but the latter seems the more probable, since a much larger instrument could be made of metal. The priests on this occasion carried "sonorous metal, blowing martial sounds." "The seven days' procession, the sevenfold repetition of it on the seventh day by seven priests, and the use of seven trumpets, are unmistakable proofs of the importance of the number seven."—Keil. This may be

“the priests shall blow with the trumpets. **5** And it shall come to pass, that when they make a long *blast* with \*the ram’s horn, *and* when ye hear the sound of the trumpet, all the people shall shout with a great shout; and the wall of the city shall fall down \*flat, and the people shall ascend up every man straight before him.

**6** And Joshua the son of Nun called the priests, and said unto them, \*Take up the ark of the covenant, and let seven

*d Num. 10. 8.—3 Heb. the horn of jubilee.*

best explained by observing that the word for **seven** is radically the same as the word for *oath*. Seven, then, was a sacred number, the seal of the covenant. “By this march of seven days, and the sevenfold repetition on the seventh day, with the seven priests blowing the seven trumpets, the host of Israel were to show that they were the people of the covenant.” [**The seventh day**—These seven days of marching must have included one Sabbath, and perhaps, as the Rabbins have assumed, the last day of the seven, on which the city fell, was itself the Sabbath. But this solemn marching and carrying of the ark about the doomed city was no ordinary work, such as that contemplated in the prohibition in the fourth commandment. It was rather a service of obedience to a special Divine mandate, and the grand triumph given on the seventh day was, even in that age, a sublime indication that “the Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath.”] **Seven times**—We have no means of knowing the circumference of Jericho, but allowing that it was five miles, a not unreasonable estimate, the seven marches around it would be thirty-five miles, a distance not exceedingly difficult for a host all aglow with intense enthusiasm, and disciplined to the route by having travelled it for six preceding days. Then, too, they began their travel early in the morning. Verse 15.

**5. All the people shall shout**—This was to take place during the seventh circuit, at a concerted signal. Previous to that signal they were prohibited from uttering a word; the twelve circumambulations were to be in

priests bear seven trumpets of rams’ horns before the ark of the Lord. **7** And he said unto the people, Pass on, and compass the city, and let him that is armed pass on before the ark of the Lord. **8** And it came to pass, when Joshua had spoken unto the people, that the seven priests bearing the seven trumpets of rams’ horns passed on before the Lord, and blew with the trumpets: and the ark of the covenant of the Lord followed them. **9** And the armed

*4 Heb. under it.—e Exod. 25. 14; Deut. 20. 2, 4.*

perfect silence, save the sound of the trumpets. **The wall of the city shall fall down flat**—H-b., *shall fall under itself*, that is, to its very foundations. The portion of the wall which constituted the rear wall of Rahab’s house must have been spared. See verse 22. **Ascend up every man straight before him**—The moving column of men was so long that it completely encircled the city. When the wall fell there was a wall of soldiers surrounding it on every side. The command is that this living wall contract by each man’s marching over the ruins towards the centre of the city. Escape would be impossible.

#### THE CONQUEST OF JERICHO, 6-21.

**6. And Joshua . . . called the priests**—The promptness of his unquestioning obedience to a command so unexpected, and so little in accordance with human reason, attests Joshua’s unfaltering faith in his great Captain, with whom he had just been in counsel. It is the province of reason to ask who speaks; but when reason acknowledges it is the voice of God, it is her highest function not to sit in judgment upon the message, but to obey.

**7. And he said**—Such in the Hebrew is the marginal reading, while the text is plural, *and they said*; that is, the subordinate officers, to whom Joshua made known the divine plan of the conquest. See chap. i, 10, note. **Him that is armed**—Literally, *the armed one*. The reference is collectively to the armed host of forty thousand from the tribes of Reuben, Gad, and Eastern Manasseh. These, according to chap. iv, 13, marched before the ark of the Lord.

men went before the priests that blew with the trumpets, and the rearward came after the ark, *the priests going on, and blowing with the trumpets.* 10 And Joshua had commanded the people, saying, Ye shall not shout, nor make any noise with your voice, neither shall any word proceed out of your mouth, until the day I bid you shout; then shall ye shout. 11 So the ark of the Lord compassed the city, going about it once: and they came into the camp, and lodged in the camp. 12 And Joshua rose early in the morning, and the priests took up the ark of the Lord. 13 And seven priests bearing seven trumpets of rams' horns before the ark of the Lord went on continually, and blew with the trum-

pets: and the armed men went before them; but the rearward came after the ark of the Lord, *the priests going on, and blowing with the trumpets.* 14 And the second day they compassed the city once, and returned into the camp. So they did six days. 15 And it came to pass on the seventh day, that they rose early about the dawning of the day, and compassed the city after the same manner seven times: only on that day they compassed the city seven times. 16 And it came to pass at the seventh time, when the priests blew with the trumpets, Joshua said unto the people, *Shout; for the Lord hath given you the city.* 17 And the city shall be accursed, *even it, and all that are therein,*

*f* Num. 10. 25.—*g* Heb. *gathering host.*—*h* Heb. *make your voice to be heard.*—*g* Deut.

31. 25.—*h* Jer. 7. 20, 22; 2 Chron. 13. 15; 30. 22, 23.—*i* Or, *devoted*, Lev. 27. 28; Micah 4. 13.

9. **The rearward**—Margin. *the gathering host*; that part of the army which occupies the last place on the march, protecting the front columns, and gathering up the faint and sick. The tribe of Dan had this position in the wilderness. Num. x, 25. Had the ark been at the head of the column, its usual place, it would have been more exposed to capture by a sudden sally of the enemy.

10. **Neither shall any word proceed out of your mouth**—The injunction of silence was necessary that they might distinctly hear the signal for the shout in concert. Moreover, the very silence of a vast army marching in stillness around the city would either lull the inhabitants into a feeling of security, or fill their minds with fearful forebodings of approaching doom.

{ 14. **Six days**—Is there any parallelism between the seven trumpets and downfall of Jericho, and the apocalyptic seven trumpets and overthrow, by Messianic power, of the Mystical Babylon? This, in our view, was the apocalypse of the overthrow of, not the Antichrist, but the anti-Jehovism of Canaan. It is performed at Jericho, the first great Canaanite city taken. And that is utterly destroyed, as token of what was by divine justice due to all the rest. }

15. **About the dawning of the day**—Here not only Joshua rises early, as in verse 12, but also the whole army, because a great day's work was

before them. It is not to be supposed that the entire camp, several millions in number, marched together in this service, but it is probable that the entire military force was engaged.

16. **Shout; for the Lord hath given you the city**—They were to praise the Lord for what he was about to do. Up to this moment it is probable that the soldiers knew nothing of the mode by which the city was to be taken, yet they obeyed with alacrity orders which must have been totally dark with mystery. Verily this is worthy of enrolment among the signal victories of faith. "By faith the walls of Jericho fell down, after they were compassed about seven days." Heb. xi, 30.

17. **The city shall be accursed**—The city, with all its immense wealth, was now put under the ban, and devoted to destruction. To many of the besieging host this was the severest test of their faith and obedience. In oriental usage when a city is stormed the maxim is "To the victors belong the spoils." As symbol of the utter destruction which the Canaanite race had deserved, this first great representative city is made an example of just doom. For the doom of first things, see note on Acts v, 1-11. The anathema was the devotion of any person or thing to God as irredeemable property; the person or animal was to be killed, and the inanimate thing was either completely destroyed, or set apart



to the LORD: only Rahab the harlot shall live, she and all that *are* with her in the house, because <sup>1</sup>she hid the messengers that we sent. **18** And ye, <sup>2</sup>in any wise keep *yourselves* from the accursed thing, lest ye make *yourselves* accursed, when ye take of the accursed thing, and make the camp of Israel a curse, <sup>3</sup>and trouble it. **19** But all the silver, and gold, and vessels of brass and iron, *are* <sup>4</sup>consecrated unto the

<sup>1</sup> Chap. 2, 4. — <sup>2</sup> Deut. 7, 26; 13, 17; chap. 7, 1, 11, 13. — <sup>3</sup> Chap. 7, 25; 1 Kings 18, 17, 18; Joshua 1, 12. — <sup>4</sup> Heb. *holiness*.

forever for the purposes of the sanctuary. The exact idea of the anathema, in the words of Hengstenberg, "is the forced dedication to God of those who have obstinately refused to dedicate themselves to him of their own accord, and the manifestation of his glory in the destruction of those who would not, while they lived, serve as a mirror to reflect it, and thus answer the purpose for which the world was created, and for which especially man was formed." Compare Lev. xxvii, 28, note. In the last day all the wicked of the earth shall fall beneath the anathema of the Judge. **Only Rahab** and her kindred were exempt from the curse, for the oath of the spies had now become the oath of their entire nation.

**18. Lest ye make yourselves accursed**—Hebrew, *lest ye both devote and appropriate the accursed thing*. The two acts could not be harmonized. It would be sacrilege to dedicate the whole to Jehovah and then to take possession of a part for their own use. **And make the camp of Israel a curse**—God will not be defrauded. If any one of the camp takes for personal use any thing dedicated to Himself, He will devote the camp to Himself, that is, to destruction. **And trouble it**—By bringing distress, and humiliating defeat in battle.

**19. But all the silver, and gold**—Because the precious metals and vessels of brass and iron were regarded as indestructible by fire, and were needed in the service of the tabernacle, they were put into the treasury of the tabernacle. **Consecrated unto the Lord**—Literally this and the following sentence

LORD: they shall come into the treasury of the LORD. **20** So the people shouted when the priests blew with the trumpets: and it came to pass, when the people heard the sound of the trumpet, and the people shouted with a great shout, that <sup>5</sup>the wall fell down <sup>6</sup>flat, so that the people went up into the city, every man straight before him, and they took the city. **21** And they <sup>7</sup>utterly destroyed all that *was* in the city, both man and

<sup>5</sup> m Verse 5; Heb. 11, 30. — <sup>6</sup> Heb. *under it*. — <sup>7</sup> Deut. 7, 2; 20, 16, 17; 1 Sam. 15, 3, 8; Psal. 137, 3, 9; Jer. 48, 18; Rev. 18, 21.

read: *Holiness is it to Jehovah, a treasure of Jehovah shall it go*. In Num. xxxi, 21–23, the method is prescribed of purifying metals by fire in order to consecrate them to the service of God.

**20. So the people shouted**—The trumpets gave the signal and then the people shouted. The trumpets had been silent during the speech of Joshua, (verses 17–19,) then came the signal, and the war-cry, and the downfall. How vain the attempt of some to strip this event of the miraculous by ascribing it to an earthquake! How came Joshua to know that an earthquake would occur at that particular juncture? Such knowledge would be a greater miracle. Equally untenable is the theory that the walls had been extensively mined by a people brought up in the desert, in utter ignorance of that method of conducting war. How absurd to imagine that even the most skilful engineer could so undermine a wall that it would stand till a shout should topple it down! Verily, sceptics are the most credulous people in the world. This miracle put into the hand of Joshua the key to Canaan, the strongest city in the land. With no experience in the art of besieging and storming cities, they could not immediately, without the divine aid, have reduced this stronghold. It also gave both Israel and Canaan overwhelming proof of the omnipotence of Jehovah and of his alliance with Joshua.

**21. They utterly destroyed all that was in the city**—The Israelites in this indiscriminate massacre were simply obeying a plain command of God, (Deut. xx, 16, 17,) and hence

woman, young and old, and ox, and sheep, and ass, with the edge of the sword.

**22** But Joshua had said unto the two men that had spied out the country, Go into the harlot's house, and bring out

o Chap. 2. 14; Heb. 11. 31.

the charge of cruelty, if any, must be brought not against Israel, but God. And there have not been wanting men to urge the question, On what principles can the righteousness of God in this case be vindicated? A sufficient answer is furnished in the following considerations, condensed from Dr. Paley's sermon in justification of God's dealings with the Canaanites: (1.) They were destroyed for their excessive, wilful, habitual, and incurable wickedness. Lev. xviii, 24-30. Their "abominable customs" show that the gross-est vices had become inherent in their national character, and constituted even a *part of their religion*, for they were "done unto their gods." Because of these heinous sins, and not to make way for the Israelites, they were cut off. (2.) God's treatment of these crimes was impartial. The Jews, the chosen and favoured people, are told that for like sins the land shall "vomit you out also." "As the nations which the Lord destroyed before your face, so shall ye perish." (3.) God suffered long with the Canaanites. In the days of Abraham, four generations before, it was said, "The iniquity of the Amorites is not yet full;" (Gen. xv, 16;) for this reason that patriarchy was not put in possession of their country. They had not profited by the pure example of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, nor had they taken warning from the fate of Sodom and Gomorrah. (4.) If the destruction be just, the manner is of little importance, whether by earthquake, pestilence, or famine, which spare neither age nor sex, or by the hand of their enemies. In all national punishments the innocent are of necessity confounded with the guilty. The Israelites were God's sheriffs, charged with the duty of inflicting capital punishment upon an incorrigible nation. Without the com-

thence the woman, and all that she hath, °as ye sware unto her. **23** And the young men that were spies went in, and brought out Rahab, °and her father, and her mother, and her brethren, and all that she had; and they brought

p Chap. 2. 13.

mand from God they would have sinned in this act, the same as a man would sin who should kill a fellow man from motives of private resentment, and not by a warrant from the chief magistrate. (5.) There was a peculiar fitness in the destruction of the Canaanites by the agency of Joshua. The people of those ages were affected by no proof of the power of their gods so deeply as by their giving them victory in war. All the neighbouring nations, for whose admonition this dreadful example was intended, were hereby convinced not only of the supreme power of the God of Israel, but also of his utter abhorrence of the abominations for which the Canaanites were destroyed. (6.) Vices of all kinds, especially licentiousness, are astonishingly infectious. If any of these idolatrous tribes were spared they would taint the Hebrews. A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump. Hence, "Thou shalt utterly destroy them, that they teach you not to do after all their abominations, which they have done unto their gods." Deut. xx, 17, 18. Moreover, this growing corruption might have polluted the whole ancient world if it had not received this signal and public demonstration of God's indignation.

#### THE SALVATION OF RAHAB, 22-25.

**22. Joshua had said**—The indefinite past tense of the original is here very properly rendered by our pluperfect, *had said*. See verse 17, where these instructions are given.

**23. And her brethren**—This term must be understood to include the sisters spoken of in chap. ii, 13. **All that she had**—This expression seems most naturally to include goods, and not kindred only. The neuter gender in the Septuagint and Vulgate supports this interpretation, and why should we deny that they were per-

out all her <sup>10</sup>kindred, and left them without the camp of Israel. **24** And they <sup>9</sup>burnt the city with fire, and all that *was* therein: <sup>1</sup>only the silver, and the gold, and the vessels of brass and of iron, they put into the treasury of the house of the Lord. **25** And Joshua saved Rahab the harlot alive, and her

10 Heb. *families*.—*q* Deut. 13. 16; 2 Kings 25. 9; Rev. 18. 8.—*r* Verse 19.

mitted to save all their portable possessions? We suppose that the spies had with them a large company of assistants, to carry her household furniture to the camp. It was honourable on the part of Joshua that she should suffer no loss, and that her faith should be profitable for the life that now is. **All her kindred**—Heb., *all her families*; that is, all who were related to Rahab, and also their families. God honours the family institution which he has ordained. He saves by families not only in the Old Dispensation, as in this case, and Noah, and many others, but also in the New, as in the case of whole households admitted to baptism. **Left them without the camp**—They were not prepared ceremonially to dwell among the Hebrews. It was not lawful for uncircumcised men, nor for females who had not publicly espoused the Jewish faith, to enter the camp, which was regarded as sacred because of the ark. This separation for a season would induce them to lay aside all their pagan habits, which an immediate reception might have confirmed.

**25. She dwelleth in Israel even unto this day**—This account must have been written during the lifetime of Rahab, when many were living who could have disputed the miracles if they had not occurred. Those who assert that this book was written several centuries later are driven to such an arbitrary interpretation as that her descendants continued to dwell in Israel unto this day..

[Rahab was the first Canaanite convert to the Hebrew faith, and is, accordingly, highly honoured in Hebrew history and Jewish tradition. She was married to Salmon, whom a ro-

father's household, and all that she had; and <sup>1</sup>she dwelleth in Israel *even* unto this day; <sup>2</sup>because *she* <sup>3</sup>hid the messengers, which Joshua sent to spy out Jericho.

**26** And Joshua adjured *them* at that time, saying, "Cursed *be* the man before the Lord, that riseth up and buildeth

*s* See Matt. 1. 5.—*t* James 2. 25.  
*u* 1 Kings 16. 34; Mal. 1. 4.

mantic imagination has very plausibly identified with one of the two spies whose lives she saved at Jericho. She became an honoured mother in Israel, from whom sprang David and his Messianic son. Matt. i, 5. The prominence given by Matthew to the adoption of Gentile women, like Rahab and Ruth, into the Messiah's genealogy, is a prophetic indication of the Gospel catholicity, in which Jew and Gentile, bond and free, are seen to be one in Christ.]

#### JOSHUA'S ADJURATION AND FAME, 26-27.

**26. And Joshua adjured them**—Bound them with an oath; caused them to swear. This solemn charge, attended with all the solemnity of an adjuration, was designed to prevent Israel and his posterity from erecting again the walls which had been thrown down by the power of Jehovah. Joshua would have these prostrate defences of the wicked city a perpetual and impressive memorial of punished sin, and of the power and justice of Jehovah. We do not understand that the oath bound the Hebrews not to erect houses, but simply the walls and gates: for we find, in Judges iii, 13, the city of palms—the usual appellation of Jericho—spoken of as inhabited. Also, that in 2 Sam. x, 5, David orders his outraged embassy to "tarry in Jericho until their beards be grown." **Cursed be the man before the Lord**—That is, *Jehovah beholding and being judge*. The curse is pronounced by divine sanction, and will fall at his command upon the daring man who shall attempt to restore these fallen walls, and thereby destroy their monumental significance. **In his firstborn**—That is, *at the expense of his life*. The meaning, evi-

this city Jericho: he shall lay the foundation thereof in his firstborn, and in his youngest son shall he set up the gates of it. **27** So the Lord was with Joshua; and his fame was noised throughout all the country.

• Chap. 1. 5. — w Chap. 2. 1, 3. — a Chap. 22. 20.

dently, of this strong poetic expression is, that the builder of the walls would suffer the loss of all his offspring, from the oldest to the youngest. [The words of the curse are in the form of poetic parallelisms, and may be rendered thus:

Cursed be the man before Jehovah,  
Who rises up and builds this city of Jericho.  
In his firstborn shall he lay its foundation,  
And in his younger son shall he set up its gates.

Possibly this rhythmical passage, like that cited in chap. x, 13, was taken from the book of Jasher.] For a striking fulfilment of this prophetic curse, see 1 Kings xvi, 34, where we find that Hiel accomplished this work, and suffered the penalty predicted five hundred and fifty years before.

**27. So the Lord was with Joshua**—The promise made to Joshua in chap. i is fulfilled. **His fame was noised**—True fame has been styled the shadow of greatness. He who demonstrates that God is with him cannot dwell in obscurity.

## CHAPTER VII.

### THE TRESPASS AND PUNISHMENT OF ACHAN, 1-26.

[After the fall of Jericho the prestige of Israel was exceedingly great. The name of Jehovah was a terror to the idolatrous nations of the land, and the chosen people, glorying in his matchless power and their own wondrous triumphs, were in danger of forgetting that his wrath burns against every appearance of evil, and would fall as fiercely on an offender in the camp of Israel as on the armies of the aliens. Hence the severe and solemn lesson taught by the sin and punishment of Achan.]

**1. But the children of Israel committed a trespass**—Many have found great difficulty here. There was but one

## CHAPTER VII.

**B**UT the children of Israel committed a trespass in the accursed thing: for <sup>1</sup>Achan, the son of Carmi, the son of <sup>2</sup>Zabdi, the son of Zerah, of the tribe of Judah, took of the accursed

1 Achar, 1 Chron. 27. — 2 Or, Zimri, 1 Chron. 26.

personal sinner. How can the whole nation, then, be charged with sin? Calvin, dissatisfied with the many different explanations, advises that "we suspend our decisions till when the books are opened, and the judgments, now holden in darkness, are clearly explained." It is certain that the crime of one had robbed the nation of that innocence which is pleasing to God. Such are the relations of human society that a community is punished for the sins of a part of its constituents. National punishments are inflicted in this life because nations do not exist after death. It follows, therefore, that while a nation may suffer from the sin of an individual, that suffering is temporal, and not eternal, to those who are not personally involved in the guilt. ["The Scriptures teach that a nation is one organic whole, in which the individuals are merely members of the same body, and are not atoms isolated from one another and the whole. The State is there treated as a divine institution, founded upon family relationships, and intended to promote the love of all to one another, and to the invisible Head of all. As all, then, are combined in a fellowship established by God, the good or evil deeds of an individual affect beneficially or injuriously the whole society."—*Keil*. All this is simply an admonitory form in which Jehovah places the divine administration of justice. Each man who suffers is worthy of death for his own sin, and no wrong is done to any. See note on Matt. xxiii, 35.] **In the accursed thing**—In appropriating to private use that which had been solemnly consecrated to God, or devoted to destruction. See note, chap. vi, 17, 18. **Achan**—Called in 1 Chron. ii, 7, *Achar, the troubler of Israel*. **Son of Carmi**—His genealogy is thus traced out in view of the method of his detection. Com-  
O. T.

thing: and the anger of the Lord was kindled against the children of Israel.

5 Gen. 12. 8, *Hai*;

pare verses 16-18. He seems to have been a descendant of Judah in the fifth generation. **And the anger of the Lord was kindled against the children of Israel**—The entire community has become infected with the guilt of one of its members.

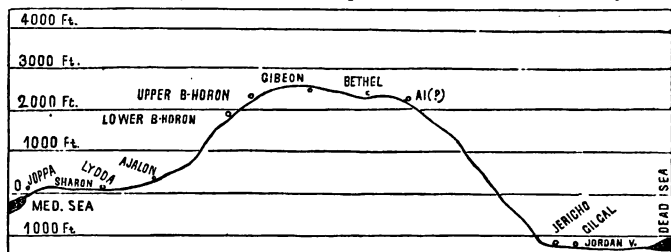
2. [From Jericho to Ai—A distance of about fifteen miles, and an ascent of more than 3,000 feet above the plain of the Jordan valley. See map below. **Ai, which is beside Bethaven, on the east side of Bethel**—This precise statement, together with that of chap. viii, 11, 12, that there was a valley on the north, and another on the west, capable of concealing five thousand men, would seem to have been sufficient to enable travelers easily to identify the precise location of **Ai**. But after all their search such men as Robinson, Stanley, and Tristram failed to reach any satisfactory conclusion. Robinson and Tristram assigned as the probable site a place with ruins just south of Deir Duwan, and about an hour distant (south-east) from Bethel; but in the spring of 1866 Captain Wilson and Lieutenant Anderson spent several days in examining every hill-top and almost every acre of ground for several miles east, north, and south of Bethel, and the result

2 And Joshua sent men from Jericho to <sup>b</sup>Ai, which *is* beside Bethaven, on

Neh. 11. 31, *Aija*.

was the identification, beyond any reasonable doubt, of Ai with Et-Tel, an eminence a little south-east of Bethel, covered with heaps of stones and ruins. In chap. viii, 28, where it is said, "Joshua made it a heap forever," the

Hebrew word for *heap* is *Tel*, (תל) which strikingly confirms this identification. See further notes on chap. viii, 11, 12, 28. Whether Ai was rebuilt or not, the name occurs again in the history of Israel. "Men of Ai" returned from Babylon with Zerubbabel, (Ezra ii, 28,) and the name is probably to be recognized in the *Aiath* of Isa. x, 38, and *Aija* of Neh. xi, 31.] **Bethel**—*house of God*—was a well-known city and holy place in Central Palestine, and was originally called Luz. It was named by Jacob on awakening from that sleep in which he had a vision of the opened heavens. Gen. xxviii, 19, note. Here also God blessed him when he had returned from Padan-aram. After the conquest Bethel was the gathering place of the people to ask counsel of God. Here was an altar for sacrifices. Jeroboam chose Bethel as one of the seats of the false worship which he instituted. It is about twelve miles north of Jerusalem, and its ruins are still pointed out under the scarcely altered



PROFILE SECTION OF CENTRAL PALESTINE.

name of *Beitin*. [**Bethaven** was in the mountains of Benjamin, east of Bethel, and westward from Michmash. 1 Sam. xiii, 5. The name means *house of nothingness*, or *vanity*, and was,

perhaps, so called from the idolatry practised there. Its site has not been discovered, but Capt. Wilson suggests its identity with the ruins called *Kiurbet An*, westward from Michmash, and

the east side of Bethel, and spake unto them, saying, Go up and view the country. And the men went up and viewed Ai. **3** And they returned to Joshua, and said unto him, Let not all the people go up; but let <sup>a</sup>about two or three thousand men go up and smite Ai; and make not all the people to labour thither; for they are *but few*. **4** So there went up thither of the people about three thousand men; <sup>c</sup>and they fled before the men of Ai. **5** And the men of Ai smote of them about thirty and six men:

<sup>3</sup> Heb. *about two thousand men, or about three thousand men.*—<sup>c</sup> Lev. 26. 17; Deut. 28. 25.—<sup>4</sup> Or, *in Morad*.—<sup>d</sup> Chap. 2. 9, 11; Lev.

not far from Et-Tel.] **Go up and view the country**—As in the case of Jericho, spies were probably sent to reconnoitre Ai, and not an armed company.

**3. Let not all the people go up**—The spies set a very low estimate upon the military strength of the city. Disasters often happen to armies from this cause. **For they are but few**—That is, comparatively. But the character of the **few**, and their excellent position for defence, were left out of the account. Their numbers were probably underrated also, for after the conquest of the city the slain numbered twelve thousand. Chap. viii, 25.

**4. They fled before the men of Ai**—Having made their assault in perfect confidence of success, and having met an unexpected repulse, they became panic-stricken, and fled in disorder.

**5. About thirty and six men**—The disaster, though shameful, was much lighter than might have been expected to attend such a rout. **Even unto Shebarim**—That is, *the stone quarries or ruins*, the situation of which cannot be determined. Captain Wilson suggests that it may be identical with some extensive ruins north-east of Bethel, called Deir Sheba. **In the going down**—Or, *the declivity*. Heb., *Morad*. Perhaps the descent into the wady, (note, verse 2,) which is hemmed in on both sides with precipitous cliffs, is meant. Both the ruins (*shebarim*) and the declivity (*morad*) were evidently well known places in the time of the writer of this book, but not of sufficient importance to survive in the memory of many genera-

for they chased them *from* before the gate *even* unto Shebarim, and smote them <sup>a</sup>in the going down: wherefore <sup>a</sup>the hearts of the people melted, and became as water. **6** And Joshua <sup>a</sup>rent his clothes, and fell to the earth upon his face before the ark of the Lord until the eventide, he and the elders of Israel, and <sup>a</sup>put dust upon their heads. **7** And Joshua said, Alas, O Lord God, <sup>a</sup>wherefore hast thou at all brought this people over Jordan, to deliver us into the hand of the Amorites, to destroy us? would

26. 36; Psa. 22. 14.—<sup>e</sup> Gen. 37. 29, 34.—<sup>f</sup> 1 Sam. 4. 12; 2 Sam. 1. 2; 13. 19; Neh. 9. 1; Job 2. 12.—<sup>g</sup> Exod. 5. 22; 2 Kings 3. 10.

tions. **The hearts of the people melted**—This dismay was not on account of the magnitude of the disaster to the arms of Israel, but because it betokened the withdrawal of their Great Ally, Jehovah. Well may a nation tremble when it sees itself forsaken of God!

**6. Joshua rent his clothes**—This was an expressive oriental symbol of intense sorrow, fear, anger, or despair. The loose, flowing, outer robe was well adapted to this action, and this alone was rent. Joshua felt that the defeat had a deep significance, and must have a moral cause; hence he goes to God to inquire. **Fell to the earth...before the ark**—Over the cover of the ark was the Divine Presence. Ask Judaism the direct way to God, and she points to the mercy-seat between the cherubim. **Put dust upon their heads**—The eastern nations are noted for using actions, rather than words, in expression of strong emotion. Dust or ashes sprinkled upon the head indicates deep mourning and true penitence.

**7. Alas,...wherefore hast thou at all brought this people over Jordan**—This is not the language of distrust, but of distress. It is the tearful wail of a great soul in deepest humiliation and gloom. Joshua unburdens his troubled mind, and reasons with God only as one having the utmost confidence in him can reason. The urgency of his expostulation and the importunity of his plea evince faith in God. He cannot think that such miracles as the passage of the Jordan and the conquest

to God we had been content, and dwell on the other side Jordan! **8** O Lord, what shall I say, when Israel turneth their <sup>a</sup>backs before their enemies! **9** For the Canaanites and all the inhabitants of the land shall hear <sup>of it</sup>, and shall environ us round, and <sup>b</sup>cut off our name from the earth: and <sup>c</sup>what wilt thou do unto thy great name? **10** And the Lord said unto Joshua, Get thee up;

<sup>5</sup> Heb. *necks*.—<sup>h</sup> Psa. 83. 4.—<sup>i</sup> See Exod. 32. 12; Num. 14. 13.—<sup>6</sup> Heb. *fullest*.

of Jericho are to lead the chosen nation to destruction. **Amorites**—See note on ii, 10. **Would to God we had been content**—"To all human view it would have been better for us to have remained on the other side of Jordan, and we shall be strongly prompted to wish that that had been the case, for it will be inferred from the event that thy sole purpose in bringing us hither was to deliver us into the hands of the Amorites."—*Bush*.

**8. What shall I say**—Joshua, as the Lord's agent and captain, is perplexed to show a reason for the unexpected defeat. **When Israel turneth**—Or, *inasmuch as Israel has turned*. How is such defeat possible to a people in covenant with Jehovah?

**9. And cut off our name**—Our enemies will be encouraged to make a combined assault, and destroy our communications with eastern Palestine. **And what wilt thou do unto thy great name?**—That is, *with regard to thy great name*. Exalted and true views of God are necessary to elevate man and restore in him the image of God. Reverence for him is the basis of all true holiness. The preservation of the glory of God's name in order that monotheism should finally be the religion of the earth was, according to God's plan, the very mission of Israel. Joshua therefore appropriately argues, Will God defeat that plan, and upset the whole of Israel's future history? It does not detract from this prayer to say that the successive arguments used to move God are eminently human—such as a man would address to his fellow. Moses, in his entreaty, for his nation, uses the same argument. Num. xiv, 13–19; Deut. ix, 28.

wherefore <sup>e</sup>lieth thou thus upon thy face? **11** <sup>a</sup>Israel hath sinned, and they have also transgressed my covenant which I commanded them: <sup>b</sup>for they have even taken of the accursed thing, and have also stolen, and <sup>c</sup>dissembled also, and they have put it even among their own stuff. **12** <sup>a</sup>Therefore the children of Israel could not stand before their enemies, <sup>b</sup>but turned *their backs* before their ene-

<sup>k</sup> Verse 1.—<sup>l</sup> Chap. 6. 17, 18.—<sup>m</sup> See Acts 5.1, 2. <sup>n</sup> See Num. 14. 45; Judg. 2. 14.

**10. Get thee up**—The tone of this answer indicates the divine indignation at Israel's sin, and implies that entreaty for Jehovah's favour, before putting away that sin, is impertinence, and an offence to him, as sacrifices and supplications of *impenitent* sinners always are. Prov. xv, 8. Israel is here viewed as an unrepentant sinner; Joshua is the head of Israel, hence the tone of anger in which he is addressed. The spirit of God's reply is, "This is no time for prayer, but for purifying the camp. Look for the cause of your defeat not in my sovereignty but in your sin."

**11. Israel hath sinned**—For the sense in which the sin of an individual is that of a nation, see note on verse 1. Jehovah then rehearses the aggravated character of that sin. It was a treacherous violation of covenant obligations into which they had entered, (Exod. xix, 8; xxiv, 7;) it was a sacrilege, inasmuch as a consecrated thing had been put to a private use; it was theft, because the appropriation had been made clandestinely; it was a lie, acted if not spoken. "The first three clauses describe the sin in its relation to God; the following three refer to the actual nature of the sin itself, as theft, concealment, and misappropriation to their own use of the stolen goods."—*Keil*.

**12. Therefore the children of Israel could not stand before their enemies**—In the moral government of God there is a causal connexion between moral and natural evil, between sin and suffering. But how few the national leaders who have eyes to see the relation which a nation's righteous character sustains to its victory in war and its prosperity and greatness in

nies, because ° they were accursed: neither will I be with you any more, except ye destroy the accursed from among you.

**13** Up, °sanctify the people, and say, °Sanctify yourselves against to-morrow: for thus saith the Lord God of Israel, *There is an accursed thing in the midst of thee, O Israel: thou canst not stand before thine enemies, until ye take away the accursed thing from among you.* **14** In the morning therefore ye shall be

o Deut. 7. 26; chap. 6. 18.—p Exod. 19. 10.  
q Chap. 3. 5.

brought according to your tribes: and it shall be, *that* the tribe which °the Lord taketh shall come according to the families *thereof*; and the family which the Lord shall take shall come by households; and the household which the Lord shall take shall come man by man. **15** °And it shall be, *that* he that is taken with the accursed thing shall be burnt with fire, he and all that he hath: because he hath °transgressed

r Prov. 16. 33.—s See 1 Sam. 14. 38, 39.  
t Verse 11.

peace! The atheistic apotheism of Napoleon, that Providence always favours the strongest battalions, is still believed by the statesmen of even Christian nations. God, as the disposer of human events, finds too little recognition in camps, courts, and cabinets. **Neither will I be with you any more**—This declaration proves that the strong promise of chap. i, 5, was conditioned on the fidelity of Israel.

**13. Up... sanctify yourselves**—This mode of address indicates the critical nature of the exigency, which demanded immediate action to prevent further disaster. There cannot be too great haste in putting ourselves right in the sight of God. In order to prepare for the scrutiny which the Lord was to exercise upon all the camp, the entire people were to perform the ablutions and observances required by the law. Jehovah required these washings whenever he came near to them in order to impress them with his own holiness. Exod. xix, 10, 11; see chap. iii, 5, note.

**14. Ye shall be brought according to your tribes**—God could have disclosed to Joshua the sinner as well as the sin by direct revelation, without this review of the whole camp. But he chose the latter method as far more impressive, since it awakened the interest of all the people, exhibited the magnitude of the crime, and clearly set forth the omniscience of Jehovah, and their personal amenability to him. Representatives of each tribe were to come to the tabernacle, or to pass in review before the ark. **The tribe which the Lord taketh**—The word **taketh**, as we may see from 1 Sam. xiv, 42, is the technical term used for de-

cision by lot. "The lot is cast into the lap, but the whole disposing thereof is of the Lord." Prov. xvi, 33. White pebbles and one black one may have been cast into a sack or urn, and some man from each tribe appointed to draw them out—the black pebble indicating the tribe, clan, family, or individual whom the Lord designated. Decision by lot is mentioned frequently in the Old Testament, and once in the New. Acts i, 24–26. It recommends itself as a sort of appeal to the Almighty, free from all influence of passion or bias. **Families . . . households**—The tribes, says Keil, were founded by the twelve sons of Jacob and the two sons of Joseph, who were placed on an equality with them by adoption. Whenever Levi was reckoned, Joseph was counted as one tribe; whenever Levi was omitted, Joseph was counted as two. The tribes were divided into clans, of which the sons, grandsons, or great grandsons of the twelve were the heads. The clans were again divided into groups of **families**—Heb. *fathers' houses*—taking their name from the sons, grandsons, etc., of the heads of the clans. This last division was subdivided into **households**, composed of individuals. The distinction between the clans and fathers' houses was not very definitely preserved.

**15. He . . . shall be burnt with fire, he and all that he hath**—As the anathema was to be executed by fire, and as the guilty man has made himself and all his possessions anathema, he is to be destroyed with fire. See note on verse 24. The body, rendered lifeless by stoning, (verse 25,) and not the living



the covenant of the Lord, and because he "hath wrought 'folly in Israel. 16 So Joshua rose up early in the morning, and brought Israel by their tribes; and the tribe of Judah was taken: 17 And he brought the family of Judah; and he took the family of the Zarhites: and he brought the family of the Zarhites man by man; and Zabdi was taken: 18 And he brought his household man by man; and Achan, the son of Carmi, the son of Zabdi, the

son of Zerah, of the tribe of Judah, "was taken. 19 And Joshua said unto Achan, My son, "give, I pray thee, glory to the Lord God of Israel, "and make confession unto him; and "tell me now what thou hast done; hide it not from me. 20 And Achan answered Joshua, and said, Indeed I have sinned against the Lord God of Israel, and thus and thus have I done: 21 When I saw among the spoils a goodly Babylonish garment, and two

u Gen. 34. 7; Judg. 20. 6. — 7 Or. *wickedness*.  
— v Gen. 38. 30; Num. 26. 20; 1 Chron. 2. 7. —  
w 1 Sam. 14. 43.

x See 1 Sam. 6. 5; Jer. 13. 16; John 9. 24. —  
y Num. 5. 6, 7; 2 Chron. 30. 22; Psa. 51. 3; Dan.  
9. 4. — z 1 Sam. 14. 43.

man, was to be burned. Burning alive is not found in the Mosaic law. **Wrought folly in Israel**—**Folly** is a very appropriate name for sin, since every sin proceeds from real intellectual stupidity, short-sightedness, and fatuity, which the Greeks expressed by a word signifying *missing the mark*. In the eye of true reason the devil himself is a simpleton, and all his followers doltishly reject divine instruction, and stupidly go down to hell, imagining that God does not see their sins, and will not punish the guilty.

16. **Early in the morning**—In all hot countries during the heated months early morning is the time for business. Note, Luke xxi, 38. **By their tribes**—Representatively; see verse 14, note. **And the tribe of Judah was taken**—It was indicated by lot that the sinner belonged to that tribe.

17. **The family of Judah**—Some codices read *families of Judah*, but the singular is to be preferred. The meaning is the tribe, or collective family. **He took the family of the Zarhites**—The lot, under Divine guidance, designated this division of Judah as containing the criminal.

18. **Achan... was taken**—God might have instantaneously revealed the sinner, but he chose to sift the nation thus gradually in order that the moral sense of every man might be awakened, and that the conscience of Achan, when he saw the network of conviction and punishment closing in upon him, might prompt him to confession. But he remained impenitent till he found himself within the grasp of the Divine arrest.

19. **My son**—The expression denotes the pity and tenderness of Joshua's heart towards the unhappy Achan. He is by the finger of God convicted of an awful crime, but the crime itself is yet unknown to Joshua. The Scriptures abundantly show how both God and his ministers may, in certain relations, be tender towards a criminal, while, in other relations, they must punish with awful severity his crime. **Give... glory to the Lord**—This is not a formal judicial oath, but rather a solemn appeal to the conscience of the sinner, in the presence of the all-seeing God, to acknowledge his sin. Confession of sin vindicates the Divine administration, and justifies the infliction of the penalty. Compare Ezra x, 11, which, in the original, reads "*give glory*," instead of "*make confession*." In the day of judgment "every tongue shall confess," but, as in the case of Achan, no sweet joy of forgiveness will ensue.

20. **Indeed I have sinned**—The Hebrew original, as well as the Greek and Latin versions, make the *I* emphatic: I, and I only, have sinned.

21. **A goodly Babylonish garment**—[Literally, a mantle of Shinar, one of excellence. The mention of this garment indicates that Jericho had enriched itself by commerce with Babylon, in the land of Shinar. Gen. xi, 2. This was rendered easy by the caravans of merchantmen, such as that to which Joseph was sold, (Gen. xxxvii, 25–28,) which frequently must have passed near Jericho on their journeys between Egypt and the East.] The

hundred shekels of silver, and a <sup>a</sup>wedge of gold of fifty shekels weight, then I <sup>a</sup>coveted them, and took them; and, behold, they ~~are~~ hid in the earth in the midst of my tent, and the silver under

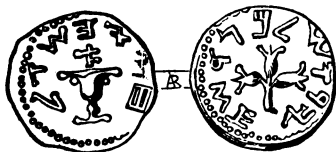
8 Heb. *tongue*.—*a* Exod. 20. 17;

original intimates that it was a splendid mantle. Some think it was a military cloak, embroidered with brilliant colors; others, that it was a kingly robe, woven with gold. It is probable that its appearance dazzled the eye of Achan, and through the eye awakened covetousness in his heart. [Herodotus



BABYLONIAN APPAREL.

(i, 195) says: "The dress of the Babylonians is a linen tunic reaching to the feet, and above it another tunic made in wool, besides which they have a short white cloak thrown around them." The Babylonian cylinders furnish us with representations of a flounced robe, reaching from the neck to the feet.] **And two hundred shekels of silver**—The word shekel signifies *weight*, generally a definite weight of unstamped gold, silver, brass, or iron.



ANCIENT SHEKEL.

Here it may mean definite pieces of silver passing current, with the weight

it. **22** So Joshua sent messengers, and they ran unto the tent; and, behold, *it was* hid in his tent, and the silver under it. **23** And they took them out of the midst of the tent, and brought them

1 Kings 1. 2; Hab. 2. 9; Luke 12. 15.

marked. In different periods the shekel varied in value. The shekel of the sanctuary differed from the shekel of the king. Its usual value was about sixty-two and one half cents. The whole value of the silver was about \$125, when a dollar had nearly ten times the purchasing power that it now has. **A wedge of gold of fifty shekels weight**—The shekel of gold was about five and a half dollars, so that this oblong or tongue-shaped bar was worth \$275. **And the silver under it**—That is, under the Babylonish garment. All the stolen goods were probably placed in some box or bag, and buried where no human eye could see them. The frankness and apparent penitence of this confession affects our hearts with sorrow for the sad fate of Achan. It lacked but two elements—spontaneity and seasonableness—which will be lacking in the confession of every impenitent sinner before the judgment seat of Christ. The whole philosophy of temptation and sin is here strikingly illustrated. In the sacking of Jericho Achan, unobserved by any witness, finds, possibly in the king's palace, a beautiful robe and a quantity of gold and silver. The splendour of the garment and the glitter of the precious metals struck his eye and awakened desire. Instead of turning away his eyes, he continued to look and to desire, till desire ripened into volition, and this into action. "When Iust hath conceived it bringeth forth sin, and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death."

**22. They ran unto the tent**—The interests of the entire nation, involved in this affair, require prompt and energetic measures. The theft itself, its disastrous consequences at Ai, and the supernatural detection of the criminal, had awakened an intense excitement, which caused the haste of the messengers.

unto Joshua, and unto all the children of Israel, and <sup>a</sup>laid them out before the Lord. **24** And Joshua, and, all Israel with him, took Achan the son of Zerah, and the silver, and the garment, and the wedge of gold, and his sons, and his daughters, and his oxen, and his asses,

<sup>a</sup> Heb. *poured*.—<sup>b</sup> Verse 26; chap. 15. 7.

**23. Unto all the children of Israel**—Representatively; that is, unto the elders. **Laid them out before the Lord**—"As a sign," says Keil, "that they belonged to Jehovah on account of the ban." They were before the Lord's eyes when covered up in the earth. But now they are publicly displayed before the ark of the covenant, the symbol of Jehovah's presence.

**24. Joshua, and all Israel with him**—The objection of Colenso, that **all Israel** was a body too numerous to perform many acts recorded of them, is sufficiently met by the remark that the heads of the tribes and clans are constructively "all Israel." **And his sons, and his daughters**—These were taken, some say, not to be executed with their father, but to be witnesses of his execution. [But this is inadmissible. Were **his oxen, and his asses, and his sheep, and his tent**, taken to witness his execution? The narrative clearly conveys the impression that all Achan's family and possessions perished with him. Compare also chap. xxii, 20. Why Achan's family and property should all be destroyed for his sin is a question to be answered by reference to that archaic jurisprudence which dealt with families rather than with individuals. In the Patriarchal system of government the father was absolute lord and representative of the entire household. His children and possessions were identified with him in praise or in punishment. And this judicial idea of Patriarchism was also carried over into Mosaism. The family was sometimes punished rather than the individual, the latter being utterly absorbed in the former, and such family punishment sometimes continued through many generations. Exod. xx, 5; xxxiv, 7; Num. xiv, 18. Hence the punishment of Achan's children for

and his sheep, and his tent, and all that he had: and they brought them unto <sup>b</sup>the valley of Achor. **25** And Joshua said, "Why hast thou troubled us? the Lord shall trouble thee this day. "And all Israel stoned him with stones, and burned them with fire, after they had

<sup>c</sup> Chap. 6. 18; 1 Chr. 2. 7; Gal. 5. 12.—<sup>d</sup> Deut. 17. 5.

their father's sin must not be judged by the standards of an age which has not "occasion any more to use the ancient proverb, The fathers have eaten sour grapes, and the children's teeth are set on edge." Ezek. xviii, 2, 3.] **Valley of Achor**—So called by *prolepsis*, or anticipation, (see ver. 26, note,) for the punishment of Achan gave it its name. That this valley was among the hills is evident from the Hebrew verb, *they caused them to ascend into the valley of Achor*. But its location is now a matter of conjecture. Jerome locates it to the north of Jericho.

**25. Why hast thou troubled us?**—The verb here used has, in the Hebrew, (*achar*), a sound much like Achan's name. See note on verse 26. **And all Israel stoned him**—Here note the propriety of requiring the whole nation by their various representatives to participate in the execution of the law. The great principle embodied is this: The execution of civil law rests largely upon public opinion. When this becomes so corrupt that it will not uphold the law, it becomes a dead letter on the statute book. [**Stoned him . . . burned them . . . had stoned them**—This interchange of singular and plural pronouns does not show that only Achan was stoned, and not his children, but may indicate that he was the person most prominent in the punishment. To urge from this change of number that only Achan was stoned would oblige us to urge that the rest were burned alive without having first been stoned. Two different Hebrew words are here rendered **stoned**, רָגַם and סָקַל. The former seems to mean in this place to *pelt with stones*, the latter to *cover with stones*. So we may more accurately render, *All Israel pelted him with stones, and burned them with fire, and covered them with stones*. Per-

stoned them with stones. **26** And they \*raised over him a great heap of stones unto this day. So 'the LORD turned from the fierceness of his anger. Wherefore the name of that place was called, 'The valley of <sup>10</sup> Achor, unto this day.

## CHAPTER VIII.

**A**ND the LORD said unto Joshua, \*Fear not, neither be thou dis-

<sup>e</sup> Chap. 8. 29; 2 Sam. 18. 17; Lam. 8. 58.—  
<sup>f</sup> Deut. 13. 17; 2 Sam. 21. 14.—<sup>g</sup> Verse 24; Isa. 65. 10; Hos. 2. 15.

haps here is an intimation, too, that they stoned Achan with a fiercer violence than they did his family and possessions.]

**26. And they raised over him a great heap of stones**—A monument of everlasting reproach. Michaelis says it is still a prevalent custom in the East to throw stones, as a mark of reproach and disgrace, upon the graves of criminals. **That place was called, The valley of Achor**—This name signifies *trouble, disturbance*, and is derived from the verb which Joshua uses twice in verse 25. Hence the propriety of the name.

## CHAPTER VIII.

## CAPTURE OF AI, 1-29.

**1. Fear not**—Joshua had need of reassurance and encouragement after the disasters and humiliation which Israel had suffered for the sin of Achan. **As shines the sun emerging from behind a thunder cloud**, so the returning mercy of Jehovah upon the camp of Israel. **Take all the people of war with thee**—How different from the counsel of the spies, (chap. vii, 3.) "Let not all the people go up, but let about two or three thousand men go up." The Lord could, indeed, have given Ai into the hands of two or three thousand as easily as to all, but he would not encourage Israel in a rash, imprudent dependence on Omnipotence. It appears from verse 3 that the expression **all the people of war**, like the oft-recurring phrase, "all Israel," is not to be taken in its widest import. It is probable that the whole camp was put in preparation, and the whole force was

mayed: take all the people of war with thee, and arise, go up to Ai: see, <sup>b</sup>I have given into thy hand the king of Ai, and his people, and his city, and his land: **2** And thou shalt do to Ai and her king as thou didst unto <sup>c</sup>Jericho and her king: only <sup>d</sup>the spoil thereof, and the cattle thereof, shall ye take for a prey unto yourselves: lay thee an ambush for the city behind it. **3** So Joshua

<sup>10</sup> That is, *Trouble*.—<sup>a</sup> Deut. 1. 21; 7. 18; 31. 8; chap. 1. 9.—<sup>b</sup> Chap. 6. 2.—<sup>c</sup> Chap. 6. 21.—<sup>d</sup> Deut. 20. 14.

reviewed, and thirty thousand of the most suitable were detached for this expedition, while the rest of the army was held in reserve. **Go up to Ai**—The march from Jericho to Ai was actually an ascent, but the term **go up** is often used in a military sense of an advance against a city or nation where the advance is not an actual ascent. **Have given**—The conquest of Ai was a foregone conclusion in the Divine mind. Compare chap. vi, 2, note.

**2. Only the spoil thereof. . . shall ye take**—The spoils of Jericho had been devoted wholly to the Lord, as the first fruits of the conquest of Canaan. But the spoils of Ai and of the other conquered cities (Deut. vi, 10-11) are now to be appropriated unto the conquerors. The people and their king are to be slain and their city subverted. There was, henceforth, to be no temptation to the sin of Achan. Had he waited obediently and refrained from the accursed thing he might now have innocently enriched himself. So sin generally misses the mark. **Lay thee an ambush**—If war itself is ever justifiable, it is right to use the mind as well as the hand, strategy as well as brute force. It is certain that a contest of wit is as proper as a contest of muscle. Says Calvin: "Those are pronounced the best generals whose success is due less to force than to skilful manœuvres. It is, of course, understood that neither must treaties be violated, nor faith broken in any other way." **Behind it**—As Joshua was east of Ai, the ambuscade, by a flank movement up one of the numerous ravines, was to be made on the west side of the city. See note on ver. 9.

arose, and all the people of war, to go up against Ai: and Joshua chose out thirty thousand mighty men of valour, and sent them away by night. **4** And he commanded them, saying, Behold, ye shall lie in wait against the city, even behind the city: go not very far

e Judges 20. 29.

**3. Joshua arose... to go up**—That is, set himself about the preliminary arrangements necessary for the march. **Chose out thirty thousand**—There is some apparent confusion in the details of this movement of Joshua. Some eminent commentators think that the entire army of more than six hundred thousand fighting men (Num. xxvi, 51) was engaged in this enterprise. The difficulties of this interpretation are: (1) the impossibility of handling advantageously so vast a body of soldiers in a country cut up by deep and narrow mountain gorges; (2) The exposure of the camp left behind them; (3) The presence of so vast an array before Ai would so appal the inhabitants that they would not venture to sally out and attack it; (4) The extreme difficulty of hiding so large an ambuscade as that of thirty thousand men **not very far from the city**. Some expositors have even supposed that there were two ambuscades, one of thirty thousand and the other of five thousand. But if so, verses 9 and 12 would argue that both were in the same place, namely, "between Bethel and Ai," on the west side of Ai, and this is hardly supposable. Further, in verses 19 and 21 mention is made of only one ambush. The other theory is, that this number of men were all who were engaged. These were divided into two corps—one of five thousand for the ambush and the other of twenty-five thousand for the feigned assault. The latter theory being more reasonable, and involving less difficulties, is assumed by us. [On this hypothesis the order of events must be understood as follows: Joshua, having made all necessary arrangements, arose early one morning, and, accompanied by the elders, went up with the thirty thousand men who were, in this siege, **all the people of**

from the city, but be ye all ready: **5** And I, and all the people that are with me, will approach unto the city: and it shall come to pass, when they come out against us, as at the first, that we will flee before them, **6** (For they will come out after us,) till we have

f Judges 20. 32.

**war**, and encamped on the north side of Ai. Verses 10–11. This march occupied the day, so that it was evening when they approached Ai. That same night Joshua sent the five thousand men to lie in ambush on the west side of the city, (verses 4, 9, 12,) but he and the twenty-five thousand remained encamped in the valley north of Ai. Ver. 13. The next day the king of Ai, not knowing Joshua's stratagem, hasted out early with his people to attack the Israelites, but was caught in the snare prepared to deceive him, and he and his people and city were utterly ruined. On the apparent confusion of the narrative, see remarks in the Introduction on the style of the Hebrew historians.] **And sent them away by night**—A portion of them, five thousand in number. A part is here loosely put for the whole. See verse 12, rendering the verb *took*, *had taken*, as does the Vulgate.

**4. He commanded them**—That is, the five thousand who were to form the ambuscade. To these the words from this verse on through verse 8 are addressed. But of course all these plans for the battle were also made known to the rest of the army.

**5. All the people**—The soldiers are often spoken of by Homer as "the people." **We will flee**—This was no uncommon stratagem for decoying the garrison of a walled town into the open fields. See Livy's description of the capture of Fidenæ by the Romans, book i, chap. 14. There is always danger of military disorganization on the part of the soldiers making this movement, unless they are let into the secret of the commander, as they were in the present instance.

**6. For they will come out after us**—So infatuated are they over their recent victory that our greater num-

'drawn them from the city; for they will say, 'They flee before us, as at the first: therefore we will flee before them. **7** Then ye shall rise up from the ambush, and seize upon the city: for the Lord your God will deliver it into your hand. **8** And it shall be, when ye have taken the city, *that* ye shall set the city on fire: according to the commandment of the Lord shall ye do. 'See, I have commanded you. **9** Joshua therefore sent them forth; and they went to lie

1 Heb. *pulled*.—*g* Exod. 14. 3; 15. 9; John 20.

bers will not be likely to awe them from coming out against us. **They flee before us, as at the first**—It is a wise general who makes a former defeat aid him in securing a future victory.

**8. Ye shall set the city on fire**—We are not to understand that the entire city is to be immediately *destroyed* by fire, for in that case there would be a loss of the promised spoil. A part of the city was set on fire as a signal, and the smoke was to signify to Joshua that it was time to stop the feigned retreat and return to the city. Afterwards the entire city was pillaged and destroyed. **According to the commandment of the Lord**—This is found in the second verse, "as unto Jericho." **See, I have commanded you**—Be impressed with the fact that this is a momentous military order, and on your perfect obedience victory hinges.

**9. Between Bethel and Ai**—This region is greatly cut up with gorges and ravines, "and," says Dr. Thomson, "as I passed from Bethel towards Michmas, (southeasterly,) I could easily understand how Joshua's ambush of five thousand men could be hid between Ai and Bethel." [**On the west side of Ai**—A short distance west of Et-Tel, says Captain Wilson, "and entirely concealed from it by rising ground, is a small ravine well suited for an ambush, one of the branches of the main valley, which runs close to Et-Tel and protects its northern face—the same into which the army of the Israelites descended the night before the capture of the city. On the hills to the north, beyond the valley, Joshua encamped before making his final ar-

in ambush, and abode between Bethel and Ai, on the west side of Ai: but Joshua lodged that night among the people. **10** And Joshua rose up early in the morning, and numbered the people, and went up, he and the elders of Israel, before the people to Ai. **11** And all the people, *even the people* of war that were with him, went up, and drew nigh, and came before the city, and pitched on the north side of Ai: now *there was* a valley between them and Ai. **12** And

32; Eccles. 9. 12.—*h* 2 Sam. 13. 28.—*i* Verse 5.

rangements for the attack, (verse 11.) and it seems probable that he took his stand at some point on the hillside while the battle was raging, for there is a most commanding view over the whole scene, not only up the lateral valley, in which the ambush was placed, but also down by the way of the wilderness. Verse 15. He would thus be able at the same time to control the feigned flight of the Israelites, and signal the ambush (verses 18, 19) to rise up quickly and seize the city." **Joshua lodged that night among the people**—That is, among the twenty-five thousand who encamped for the night on the north side of Ai in the valley. Verses 11, 13. The night here mentioned is to be understood as identical with that mentioned in verses 3 and 13.

**10. And Joshua rose up early**—This must be regarded as a repetition of verse 3, after the custom of oriental historians. **Numbered the people**—Reviewed the troops (thirty thousand) with whom he intended to capture Ai. **Went up**—From the Ghor, or Jordanic Valley, to the interior of Palestine, there is a steep ascent. Compare note on Luke x, 30. Ai was distant from Jericho about fifteen English miles. **And the elders**—As a council of war. Joshua's impetuous and rapid movements were attended by a wise senate.

**11. A valley between them and Ai**—The Hebrew reads *the valley*, the article intimating that it was well known. It was the main valley, of which the ravine in which the ambush was laid was a branch. See note on verse 9.

he took about five thousand men, and set them to lie in ambush between Bethel and Ai, on the west side <sup>2</sup> of the city. **13** And when they had set the people, *even* all the host that *was* on the north of the city, and <sup>3</sup> their liers in wait on the west of the city, Joshua went that night into the midst of the valley. **14** And it came to pass, when the king of Ai saw *it*, that they hasted and rose up early, and the men of the city went out against Israel to battle, he and all his people, at a time appointed, before the plain; but he <sup>4</sup> wist not that *there*

*were* liers in ambush against him behind the city. **15** And Joshua and all Israel <sup>1</sup> made as if they were beaten before them, and fled by the way of the wilderness. **16** And all the people that *were* in Ai were called together to pursue after them: and they pursued after Joshua, and were drawn away from the city. **17** And there was not a man left in Ai or Bethel, that went not out after Israel: and they left the city open, and pursued after Israel. **18** And the Lord said unto Joshua, <sup>m</sup> Stretch out the spear that *is* in thy hand toward Ai; for I

<sup>2</sup> Or, of Ai.—<sup>3</sup> Heb. *their lying in wait*, Verse 4.

<sup>k</sup> Judg. 20. 34; Eccles. 9. 12.—<sup>j</sup> Judg. 20. 36, &c. <sup>m</sup> Exod. 8. 5; 17. 11.

**12. And he took about five thousand**—The Hebrew has no separate form for the pluperfect tense, hence we are justified in rendering an indefinite past tense by the pluperfect when the context requires it, as the Vulgate has rendered this—*had taken* and *had set*.

**13. Joshua went that night into the midst of the valley**—That is, the valley on the north of Ai. Verse 11, note. This movement was executed very late in the night, probably just before the dawn of day, when he was descried by the watchmen approaching the city in front.

**14. At a time appointed**—In Judg. xx, 38, the same word is translated an *appointed sign*. This makes good sense here; but Gesenius and Fürst both say that it is here to be rendered, *an appointed place* in Joshua's line, upon which the attack was to be made. This place is mentioned immediately afterwards as **the plain**, that is, the Arabah, *the desert*, which is spoken of in verse 15 under the name of *the wilderness*.

[**15. Made as if they were beaten**—The original simply reads *were beaten*. Keil renders it *suffered themselves to be beaten*. **The wilderness**—The eastern slope of the mountains of Judah towards Jericho and the Dead Sea. Captain Wilson says that on the east of Et-Tel "the ground, which at first breaks down rapidly from the great ridge that forms the backbone of Palestine, swells out into a small plain three quarters of a mile broad, before

commencing its abrupt descent to the Jordan valley."]

**16. And all the people**—That is, all capable of military service. We read in verse 24 that some were killed in the city.


**17. Or Bethel**—This small city, three miles distant on the west, had probably concentrated its military strength at Ai, as the next probable point of attack by Joshua after the conquest of Jericho; for we cannot conceive of their separate and concerted action, with a large undiscovered ambuscade between them. Our interpretation is confirmed by the next statement, **and they left the city**—not cities—**open**. We have no further mention in this book of the conquest of Bethel, except that its king is in the list of those subdued by Joshua, in chap. xii, 16. "It was not taken at that time, and seems long to have resisted the invaders. At last it fell before the arms, not of the little tribe of Benjamin, within whose territory it was included, but of the powerful house of Joseph, who attacked it from the north, and who thus acquired possession of it. Judg. i, 23-25."—Stanley.

**18. The Lord said**—As there were probably no facilities for consulting the Lord by means of the urim and thummim, we infer that there was an immediate communication to Joshua of this divine command. **Stretch out the spear**—This was the concerted signal for the ambush to arise and seize the city. The Hebrew word for **spear** has been variously explained. See note on

will give it into thine hand. And Joshua stretched out the spear that *he had* in his hand toward the city. **19** And the ambush arose quickly out of their place, and they ran as soon as he had stretched out his hand: and they entered into the city, and took it, and hasted and set the city on fire. **20** And when the men of Ai looked behind them, they saw, and, behold, "the smoke of the city ascended up to heaven," and they had no "power to flee this way or that way: and the people that fled to the wilderness turned back upon the pursuers. **21** And when Joshua and all Israel saw that the ambush had taken the city, and that the smoke of the city ascended, then they turned again, and slew the men of Ai.

n Gen. 19. 28; Rev. 18. 9.—o Job 11. 20;  
Psa. 48. 5, 6.

1 Sam. xvii. 6. The translator of the Vulgate, and several others, have rendered it *shield*. Others suppose that a shield was elevated on the spear.



Gesenius suggests that the spear supported a small flag, like that of the modern lance. This could be seen by the distant liers in wait, who were, doubtless, instructed to watch for the signal. **Toward the city**—An act symbolical of the terrible blow which was now to ruin it forever.

**19. And set the city on fire**—Not only for its destruction, but also for a signal to the army which was feigning a retreat to turn upon their pursuers, whose place of safety was now cut off.

In verse 28 the burning of the city occurs after the pillage, but that is to be understood of the completion and consequence of what the ambush had begun.

**20. And they had no power to flee**—[Literally, *there was not in them two hands to fly*. Keil makes the word rendered *two hands* mean on both sides, that is, it was not in them to flee on either side, or in either direction. But this explanation hardly holds good in connection with the expression *בָּהֶם*, in them. We prefer, therefore, the common version, which takes *hands* metaphorically for *capability*, power for ac-

**22** And the other issued out of the city against them; so they were in the midst of Israel, some on this side, and some on that side: and they smote them, so that they "let none of them remain or escape. **23** And "the king of Ai they took alive, and brought him to Joshua. **24** And it came to pass, when Israel had made an end of slaying all the inhabitants of Ai in the field, in the wilderness wherein they chased them, and when they were all fallen on the edge of the sword, until they were consumed, that all the Israelites "returned unto Ai, and smote it with the edge of the sword. **25** And so it was, that all that fell that day, both of men and women, were twelve thousand, even all the men of Ai.

4 Heb. *hand*.—p Deut. 7. 2.—q 1 Sam. 15. 8.  
r Num. 21. 24.

tion or flight.] They were appalled by the revelation of the plot, and stupified by sudden terror. Their wives, children, houses, and possessions were in the hands of a merciless foe, and they themselves were in a ravine completely shut in before and behind by Joshua's army.

**22. They let none of them . . . escape**—Considering the Israelites' superior numbers, their advantage in the strife, and the panic of the men of Ai, their total destruction was an easy matter. Rarely in those times were prisoners taken in battle. The sword devoured utterly.

**23. And the king of Ai they took alive**—Kings were anciently spared in battle, either to grace the triumph of the victor, or for the accomplishment of some political end, or, as in this case, for a more formal and impressive execution. The king of Bethel (chap. xii. 16) was, perhaps, killed in this battle, and left among the common dead, so that no special notice of his death is here recorded.

**24. Smote it with the edge of the sword**—The non-combatant population, without regard to age or sex, were indiscriminately slain. For several considerations in justification of the total excision of the Canaanites, see note on chap. vi. 21.

[**25. Twelve thousand**—Some expositors have argued that these twelve thousand were only the military force



**26** For Joshua \*drew not his hand back, wherewith he stretched out the spear, until he had utterly destroyed all the inhabitants of Ai. **27** 'Only the cattle and the spoil of that city Israel took for a prey unto themselves, according unto the word of the Lord which he \*commanded Joshua. **28** And Joshua burnt Ai, and made it \*a heap for ever, *even a*

*s* Exod. 17. 11, 12. — *t* Num. 31. 22, 26. — *u* Verse 2. — *v* Deut. 13. 16 — *w* Chap. 10. 26;

of Ai; but this would imply a population of fifty or sixty thousand; a number far too large for a comparatively small city among the hills. Compare chap. vii. 3. This verse clearly affirms that the twelve thousand included **all that fell that day, both of men and women.**]

**26. Joshua drew not his hand back**—The uplifted spear was not only a signal for the assault of the city, but also for its continuance till the conquest was completed. We see no good reason for regarding this act as symbolic of prayer, as was the lifting up of Moses' hands when Israel fought with Amalek. Exod. xvii. 11.

**27. A prey unto themselves**—Joshua's army was now, like Sherman's on his grand march to the sea, a moving column cut off from its base of supplies. Hence it must live upon spoils.

**28. A heap for ever**—[The word translated **heap** is *תל*, *Tel*, and strikingly confirms Capt. Wilson's identification of the site of Ai with the mound still bearing, after the lapse of ages, the name *Et-Tel*, *the ruined heap*. Compare note on vii. 2.] Because the meaning of Ai is a *heap of ruins* the Rationalists build up a theory that the history of its conquest is a myth, growing out of ruins of unknown origin. But the city destroyed by Joshua may have taken the name of Ai or Hai, *the ruins*, from the ruins of a more ancient city out of which it may have been built. **Unto this day**—This clause seems awkward, coming immediately after **for ever**, but it shows that the word *for ever* sometimes has a limited reference. Perhaps, however, the historian, or some later editor, meant by the former clause, closing

desolation unto this day. **29** \*And the king of Ai he hanged on a tree 'until eventide: \*and as soon as the sun was down, Joshua commanded that they should take his carcass down from the tree, and cast it at the entering of the gate of the city, and 'raise thereon a great heap of stones, *that remaineth* unto this day.

*Psa.* 107. 40; 110. 5. — *a* Deut. 21. 23; chap. 10. 27. — *y* Chap. 7. 26; 10. 27.

with **for ever**, to express Joshua's purpose to make Ai a perpetual desolation, and by the latter clause to indicate its fulfilment. The name of Ai appears again, after a thousand years, as inhabited. Neh. xi. 31. But it was probably on another site, just as there were an Old and a New Troy, an Old and a New Tyre.

**29. The king of Ai he hanged**—For the reason, see note on verse 23. **On a tree**—The Septuagint says, on a double tree, which the Vulgate renders, a fork-shaped gibbet. **Until eventide**—This was in accordance with the law, (Deut. xxi. 23,) "that the land be not defiled." Among the ancient Israelites hanging alive seems not to have been practiced, but, as Deut. xxi. 22, implies, the victim was first slain and then hanged. Comp. chap. x. 26; 2 Sam. iv. 12. **At the entering of the gate**—Probably the dead body was cast into a pit. Thus the Septuagint translates this passage. **A great heap of stones**—See note on chap. vii. 26.

#### THE MEMORIAL ALTAR AND SERVICE ON MOUNT EBAL, 30-35.

[This passage is one of those peculiarly interesting narratives of sacred history which serve to bind the Bible to the hearts of devout believers. But the whole account has been hastily pronounced by some critics an interpolation by a later hand, the main argument being that Joshua had not yet carried his conquests as far north as Mount Ebal. It is possible, indeed, that the narrative may have been inserted here out of its proper place, (for chronological order seems not to have been sought after by our author,) and to a critic's eye it might appear more appropriate, as some suggest, at the

**30** Then Joshua built an altar unto the Lord God of Israel <sup>a</sup>in mount Ebal,  
**31** As Moses the servant of the Lord commanded the children of Israel, as it is written in the <sup>a</sup>book of the law of

<sup>a</sup> Deut. 27. 4, 5.—<sup>a</sup> Exod. 20. 25; Deut. 27. 5, 6.

close of chap. xi. But the criticisms which make the passage an interpolation, or hold it to be out of place here, are based on uncertain and unwarrantable assumptions, and there are several considerations which make it more probable that the narrative is in its proper chronological order. Joshua improved the first possible opportunity to obey the commandment of Moses, which required Israel, "on the day when they passed over Jordan," (Deut. xxvii, 2,) to do what is here recorded. Of course the commandment, literally understood, imposed an impossibility, for Mount Ebal could not be reached by the Israelitish camp on the very day they crossed the Jordan. The spirit and import of the commandment were that the first possible opportunity be taken for it. Jericho and Ai were the centers of two powerful kingdoms that lay directly in the way from the Jordan to Mount Ebal, and these must first be conquered. Then, as the miraculous passage of the Jordan had so awed the Canaanites that Joshua could circumcise the people and celebrate the passover unmolested in the plains of Jericho, so the destruction of Ai enabled him to proceed at once to Mount Ebal, and without opposition erect the memorial altar there. Keil supposes that after this the camp of Israel was pitched at the Gilgal which lies about half way between Bethel and Mount Ebal. But see note on chap. ix, 6. Keil's hypothesis is unnecessary, especially as no account at all is given of the march of Israel either to or from Mount Ebal, and it is therefore as easy to *suppose* they marched back to the Jordan Gilgal as to the mountains of Ephraim.]

**30. Mount Ebal**—The mountain, nearly eight hundred feet high, which rises in steep, rocky precipices on the north side of the narrow valley in which lay the city, Shechem, and which was

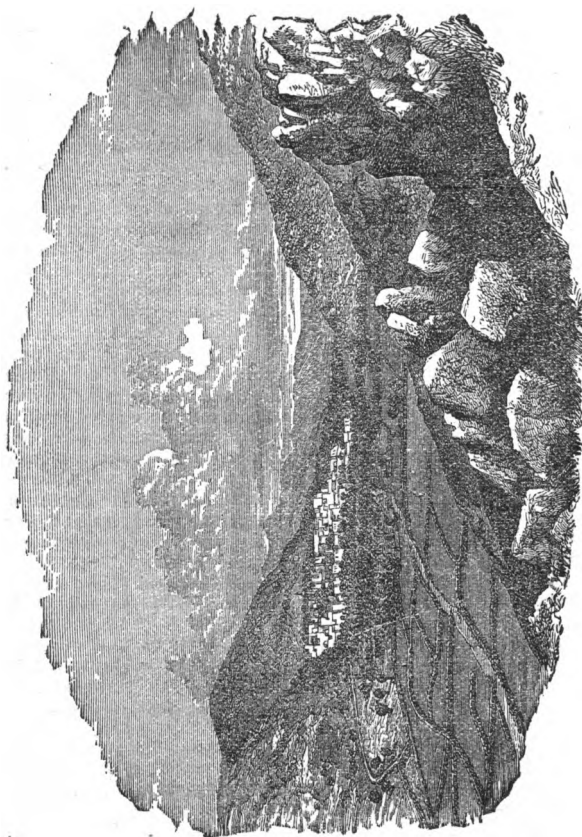
Moses, an altar of whole stones, over which no man hath lifted up *any* iron: and <sup>b</sup>they offered thereon burnt offerings unto the Lord, and sacrificed peace offerings. **32** And <sup>c</sup>he wrote there up-

<sup>b</sup> Exod. 20. 24.—<sup>c</sup> Deut. 27. 2, 8.

confronted on the south by Mount Gerizim. See on verse 33, and on John v. 4.

**31. An altar of whole stones**—That is, stones on which no tool of iron had been used to chisel down or polish. According to the law of Exod. xx, 25, a stone altar must not be built of hewn stones, for the touch of an iron tool upon it was regarded as a pollution. And an unhewn stone would the better symbolize that Living Stone, (1 Pet. ii, 4,) cut out of the mountain without hands, (Dan. ii, 45,) which has become the head of the corner, (Eph. ii, 20,) and certainly owes none of its excellence to human culture or polish.

**32. He wrote there upon the stones**—Whether these stones were the same as those of which the altar was built, or others, erected solely for the purpose of inscription, is not positively determined either by this passage or that of Deut. xxvii, 2-8. But the more probable opinion, and the one adopted by most expositors, is that it was a separate monument of stones on which the law was written. According to the original command, (Deut. xxvii, 4,) the stones were to be smeared with cement, and the words to be written upon it. At first thought this would seem to lack the chief quality of a memorial, durability. But travelers in the east assert that such inscriptions are as lasting as those cut in the rock. Says Dr. Thomson: "A careful examination of Deut. xxvii, 4, 8, and Josh. viii, 30-32, will lead to the opinion that the law was *written upon*, or *in*, the plaster with which these pillars were coated. This could be done, and such writing was common in ancient times. I have seen numerous specimens of it certainly *two thousand years old*, and still as distinct as when they were first inscribed on the plaster. In this hot climate, where there is no frost to dissolve the cement, it will continue hard and unbroken for thousands of years, which



VALLEY OF SHECHEM.

on the stones a copy of the law of Moses, which he wrote in the presence of the children of Israel. **33** And all Israel, and their elders, and officers, and their judges, stood on this side the ark and on that side, before the priests the Le-

d Deut. 31. 9, 25. —e Deut. 31. 12.

is certainly long enough. The cement on Solomon's pools remains in admirable preservation, though exposed to all the vicissitudes of climate, and with no protection. The cement in the tombs about Sidon is still perfect, and the writing entire, though acted upon for perhaps two thousand years by the moist damp air always found in caverns." Respecting the mode of writing on the cement, he says: "What Joshua did, therefore, when he erected these great stones at Mount Ebal, was merely to write *in* the still soft cement with a stile, or, more likely, *on* the polished surface, when dry, with red paint, as in ancient tombs." **A copy of the law of Moses**—The chief difficulty which critics have here is in the size of the work, if the whole of the *Torah*, or Mosaic law, is to be deemed as thus inscribed. The Hebrew word for **copy** is *mishneh*, (משנה) and signifies a *repetition*, a *duplicate*, "an apograph next to the original." The Septuagint and the Vulgate translate it by the word *Deuteronomy*, which, though literally meaning *a repetition of the law*, had already acquired a narrower signification. Several Rabbins make the incredible statement that the whole law, word for word, was written on the monuments, in seventy different languages, that all the people of the earth might be able to read it! Clarke and Bush suppose "that only a copy of the blessings and curses, recorded in Deut. xxvii and xxviii, was written." But Keil well says, "To limit 'the law' to the blessings and curses is out of the question, for these are not 'the law,' but motives added to impel, or rather adjure, the people to keep the law inviolate." [The opinion of Grotius seems at first very plausible, that the Decalogue is meant, for it contains the essence of the whole law, all else being accessory to it. But against it is the insuperable objection, that to

vites, 'which bare the ark of the covenant of the Lord, as well 'the stranger, as he that was born among them; half of them over against mount Gerizim, and half of them over against mount Ebal; 'as Moses the servant of the Lord

f Deut. 11. 29; 27. 12.

call "the words of the covenant"—"the ten words," (Exod. xxxiv, 28; Deut. iv, 13,) which are ever associated with "the two tables of the testimony"—to call these **a copy of the law of Moses** would be inexplicably strange. In the absence of any specific statement it is impossible to decide the question positively, but we incline to the view of Hengstenberg, Keil, and others, that the so-called "second law" is meant, which is embodied in Deuteronomy, between chap. iv, 44, and chap. xxvi, 19, omitting, of course, the exhortations and historical incidents with which it is now associated in the Book of Deuteronomy. This would be the essence of all the law of Moses.]

**33. As well the stranger**—The entire body of Israelites, by descent and by adoption, were present. The latter were more commonly called *proselytes*, but sometimes *strangers*. **Over against Mount Gerizim**—The multitude did not stand on the summits of the mountains, but on their slopes. That they could all hear when thus standing is sufficiently attested by modern travellers. Says Stanley: "The vale of Shechem is far from broad, not exceeding in some places a few hundred feet." [Says Tristram: "The acoustic properties of this valley are interesting. A single voice might be heard by many thousands, shut in and conveyed up and down by the enclosing hills. In the early morning we could not only see from Gerizim a man driving his ass down a path on Mount Ebal, but could hear every word he uttered as he urged it on; and, in order to test the matter more certainly, on a subsequent occasion two of our party stationed themselves on opposite sides of the valley, and with perfect ease recited the commandments antiphonally."] Dr. W. M. Thomson writes, respecting this impressive scene: "This was, beyond

O. T.

had commanded before, that they should bless the people of Israel. **34** And afterward <sup>a</sup>he read all the words of the law, <sup>b</sup>the blessings and cursings, according to all that is written in the book of the law. **35** There was not a word of all that Moses commanded, which Joshua read not before all the congregation of Israel, <sup>c</sup>with the women, and the little ones, and <sup>d</sup>the strangers that <sup>e</sup>were conversant among them.

<sup>a</sup> Deut. 31. 11; Neh. 8. 3.—<sup>b</sup> Deut. 28. 2, 15, 45; 29. 21, 24; 30. 19.—<sup>c</sup> Deut. 31. 12.—<sup>d</sup> Verse 33.—<sup>e</sup> Heb. *walked*.

question or comparison, the most august assembly the sun ever shone upon. I never stand on the narrow plain, with Ebal and Gerizim rising on either hand to the sky, without involuntarily recalling and reproducing the scene. I have shouted to hear the echo, and then fancied how it must have been when the loud-voiced Levites proclaimed from the naked cliffs of Ebal, 'Cursed be the man that maketh any graven or molten image, an abomination unto Jehovah;' and then the tremendous AMEN, tenfold louder, from the mighty congregation, rising and swelling, and reaching from Ebal to Gerizim and from Gerizim to Ebal."

## CHAPTER IX.

THE CANAANITES CONFEDERATED, 1, 2.

1. **All the kings**—Palestine was divided into many petty sovereignties, the heads of which were dignified by this title. **This side Jordan**—Literally, *beyond Jordan*, but meaning here, as the context shows, the west side of Jordan. See note on chap. i. 14. **In the hills**—Or, *in the mountain*. The reference is to the entire mountain range which forms the backbone of Palestine. **In the valleys**—Or, *in the Shephelah*. This word designates the maritime plain of Philistia, and might well be translated *the low countries*. **Great sea**—The Mediterranean. **Coasts... over against Lebanon**—The Phenician plain. Canaanites from even these remoter parts joined this confederacy. On the Canaanitish tribes here mentioned, see note on chap. iii. 10. **Heard thereof**—Not of the demonstration at

## CHAPTER IX.

**AND** it came to pass, when all the kings which *were* on this side Jordan, in the hills, and in the valleys, and in all the coasts of <sup>a</sup>the great sea over against Lebanon, <sup>b</sup>the Hittite, and the Amorite, the Canaanite, the Perizzite, the Hivite, and the Jebusite, *heard thereof*; **2** That they <sup>c</sup>gathered themselves together, to fight with Joshua and with Israel, with one <sup>d</sup>accord.

**3** And when the inhabitants of <sup>e</sup>Gib-

<sup>a</sup> Num. 34. 6.—<sup>b</sup> Exod. 3. 17; 23. 23.—<sup>c</sup> Psa. 83. 3, 5.—<sup>d</sup> 1 Heb. *mouth*.—<sup>e</sup> Chap. 10. 2; 2 Sam. 21. 1, 2.

Ebal and Gerizim, but of the rapid conquests of Joshua. The word *thereof*, supplied by our translators, is better omitted.

### 2. Gathered themselves together

—It is not singular that rival and jealous States did not combine till the dread of a victorious foe, already in the heart of their territory, compelled them to unite for their common safety. Had wise statesmanship dwelt in their councils, their confederated hosts would have confronted Joshua on the banks of the Jordan. [**To fight with Joshua**—How Joshua suddenly surprised and conquered the southern nations of this confederacy is told in chap. x, and how he subdued the northern tribes, and others who escaped from the south, will be found in chap. xi. Meantime the writer turns aside to narrate the league of the Gibeonites, which served as the immediate occasion of Joshua's war with the five Amoritish kings.]

THE FRAUD AND PUNISHMENT OF THE GIBEONITES, 3-27.

3. **Gibeon**—This was called "a great city." Chap. x. 2. It was the capital of the Hivites, and was situated five miles north by west from Jerusalem, at the head of the pass of Bethhoron. It was the key of central Palestine. Three adjacent cities were leagued with it, (verse 17,) and seem to have formed with it a kind of republic; at least it was not under a king, but was equal in rank to "one of the royal cities." Chap. x. 2. "It stands on one of those rounded hills which characterize especially the western for-

eon heard what Joshua had done unto Jericho and to Ai, 4 They did 'work wilily, and went and made as if they had been ambassadors, and took old sacks upon their asses, and winebottles, old, and rent, and bound up; 5 And

e Chap. 6. 27.—f Gen. 34. 13; 1 Kings

mation of Judea."—*Stanley*. It is by all travellers identified with the modern village El-Jib—a corruption of Gibeon. "It is a very fair and delicious place," says Mandeville, "and it is called Mount Joy, because it gives joy to pilgrims' hearts; for from that place men first see Jerusalem." Here, where it overlooked the wide domain of Israel, the sacred tabernacle was set up for many years under David and Solomon. 1 Kings iii, 3, 4. El-Jib is a moderately sized village of irregularly placed houses, chiefly composed of old mossy ruins.

4. [They did work wilily—Literally, *Then did also they by stratagem*. The *also* seems to refer here most naturally to what Joshua had done to Ai. As he used cunning and strategy in the capture of that city, so did also they practice strategy in making a league with Israel. Others, we think less correctly, take *also* (וְגַם) as an adversative here, expressing the contrast between the action of the Gibeonites and the other Canaanites.] **As if... ambassadors**—Suing for peace. The more distant cities think only of war; the nearest, on whom the next blow must fall, seek for peace; perhaps their popular form of government also influenced them toward a pacific policy. [The Hebrew word translated, **made as if they had been ambassadors**, (Hithpael of צִיר,) occurs nowhere else; but Keil and others defend this meaning, given in the English version. Others, however, with Gesenius, argue that "since no other trace of this form or signification exists in Hebrew or Aramaean, it is better to read, with six MSS., צִירָם, they provided themselves with food for the journey, as in verse 12; which is also expressed by the ancient versions."] **Old sacks**—The traveller's equipage in Syria, anciently and at the present day, comprises food and drink,

old shoes and clouted upon their feet, and old garments upon them; and all the bread of their provision was dry and mouldy. 6 And they went to Joshua unto the camp at Gilgal, and said unto him, and to the men of Israel,

20. 31. 33; Luke 16. 8.—g Chap. 5. 10.

kitchen utensils, tents, bedding etc., all stowed away in sacks and transported on the backs of asses. **Old sacks** would give the impression of a long journey. **Winebottles**—These were goat-skins, nearly whole, cured in a peculiar manner. When worn through, a temporary expedient for mending them was to gather up the skin about the hole and tie it like the mouth of a bag. By this means the mending becomes very manifest.

5. **Old shoes and clouted**—Or, as the Hebrew, *shoes fallen into pieces, and botched or cobbled*. In long journeys the traveller walks up the hills that he may spare the heavily laden beast. These shoes in tatters and patches indicate many a walk, and hence a long journey. [The somewhat antiquated English word **clouted**, from the Anglo-Saxon *clut*, a little cloth or patch, accurately expresses the sense of the Hebrew מְלֵא, to patch, to mend. It may be used of patching with cloth, leather, or other material.] **Old garments upon them**—That is, *upon themselves*, and not upon their feet. **Dry and mouldy**—The Vulgate says, instead of **mouldy**, *broken up into crumbs*, and this seems to be the true rendering. The Septuagint adds *offensive to the smell*. Ancient inns or caravanserais provided the sojourner with lodging only; hence he must carry his food. See note on chap. ii, 1.

[6. **The camp at Gilgal**—In the absence of any hint that this was altogether a different place from the Gilgal near Jericho, where Joshua first pitched his camp, it seems rather arbitrary and unnecessary, with Keil and Van de Velde, to maintain that this Gilgal must be identified with the modern Jiljilia, in the mountains of Ephraim. If, after the capture of Ai, or after the memorial service at Mount Ebal, Joshua had pitched his camp in a new spot, and especially at another place

<sup>a</sup> We be come from a far country: now therefore make ye a league with us. **7** And the men of Israel said unto the <sup>b</sup> Hivites, Peradventure ye dwell among us; and <sup>c</sup> how shall we make a league with you? **8** And they said unto Joshua, <sup>d</sup> We *are* thy servants. And Joshua

<sup>h</sup> 2 Kings 20. 14. — <sup>i</sup> Chap. 11. 19. — <sup>k</sup> Exod. 23. 32; Deut. 7. 2; 20. 16; Judg. 2. 2.

bearing the name *Gilgal*, it is inexplicably strange that no mention is anywhere made of a fact so noticeable and important. Further, the expressions in chap. x, 7, 9—Joshua *ascended* and *went up from Gilgal*—most naturally indicate the ascent from the Jordan valley to the interior of Palestine, (see note on chap. viii, 10,) and show that the writer still had in mind the Gilgal near Jericho; for to understand the expressions in a military sense is hardly admissible. Keil's only weighty argument is, that it would have been folly in Joshua, after having penetrated into the heart of the country, to go back again to the eastern border, and leave the Canaanites at liberty to move at pleasure through the conquered territory. But this whole argument rests on the assumption that Joshua would, of course, endeavour to *keep* the conquered Canaanites in subjection by the presence of his camp and army in the centre of the land, or else by establishing garrisons in the conquered districts—a thing which we have no evidence was ever done during the wars of the conquest. Keil's argument is therefore altogether insufficient, and rests solely on a critic's assumption of what *Joshua ought to have done*.] **From a far country**—They had heard that all the Canaanites had been doomed to extermination. See verse 24. To avoid such a fate they represented that they dwelt beyond the limits of Canaan. By this means they hoped to negotiate a treaty of peace, and even an alliance with the invincible invader. That such a treaty with nations beyond the limits of Canaan was lawful, see Deut. xx, 10, 11.

**7. Said unto the Hivites**—The inhabitants of Gibeon were Hivites. See chap. xi, 19. **Peradventure ye dwell among us**—The suspicious

said unto them, Who *are* ye? and from whence come ye? **9** And they said unto him, <sup>m</sup> From a very far country thy servants are come, because of the name of the Lord thy God: for we have <sup>n</sup> heard the fame of him, and all that he did in Egypt, **10** And <sup>o</sup> all that he did

<sup>l</sup> Deut. 20. 11; 2 Kings 10. 5. — <sup>m</sup> Deut. 20. 15. <sup>n</sup> Exod. 15. 14; Josh. 2. 10. — <sup>o</sup> Num. 21. 24, 33.

of the Hebrews are awakened, as they well might have been. Their Canaanitish speech must have betrayed them. **How shall we make a league with you?**—This question strongly implies the impossibility of such an act, because it had been expressly forbidden, (Exod. xxiii, 32; xxxiv, 12; Deut. vii, 2,) on the ground of the ensnaring and corrupting influence of pagan allies.

**8. We are thy servants**—This expression hardly implies that these Gibeonites anticipated their destiny of serfdom, as some suppose; it is rather a common oriental mode of speech by which inferiors becomingly address a superior. Compare Gen. xliii, 28; xlv, 7. **Who are ye?**—Joshua seeks to draw from them their nationality and their country, but he is baffled by their vague reply.

**9. Because of the name of the Lord thy God**—{ The word LORD, in capitals, here as elsewhere in the Old Testament, is the Hebrew Jehovah, the proper name of the God of Israel, as Baal was the god of the Canaanites. These Canaanite-Gibeonites, assuming that Baal and Jehovah are two rival national deities, are proposing to make submission, and even, if needs be, to transfer their allegiance to the latter, who has shown himself by his victories to be the mightier god of the two. } **And all that he did in Egypt**—They are too cunning to say that they have heard of the miraculous crossing of the Jordan, of Jericho's downfall, and the capture of Ai. This would intimate that they were so near as to become cognizant of these recent events. So they speak of events forty years ago in Egypt, and many months ago beyond the Jordan. } Thereby fulfilling God's words to Pharaoh, that he had raised him up to make his name declared throughout all the earth.

to the two kings of the Amorites, that were beyond Jordan, to Sihon king of Heshbon, and to Og king of Bashan, which *was* at Ashtaroth. **11** Wherefore our elders and all the inhabitants of our country spake to us, saying, Take victuals <sup>2</sup> with you for the journey, and go to meet them, and say unto them, We are your servants: therefore now make ye a league with us. **12** This our bread we took hot for our provision out of our houses on the day we came forth to go

<sup>2</sup> Heb. *in your hand*.—<sup>3</sup> Or, *they received the men by reason of their victuals*.—<sup>p</sup> Num.

Exod. ix, 16. And wonderfully have these words been fulfilled. }

**10. Amorites . . . Sihon . . . Heshbon . . . Og . . . Bashan**—See note on chap. ii, 10. **Which was at Ashtaroth**—The word **which** (according to old English) refers to Og, and should be rendered *who*. This royal city of Og was in Bashan, and named from Ashtoreth, the Greek Astarte, the Oriental Venus, who was worshipped there. **Ashtaroth** is the plural form of *Ash-toreth*, and the place perhaps took this form of the name from the many Astarte-images used in her worship there. It lies six miles north-west of Edrei, and, according to Robinson, is the modern Tell-Astereh. After its capture it was assigned to the Levites.

**11. Our elders**—The popular character of their government, with a senate of elders at its head, appears quite distinctly in this verse.

**12. This our bread**—To confirm their statements they exhibit their dry, crumbled bread, wine skins and apparel sadly the worse for wear, knowing well the influence which such ocular proofs have over the human mind.

**14. The men**—The chiefs in Joshua's camp with whom the Gibeonites conferred. **Took of their victuals**—But it is not said that the men of Israel ate of these victuals. Yet, as it is a custom among the Arabs to eat the victuals of a guest, as a sign of peace and friendship, this may have been the purpose of their taking the provision of these Gibeonites. This passage has puzzled all the interpreters. The marginal reading in our English Bible is ingenious, but it is not sus-

tained by the Hebrew, "*they received the men by reason of their victuals*." Nor did they make a treaty with them by eating their food, for this was not customary. More plausible is the theory that they took their bread into their hands to examine it. But we would suggest that the real meaning may be, *they presumed* the truth of the story *from their victuals*. The original word for *took* is sometimes used for mental acts. **And asked not counsel at the mouth of the Lord**—A momentous question was settled with no reference to the Divine will, and that, too, on a point in regard to which Jehovah's commands were very explicit—alliance with aliens. Compare note and references on verse 7. Jehovah, who had made special arrangements for communicating with his people through the urim and thummim, was slighted and ignored. These Israelitish princes have had many imitators in the senates and cabinets of Christian lands. How rarely is God consulted by statesmen, even in affairs in which the destiny of a nation is involved!

27. 21; Isa. 30, 1, 2; Judg. 1, 1; 1 Sa. 22, 10; 23, 10, 11; 50, 8; 2 Sa. 2, 1; 5, 19.—<sup>q</sup> Chap. 11, 19; 2 Sa. 21, 2.

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**15. Peace**—He solemnly pledged the faith of his people to abstain from war against their commonwealth. **A league**—This is a step beyond peace; an alliance, binding the two parties to mutual assistance in defensive, if not offensive, war. **Princes of the congregation**—Called, in verses 6 and 7, *men of Israel*, that is, representative men, consisting of heads of families and elders of the people. **Sware**—The Hebrew princes appealed to God in their oaths in such phrase as, "The God of Abraham judge;" "As Jeho-



**16** And it came to pass at the end of three days after they had made a league with them, that they heard that they were their neighbours, and that they dwelt among them. **17** And the children of Israel journeyed, and came unto their cities on the third day. Now their cities were Gibeon, and Chephirah, and Beeroth, and Kirjath-jearim. **18** And the children of Israel smote them not, because the princes of the congregation had sworn unto them by the LORD God

† Chap. 18. 25, 26, 28; Ezra 2. 25.—s Psal. 15. 4; Eccles. 5. 2.

vah liveth;" "God do so to me and more also;" "God knoweth," and simular formulas.

**16. At the end of three days**—The Gibeonites themselves probably notified Joshua, after three days, that they were dwelling in their vicinity. This precaution was necessary as a safeguard against a sudden attack by Joshua. They held the pass of Beth-horon, the key of Central and Western Palestine, which a sagacious foe would seek to wrest from their hands.

**17. Gibeon**—See verse 3, note. There were three other cities on federal relations with Gibeon. **Chephira**, literally, *the village*, is in the mountains on the western confines of Benjamin, east of Nicopolis, and about two miles east of Yalo, the ancient Ajalon. Dr. Robinson discovered it under the scarcely altered name of *Kefir*. **Beeroth**, a Hebrew word for *wells*, was known to Eusebius, and his description of its position agrees perfectly with that of the modern el-Bireh, ten miles north of Jerusalem, on the great road to Shechem. It is a favourite resting-place for caravans at the end of the first day's journey from Jerusalem, and contains a population of about seven hundred. **Kirjath-jearim**—*City of forests*, called also, in chap. xviii, 14, *City of Baal*, the great Canaanite deity. It was celebrated as the abode of the ark for twenty years, (1 Sam. vii, 2,) and is still a resort of pilgrims from all Judea. Dr. Robinson identifies it with the modern Kuriet-el-Enab, *city of grapes*, on the road from Jaffa to Jerusalem, and about ten miles northwest of the latter city. In chap. xviii, 28, it is called merely Kirjath.

of Israel. And all the congregation murmured against the princes. **19** But all the princes said unto all the congregation, We have sworn unto them by the LORD God of Israel: now therefore we may not touch them. **20** This we will do to them; we will even let them live, lest 'wrath be upon us, because of the oath which we sware unto them. **21** And the princes said unto them, Let them live; but let them be hewers of wood and drawers of water unto all

† See 2 Sam. 21. 1; 2. 6; Ezek. 17. 13, 15, 18, 19; Zech. 5. 2, 4; Mal. 3. 5.—u Deut. 29. 11.

**18. The congregation murmured**—This entire land had been promised to them for an inheritance. A part of that long-promised inheritance, to which they had for many years looked forward with hope, was now suddenly snatched from them as they were just entering on its possession. The manner in which this had been done aggravated their disappointment, and increased their indignation against the princes who had permitted themselves to be so duped, and the Hebrew people to be cheated out of its divine legacy. Another reason for their murmuring was the imprudence of the chiefs of Israel in entering into a treaty like this without consulting Jehovah.

**19. Now therefore we may not touch them**—So strong was their respect for their oath that they would hold as valid a contract made on fraudulent representations. According to natural justice and the laws of our modern civilization, they would have been justified in treating their oath as null and void. Most expositors are of this opinion; and Calvin goes so far as to charge the princes with a new violation of the will of God, because they now "obstinately maintain, upon the pretext of their oath, the promise which they had foolishly made."

**20. Lest wrath be upon us**—By neglecting to consult God they had brought themselves into a state of moral perplexity. They were in a strait between their oath and the plain command of God, strengthened by the murmurs of the people.

**21. Hewers of wood and drawers of water**—We will keep our oath to

the congregation; as the princes had promised them. **22** And Joshua called for them, and he spake unto them, saying, Wherefore have ye beguiled us, saying, "We are very far from you; when ye dwell among us?" **23** Now therefore ye are cursed, and there shall none of you be freed from being bondmen, and hewers of wood and drawers of water for the house of my God. **24** And they answered Joshua, and said, Because it was certainly told thy servants, how that the Lord thy God

\*commanded his servant Moses to give you all the land, and to destroy all the inhabitants of the land from before you, therefore we were sore afraid of our lives because of you, and have done this thing. **25** And now, behold, we are in thine hand: as it seemeth good and right unto thee to do unto us, do. **26** And so did he unto them, and delivered them out of the hand of the children of Israel, that they slew them not. **27** And Joshua made them that day hewers of wood and drawers of

<sup>a</sup> Verse 15. — <sup>b</sup> Verses 6, 9. — <sup>c</sup> Verse 16. — <sup>d</sup> Gen. 9, 25. — <sup>e</sup> Heb. *not be cut off from you*. — <sup>f</sup> Verses 21, 27. — <sup>g</sup> Exod. 23, 32; Deut. 7, 1, 2.

<sup>h</sup> Exod. 15, 14. — <sup>i</sup> Gen. 16, 6. — <sup>j</sup> Heb. *gave, or delivered to be*; 1 Chron. 9, 2; Ezra 8, 20. — <sup>k</sup> Verses 21, 23; 1 Chron. 9, 2; Ezra 8, 20.

the letter: they shall live, but live as slaves. Upon the "great high place" of Gibeon the tabernacle was set up at a later period, (1 Chron. xvi, 39,) and there it remained till it was removed to Jerusalem by Solomon. From beneath this eminence water and wood for the service of the tabernacle were constantly carried up, requiring the labour of a large number of people. Stanley says: "They hewed the wood of the adjacent valley and drew the water from the springs and tanks which in its immediate neighbourhood abound, and carried them up to the Sacred Tent, and there attended the altar of the Lord." Respecting the drudgery of this menial service, Dr. Thomson, while passing through this very region of the Gibeonites, says: "I was forcibly reminded of one item in the sentence of condemnation pronounced upon them for their cunning deception—that they should be hewers of wood—by long files of women and children carrying on their heads heavy bundles of wood. It is the severest drudgery, and my compassion has often been enlisted in behalf of the poor women and children who daily bring loads of wood to Jerusalem from these very mountains of the Gibeonites. To carry water, also, is very laborious. The fountains are far off, in deep wadies with steep banks; and a thousand times have I seen the feeble and the young staggering up long and weary ways, with large jars of water on their heads. It is the work of slaves." **As the princes had promised them**—They had promised life,

not servitude. This promise was kept by successive generations, till Saul rashly killed some and planned the general massacre of the rest. Seven of Saul's descendants atoned for this breach of the covenant with their lives. 2 Sam. xxi, 1–9. At the time of Saul's massacre they were so identified with Israel that the historian was obliged to insert a note explaining their origin.

**23. Ye are cursed**—Bondage, even to the best of masters and to the most honourable kind of labour, is a curse. If slavery were ever a blessing to a pagan nation, by bringing it into a knowledge of the true religion, this would have been such a case; but Joshua pronounces even such bondage, though far above chattel slavery, a curse.

**24. It was certainly told thy servants**—This information could have been brought by spies sent from Canaan to ascertain the intentions of so formidable a mass of people marching through the wilderness toward Palestine. The language of both nations was nearly the same. **We were sore afraid**—They had grounds for their great fear, in view of the fate of their brethren, the Amorites east of the Jordan.

**26. And delivered them**—The people were clamorous for their blood. Joshua shows his great courage and fidelity to his convictions by resisting the pressure of the outraged and excited populace, who in mobocratic madness would have swept away a weaker ruler.

**27. [Joshua made them**—Rather, as the margin, *gave them*; that is, ap-

water for the congregation, and for the altar of the LORD, even unto this day, 'in the place which he should choose.

### CHAPTER X.

**N**OW it came to pass, when Adonizadek king of Jerusalem had heard how Joshua had taken Ai, and had ut-

*e* Dent. 12. 5. — *a* Chap. 6. 21. — *b* Chap. 8. 22, 26, 28. — *c* Chap. 9. 15.

pointed them to the service named. Jewish tradition and most commentators agree that these Gibeonites, thus given to perform the menial service of the sanctuary, were the original caste or order who in later times were known as the *Nethinim*, that is, *the given ones*. See 1 Chron. ix. 2; Ezra ii. 43; viii. 20, notes.] **For the congregation, and for the altar**—They were never to be required to render personal service, nor to be employed for private purposes. **In the place which he should choose**—Here is strong incidental evidence that the sanctuary had not, at the time this history was written, been permanently established at Jerusalem.

### CHAPTER X.

#### FIVE KINGS WAR AGAINST GIBEON, 1-5.

1. **Adoni-zedek**—The name means *lord of justice*. Compare the kindred word *Melchizedek*, *king of justice*. Gen. xiv. 18. All that is known of this Amorite king and his four confederates is recorded in this chapter. Alarmed at the victories of Joshua and the defection of Gibeon, his nearest neighbour on the north, he aroused the kings in the south, and combined them against the seceding state. This drew Joshua to the aid of his ally, and to the discomfiture of his confederated foes, and the execution of Adonizadek and his four royal associates. **Jerusalem**—This is the first time that undisputed mention is made in the Bible of this celebrated city. Probably the Salem in Gen. xiv. 18, is Jerusalem, although Jerome contends that Salem was in the southern part of Galilee, near Scythopolis. Jerusalem is called "Jebus" and the "city of the Jebusites" in Judges and some later books. It became the metropolis

terly destroyed it; 'as he had done to Jericho and her king, so he had done to 'Ai and her king; and 'how the inhabitants of Gibeon had made peace with Israel, and were among them; 2 That they 'feared greatly, because Gibeon *was* a great city, as one of the 'royal cities, and because it *was* greater than

*d* Exod. 15. 14, 15, 16; Deut. 11. 23. — 1 Heb. *cities of the kingdom*.

of the Hebrews under David at a comparatively late date, after the nation had gone through the period of the Judges and entered on the Monarchy. Bethel, Hebron, and Shechem were ancient holy places when the Jebusite was still possessing Jerusalem. It is a little south of the centre of Palestine, thirty-two miles from the coast and eighteen from the Jordan, and is two thousand six hundred feet above the level of the sea. It is surrounded on three sides by hills still higher, from which it is separated by precipitous ravines, which rendered it, before the invention of gunpowder, almost impregnable. "It is on the ridge, the broadest and most strongly marked ridge, of the backbone of the complicated hills which extend through the whole country, from the plain of Esdraelon to the desert. Every wanderer, every conqueror, every traveller, who has trod the central route of Palestine from north to south, must have passed through the table-land of Jerusalem. It was the water-shed between the streams, or, rather, the torrent beds, which find their way eastward to the Jordan and westward to the Mediterranean."—*Stanley*. See note, Matt. ii. 1. **And were among them**—That is, were having amicable intercourse with the Israelites.

2. **They feared greatly**—The loss to the Amorites of so powerful a commonwealth as Gibeon, and its alliance with Joshua, was a sufficient cause of fear, aside from the fact that Joshua, now securely established in this central position, had completely cut off northern from southern Palestine, so that he could conquer each in detail. **As one of the royal cities**—It was not a royal capital, but as important. The fact that so large a city, in their

Ai, and all the men thereof *were* mighty.  
**3** Wherefore Adoni-zedek king of Jerusalem sent unto Hoham king of Hebron, and unto Piram king of Jarmuth, and unto Japhia king of Lachish, and unto Debir king of Eglon, saying, **4** Come up unto me, and help me, that we may smite Gibeon: \*for it hath made peace with Joshua and with the children of Israel. **5** Therefore the five kings of the Amorites, the king of Jerusalem, the king of Hebron, the king of Jarmuth, the king of Lachish, the king of

Eglon, \*gathered themselves together, and went up, they and all their hosts, and encamped before Gibeon, and made war against it.

**6** And the men of Gibeon sent unto Joshua \*to the camp to Gilgal, saying, Slack not thy hand from thy servants; come up to us quickly, and save us, and help us: for all the kings of the Amorites that dwell in the mountains are gathered together against us.

**7** So Joshua ascended from Gilgal, he, and \*all the people of war with

e Verse 1; chap. 9. 13.—f Chap. 9. 2.

g Chap. 5, 10; 9. 6.—h Chap. 8. 1.

immediate vicinity, renowned for bravery, had submitted to the invader without striking a blow, was indeed appalling.

**3. Hebron**—This city, one of the most ancient in the world, is situated among the mountains of Judah, twenty miles south of Jerusalem. It is two thousand eight hundred feet above the Mediterranean, and is the highest town in Palestine, being six hundred feet above Jerusalem. Hence the appropriateness of the expression in chap. xx, 7: "Hebron in the mountain of Judah." It was well known when Abraham sojourned there, nearly four thousand years ago. Its original name was *Kirjath-Arba*, the city of Arba, and it was sometimes called *Mamre*. Ritter argues that the original name was Hebron, and that this name was restored after the expulsion of the Anakim. Chap. xv, 14. It is now called by the Mohammedans *El-Khulil*, "the Friend," that is, of God—the designation of Abraham, whose tomb, the cave of Machpelah, is still here, one of the historic remains in the Holy Land of which travellers have no doubts. It is enclosed within a mosque. The present population is about ten thousand. **Jarmuth** was a town in the low country of Judah, but not so far west as the plain. It was southwest from Jerusalem about eighteen miles. Robinson found here a hamlet called *Yarmuk*, which doubtless represents the ancient capital of **Piram**, and contains among the hewn stones of its ruins some traces of its ancient greatness. **Lachish**, probably the modern Um-Lakis, is about fifteen miles

west of Hebron, on the lower range of hills, so far below the summit of Hebron that it is called "the plain." It was rebuilt after Joshua destroyed it, and in the reign of Hezekiah was taken by Sennacherib. The siege is mentioned in 2 Chron. xxxii, 9, and a plan of the city and its capture is portrayed on slabs found by Layard at Nineveh. See notes and cuts at 2 Kings xviii, 14; xix, 8. **Eglon** was about eight miles west by north from Lachish on the plain. Its name is supposed to survive in Ajlan, a shapeless mass of ruins covering a round hillock. In translating this verse the Septuagint has erroneously called this place *Adullam*.

THE GIBEONITES APPEAL FOR AID, 6.

**6. Save us**—As soon as the hostile army of the confederated Amorites pitched their camp before their walls the Gibeonites sent to Joshua for aid. It was of the first importance that Joshua should rescue them and retain their allegiance. Had the Gibeonites been neglected by Joshua they would have been either forced into a league with the Amorites, or defeated by their superior numbers.

JOSHUA'S NIGHT-MARCH TO GIBEON, 7-9.

**7. Ascended**—This expression (repeated in verse 9) most obviously has reference to the ascent from the Jordan valley to the interior of Palestine. See notes on chap. viii, 10; ix, 6. **All the people of war** is an expression limited by its appositive in the next clause, **all the mighty men of valour**, which is the Hebrew way of saying, *all the bravest men of the army*.

him, and all the mighty men of valour.  
**8** And the Lord said unto Joshua, 'Fear them not: for I have delivered them into thine hand; \*there shall not a man of them stand before thee.

† Chap. 11. 6; Judg. 4. 14.—‡ Chap. 1. 5.

**8. Fear them not**—He was constrained to aid Gibeon not only by military necessity, but also by the encouraging assurance of the Lord that he should be victorious. As Joshua up to this time had fought only single cities, he needed additional assurance when he was about to meet for the first time the allied armies of Canaan.

**9. Suddenly**—Because Joshua believed the words of Jehovah he made

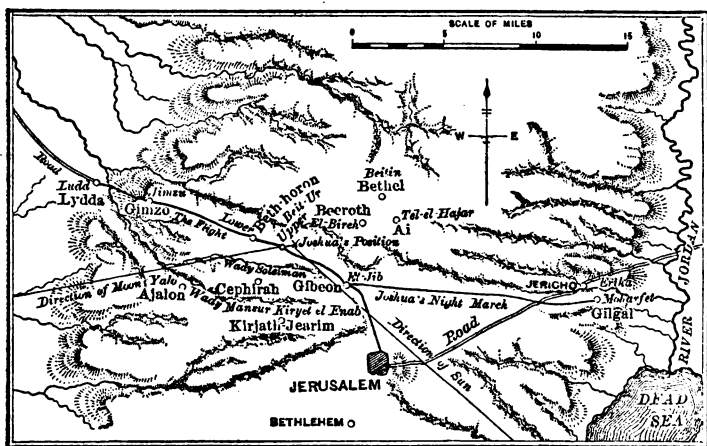
**9** Joshua therefore came unto them suddenly, and went up from Gilgal all night.

**10** And the Lord discomfited them before Israel, and slew them with a

‡ Judg. 4. 15; 1 Sam. 7. 10, 12; Psa. 18. 14; Isa. 28. 21.

a bold and sudden movement. Great faith is essential to a great captain.

**Went up from Gilgal all night**—He had marched over this route several times before, and was familiar with it. The distance from Gilgal to Gibeon was about the same as that from Gilgal to Ai, fifteen miles. See chap. viii, 9, note. This night march was a memorable prelude to the most astounding miracle of history.



JOSHUA'S BATTLE-FIELD AT GIBRON.

# THE GREAT BATTLE OF GIBRON AND BETH-HORON, 10, 11.

["The battle of Beth-horon, or Gibeon," says Stanley, "was one of the most important in the history of the world: and yet so profound has been the indifference, first of the religious world, and then (through their example or influence) of the common world, to the historical study of the Hebrew annals, that the very name of this great battle is far less known to most of us than that of Marathon or Cannæ. It is one of the few military

engagements which belong equally to ecclesiastical and to civil history, which have decided equally the fortunes of the world and of the Church."]'

**10. And the Lord discomfited them**—The victory is ascribed not to Joshua but to the Lord. He had inspired the great Hebrew chieftain with confidence to strike a sudden blow, probably in the early morning dawn, and the panic-stricken enemy fled in confusion. There is no need of supposing, with some expositors, that God made use of thunder and lightning, or

great slaughter at Gibeon, and chased them along the way that goeth up <sup>m</sup> to Beth-horon, and smote them to <sup>n</sup> Azekah, and unto Makkedah. 11 And it came to pass, as they fled from before Israel, and were in the going down to

*m* Chap. 16. 3, 5. — *n* Chap. 15. 35.

any other terrific natural phenomena, to discomfit the Amorite host early in the morning. The sudden assault of Joshua with his battalion of picked men was sufficient to produce such a result. God is often said to do that which is done through the agency of men. The issue of battles, like every other human event, is in the hands of Almighty God. In the sphere of mind there is a field for divine interposition, breathing courage into one army and dismay into the other. Hence many of the most wonderful triumphs in the world's history have been achieved by the weaker army. **Beth-horon**—The house of caves. Upper Beth-horon is on an elevation north-west of Gibeon, higher up, and is at the head of a ravine through which there is a steep pass to Lower Beth-horon and to the plain of Sharon. The flight of the Amorites was toward this pass up the long ascent, **the way that goeth up**. Then came the second stage of the flight down the steep ravine, **in the going down to Beth-horon** the lower. **Azekah** was a town in the rich agricultural plain into which the valley of Aijalon opens westward. Its position has not yet been recognized. **Makkedah** is supposed to be in the same plain, but its situation has hitherto eluded discovery.

11. **The Lord cast down great stones.**—Some have supposed that this was a shower of meteoric stones, but before the statement is concluded **hailstones** are mentioned. Neither of these, considered by itself, is a miraculous event; but either of them occurring at that particular crisis in the flight, and falling only on the foes of Israel, must be regarded as supernatural. Both meteoric stones and hail may have fallen. I have before me the account of a shower of stones in Normandy, in France, in 1803. The

Beth-horon, \*that the LORD cast down great stones from heaven upon them unto Azekah, and they died: *they were* more which died with hailstones than *they* whom the children of Israel slew with the sword.

*o* Psa. 18. 13, 14; 77. 17; Isa. 30. 30; Rev. 16. 21.

stones fell with a hissing noise from a small rectangular cloud, which did not seem to move, and they were scattered over a tract of country eight miles long by three broad. Above two thousand were collected, the largest weighing seventeen and a half pounds. In the Yale College cabinet may be seen a similar stone, weighing sixteen hundred and thirty-five pounds, which fell in Arkansas. Others are found in South America, one whose estimated weight is fifteen tons. The most reasonable hypothesis is, that these stones are fragments of small invisible planets moving through space, drawn within the sphere of the earth's attraction. That a shower of such projectiles may have been directed by the Ruler of the universe to fall on the descent to Lower Beth-horon while his foes were fleeing from Joshua is not an incredible supposition to one who believes in a personal God. There are many instances of hail storms so violent as to be destructive of life, aside from that recorded in Exodus, (ix, 23–26,) a plague so destructive to all who were unsheltered. In our own country, in Jackson, La., 1834, within ten minutes, a little after midnight, a great number of cattle were killed by the hailstones, and much damage was done to the houses and woods. Sir Robert Wilson describes a terrible thunder and hail-storm at Marmorice Bay, Asia Minor, while the British fleet were at anchor there in February, 1801. It continued, at intervals, two days and nights to pour hailstones as large as walnuts, deluging the camps with a torrent of them till the earth was covered two feet deep. In August, 1831, there was a hail-storm so violent that two boatmen in a village on the Bosphorus were killed, and many others were severely wounded, by balls of ice of a pound weight. Sudden showers

**12** Then spake Joshua to the LORD in the day when the LORD delivered up the Amorites before the children of

*p Isa. 28. 21; Hab. 3. 11.*

of hail are not unusual in Palestine. The destructiveness of this shower of hail to the Amorites only, and its occurrence at this time, mark it as a miraculous event. **The Lord cast down great stones from heaven**, by intensifying and controlling natural agencies.

#### THE SUN AND MOON STAND STILL, 12-15.

We are not to regard these remarkable verses as giving an unauthentic and merely poetical description of the victory, as rationalistic expositors teach, but rather a parenthesis thrown into the narrative, by the author himself, or by a later hand, and taken from the book referred to in verse 13. This may be clearly seen from the statement, in verse 15, that Joshua returned to Gilgal, which he did not do until the close of the campaign, as stated in verse 43. On the supposition that verse 15 is the conclusion of the quotation all the confusion is cleared up. We may admit that this quotation from the Book of Jasher was inserted here some time after the Book of Joshua was otherwise completed. The Book of Jasher was not completed, possibly not composed, until the time of David. See note on verse 13. But from this admission it does not follow that the passage is unhistorical, or to be explained merely as poetry.

**12. Then spake Joshua to the Lord**—What Joshua said to the Lord we do not know, unless we are to construe the command to the sun and moon as Joshua's prayer, "O Lord, let the sun stand still." But it is more probable that the great captain, standing on the mountain summit, and seeing his fugitive enemies hastening for their lives far down in the valley below, ejaculated a prayer to Jehovah for supernatural aid, and that he was, in answer to prayer, suddenly endowed with the gift of faith to believe that the laws of the universe would be sus-

Israel, and he said in the sight of Israel, **Sun, stand thou still upon Gibeon; and thou, Moon, in the valley of**

*2 Heb. be silent.*

ended at his command. The difference between the *grace* of faith and the *gift* of faith is this: The trust which Joshua reposed in God's promise at Gilgal, verse 8, was an exercise of the *grace* of faith, which has a moral character, inasmuch as its opposite, a disbelief of God's word, would have been sin; while the *gift* of faith is an extraordinary endowment, enabling the possessor to ask for things for which he has no specific promise, the non-exercise of which faith would not be sinful, inasmuch as it does not discredit God's word. The Lord had never promised to arrest the sun in answer to Joshua's command. Hence it would have been the highest presumption for Joshua to command a thing so extraordinary on the ground of God's general promises. But being endowed with this miraculous *gift* of faith, the act of Joshua in giving orders to the sun and moon to halt in their march through the heavens—given, doubtless, in the name of Jehovah—becomes perfectly proper. **He said in the sight of Israel**—That is, in their presence, or in sight of the army. This was done in their presence, in order that they might know to what cause to attribute so remarkable an occurrence, and might glorify God, who had given such power to a man. They could afterward attest to their children the truth of an event of which they had been eye-witnesses. **Sun, stand thou still upon Gibeon**—[Verse 12 and the first part of verse 13 may be thus poetically rendered:

Then spake Joshua to Jehovah.  
In the day of Jehovah's giving the Amorite  
In the presence of the sons of Israel;  
And he said in the eyes of Israel:  
Sun, in Gibeon be still.  
And moon, in the valley of Ajalon.  
Then still was the sun,  
And the moon stood,  
Until a nation should take vengeance on  
its enemies.]

Various have been the theories devised to explain the manner of this

stupendous miracle. Some assert that the passage is merely a poetical interpolation to adorn the narrative and heighten its effect. They allege that it is never quoted in the catalogues of Old Testament miracles. To this we reply, that, as we never find any exhaustive catalogues of those miracles, the omission of this proves nothing. The writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews omits the striking and unquestioned miracle of the passage of the Jordan. See Heb. xi, 29-30. Others explain this miracle as merely a poetical statement of the fact that the Israelites, in answer to Joshua's prayer, were endowed with power to do two days' work in one; a theory too absurd to call for sober refutation. There are others who insist that the earth's motion on its axis was actually arrested, causing a cessation of the apparent diurnal revolution of the sun and moon. Our objection to this theory is, that it involves several secret miracles. A sudden check in the velocity of rotation of the earth on its axis would violently throw down objects on its surface, especially near the equator. If a resisting force were gradually applied, like a brake to a car-wheel, Prof. Mitchell has ascertained that "in forty seconds the motion might cease entirely, and the change would not be sensible to the inhabitants of the earth, except from the appearance of the heavens." But this would require a direct interposition of a secret miracle to keep the ocean, which is sustained at a higher level in the equatorial regions by the centrifugal force, from flowing toward the poles, and from submerging much of the continents, and to keep the Mediterranean Sea from dashing over Palestine. Again: By the recent discovery of the correlation of forces it has been demonstrated that a force requisite to arrest the revolution of the earth must convert momentum into heat equal to that generated by the burning of a mass of anthracite coal fourteen times as large as the globe itself. Another secret miracle would be required to prevent this universal conflagration.

But secret miracles, so far as we know, have no place in the divine system, since they cannot authenticate a revelation, or demonstrate to man the interposition of God's hand in the course of nature. We, therefore, with a large number of commentators and Christian philosophers, adopt the theory that the standing still of the sun and moon was *optical*, and not literal—that we have a description of phenomena as presented to the eyes of the spectators. The language of the Scriptures is evidently popular, and not scientific; as when they speak of the earth as standing still and the sun as rising and setting. By the supernatural refraction, or bending of the rays of light, the sun and moon might maintain a stationary appearance for several hours. Even by natural refraction we daily see the sun before he has risen above, and after he has gone below, the horizon. The miraculous receding of the shadow on the dial of Ahaz (2 Kings xx, 11; Isa. xxxviii, 8) was probably caused by a similar supernatural refraction of the sun's rays. This explanation of these astronomical miracles involves the principle which is found in nearly all miracles, namely, the intensifying of some natural agency rather than the violation of any natural laws. As in the case of the widow's cruse and the feeding of the multitudes, new oil and new loaves were not created, but that which was in existence was multiplied, so do we believe that instead of a new and strange force brought to bear on nature the natural law of refraction was intensified in both of these miracles.

There is no astronomical difficulty in the statement of the positions of the sun and the moon at that time. To Joshua, standing at Upper Beth-horon, the direction of Gibeon was southeast, which would also be the direction of the sun in the early part of the day, at which time the moon might have been in the southwest, above the valley of Ajalon, approaching its setting. See map of the scene of the battle, page 74. To the question why Joshua should ask for



\*Aijalon. 13 And the sun stood still, and the moon stayed, until the people had avenged themselves upon their enemies. *'Is not this written in the book of Jasher?* So the sun stood still in the midst of heaven, and hasted not to go down about a whole day. 14 And there

q Judg. 12. 12.—r 2 Sam. 1. 18.—3 Or, *The upright*—s See Isa. 23. 8.

the day to be lengthened while more than half the day was still unspent, we reply that the account does not say that he asked for such a miracle. He "spake to the Lord." We are left to supply the subject-matter of his prayer, which would most naturally be for aid to annihilate God's foes. He receives no answer, but is suddenly endowed with the gift of faith that at his command to the sun and moon God will work an unheard-of miracle, for the demonstration of his sovereignty over physical law, and of his interest in his people.

It is quite probable that the sun and the moon, the gods of so many pagan nations, were the divinities of the Canaanites, to whom they were then appealing for aid against the victorious Hebrews. If this be true, there is a peculiar appropriateness in this miracle, strikingly demonstrating to both armies the superiority of the God of Joshua.

The absence of any account of this miracle in the annals of other nations should have little weight with us, since the records of nearly all the contemporaneous nations have perished, and none of them have histories containing complete accounts of that early period.

13. **The book of Jasher**—This was a poetical book in praise of the heroes of the theocracy—a collection of national songs. Both its name and extant fragments seem to show that it was composed to celebrate upright men in Israel, like Joshua and Jonathan. **Jasher** signifies the *upright*. It was probably written in the reign of David, or soon after. It may have been compiled gradually through a long course of years, one national song after another being added to the collection, but it certainly was not completed till David's time, for it contained

was "no day like that before it or after it, that the Lord hearkened unto the voice of a man: for 'the Lord fought for Israel. 15 "And Joshua returned, and all Israel with him, unto the camp to Gilgal.

16 But these five kings fled, "and

t Deut. 1. 30; verse 42; chap. 23. 3.—u Verse 43. v Ps. 48. 4, 6; 139. 7, 10; Amos 9. 2; Rev. d. 15.

his elegy on Saul and Jonathan. See 2 Sam. i. 18. Fürst is of the opinion that **Jasher** is a collective term for Israelites, and that it should be translated *the book of the Israelites*, that is, the national book. We are ignorant of its author or compiler. If it had been divinely inspired, Providence would doubtless have preserved it for the benefit of mankind. The modern works bearing its title are later and spurious.

**About a whole day**—The exposition of Bush, who translates this passage as *at the perfect day*, signifying only that the sun did not go down at its usual time at the close of the day, but pretty soon after, is rather far-fetched. The Vulgate version, "*Nor was there before nor afterward so long a day,*" contains the true explanation of this expression, namely, that the day was greatly extended, perhaps nearly doubled in length. A study of the whole chapter, and a consideration of the many acts performed by Joshua and his army, would seem to require about two days for their accomplishment.

14. **No day like that**—No day was ever before or since supernaturally extended at the command of man. God had often before this hearkened unto the voice of man, but never before to the voice of a man inspired with miracle-working faith to control the movements of the heavenly bodies.

15. **And Joshua returned**—This must be regarded as the close of the quotation from the book of Jasher. The writer of that book drops all the further acts of the campaign, and speaks of its conclusion. See note introductory to verse 12.

THE PURSUIT AND SLAUGHTER OF THE AMORITES, 16-21.

16. The thread of the narrative, broken at the end of verse 11 by the

hid themselves in a cave at Makkedah. **17** And it was told Joshua, saying, The five kings are found hid in a cave at Makkedah. **18** And Joshua said, Roll great stones upon the mouth of the cave, and set men by it for to keep them: **19** And stay ye not, *but* pursue after your enemies, and 'smite the hindmost of them; suffer them not to enter into their cities: for the Lord your God hath delivered them into your hand. **20** And it came to pass, when Joshua and the children of Israel had made an end of slaying them with a very great slaughter, till they were consumed, that the rest *which* remained of them entered into 'fenced cities. **21** And all the people returned to the camp to Joshua

4 Heb. *cut off the tail*.—*v* Hos. 8. 14.  
 α Exod. 11. 7.—*y* 1 Sam. 15. 32.

quotation from the Book of Jasher, is here resumed. **Five kings**—See verse 3. **A cave**—Caves still abound in that region. Beth-horon signifies a house of caves. Travellers relate that these hiding places are found in all parts of Palestine. "The rocks are perforated in every direction with 'caves' and 'holes' and 'pits,' crevices and fissures sunk deep in the rocky soil."—*Stanley*.

**18. Roll great stones**—The cave when thus barricaded would require but a small guard. The rest of the men could be employed in the pursuit. The golden hour for the victor is the time when his enemies are fleeing disordered and panic-stricken. The vigorous commander in such an hour neglects even his own wounded and dying that he may make his victory decisive.

**19. Pursue after your enemies**—The excitement of such a victory would in a wonderful manner keep up the strength of the soldiers, and perhaps supernatural vigour was also imparted to them. **For the Lord... hath delivered**—Compare notes on chap. vi, 2; viii, 1. But though the enemies' destruction is a foreseen certainty in the Divine Mind, the conditions, **pursue, smite**, are insisted on.

**20. Till they were consumed**—That is, utterly defeated, demoralized, and dispersed. **That the rest which remained**—These words and the rest

at Makkedah in peace: 'none moved his tongue against any of the children of Israel.

**22** Then said Joshua, 'Open the mouth of the cave, and bring out those five kings unto me out of the cave. **23** And they did so, and brought forth those five kings unto him out of the cave, the king of Jerusalem, the king of Hebron, the king of Jarmuth, the king of Lachish, and the king of Eglon. **24** And it came to pass, when they brought out those kings unto Joshua, that Joshua called for all the men of Israel, and said unto the captains of the men of war which went with him, Come near, 'put your feet upon the necks of these kings. And they came near, and

α Psa. 107. 40; 110. 5; 149. 8, 9;  
 Isa. 26. 5, 6; Mal. 4. 3.

of this verse should be put in parentheses and rendered, *And the survivors escaped from them and went into fortified cities*. The sense of this passage is, therefore, well expressed by Keil: "Only a remnant of them was left, and they took refuge in the fortified cities." The parenthesis thus qualifies the clause **till they were consumed**.

**21. All the people**—The army that had pursued the foe. **None moved his tongue**—Or, *pointed his tongue*. None uttered an impious or threatening word against Israel. The enemy was reduced to the most abject silence. This is the Hebrew way of expressing the complete subjection of all that region. Compare Exod. xi, 7.

THE FIVE KINGS EXECUTED, 22-27.

**24. Called for all the men of Israel**—This must be limited to the bravest warriors; those only were at Makkedah; the rest of the people were at Gilgal. See verse 7, note, also verse 43. A grand assembly of the army was made for the formal humiliation and public execution of the five kings. It was desirable to make the execution as impressive as possible. **Put your feet upon the necks of these kings**—Symbolical actions are very common in the East, such as passing under yokes and kissing the conqueror's feet, and in case of extreme and perfect subjection the victor proclaimed his triumph by treading on the

put their feet upon the necks of them.

**25** And Joshua said unto them, "Fear not, nor be dismayed, be strong and of good courage: for thus shall the Lord do to all your enemies against whom ye fight." **26** And afterward Joshua smote them, and slew them, and hanged them on five trees: and they were hanging upon the trees until the evening. **27** And it came to pass at the time of the going down of the sun, that Joshua commanded, and they took them down off the trees, and cast them into the cave wherein they had been hid, and laid great stones in the cave's mouth, *which remain* until this very day.

**28** And that day Joshua took Makkedah, and smote it with the edge of the sword, and the king thereof he utterly destroyed, them, and all the souls that were therein; he let none remain: and he did to the king of Makkedah

as he did unto the king of Jericho.

**29** Then Joshua passed from Makkedah, and all Israel with him, unto Libnah, and fought against Libnah: **30** And the Lord delivered it also, and the king thereof, into the hand of Israel; and he smote it with the edge of the sword, and all the souls that were therein; he let none remain in it; but did unto the king thereof as he did unto the king of Jericho. **31** And Joshua passed from Libnah, and all Israel with him, unto Lachish, and encamped against it, and fought against it: **32** And the Lord delivered Lachish into the hand of Israel, which took it on the second day, and smote it with the edge of the sword, and all the souls that were therein, according to all that he had done to Libnah. **33** Then Horam king of Gezer came up to help Lachish; and Joshua smote him and his people,

*a* Deut. 31. 6, 8; chap. 1. 9. — *b* Deut. 3. 21; 7. 19.  
*c* Chap. 8. 29. — *d* Deut. 21. 23; chap. 8. 29.

*e* Deut. 7. 16; 20. 16, 17. — *f* Chap. 6. 21.  
*g* 2 Chron. 11. 9; Micah 1. 13.

neck of his conquered foe. This impressive act inspirited the Israelites, and struck terror into their enemies yet unconquered. Some regard this as the fulfilment of the prophecy of Moses in Deut. xxxiii. 29. It also explains the expression, "to make one's enemies his footstool." Psa. cx. 1.

**25. Thus shall the Lord do to all your enemies**—Unless ye forfeit my favour by your sin, as in the first battle with Ai. Thus every Christian, if faithful to Christ, will "find his latest foe under his feet at last."

**26. Joshua smote them**—Here observe, they were slain before they were hung. This summary infliction of capital punishment so abhorrent to the humane spirit of our Christian civilization, was in accordance with the character of that age and people, who would have construed mercy as cowardice. European nations in their wars with the semi-barbarous Orientals of modern times are compelled to adopt the severe war-code of those nations. Compare the note on chap. viii. 29. **Hanged them on five trees**—As a mark of further indignity, and to strike the enemy with increased terror. **Until the evening**—See on viii. 29.

**27. Cast them into the cave**—The place of their concealment was made

their sepulchre. **Until this very day**—See note, viii. 28.

#### CONQUEST OF SOUTHERN PALESTINE, 28–43.

**28. That day**—Joshua and a part of the host took Makkedah while the rest were pursuing the flying foe. **Destroyed . . . all the souls**—All the human beings. For considerations justifying this indiscriminate extermination of the Canaanites, see note, chap. vi. 21.

**29. Libnah**, according to Stanley and Robinson, is the present Tel-el-Sâfieh, which is only a mile from Eleutheropolis, in the plain of Judah; but Van de Velde, with more probability, identifies it with Arak el-Menshyeh, a hill about five miles west of Eleutheropolis, and showing signs of having been an ancient fortified place. But the identity is far from certain. It was a city of Judah (chap. xv. 42) appropriated to the priests, xxi. 13. In the reign of Jehoram it revolted from Judah, (2 Kings viii. 22,) and still later was besieged by Sennacherib. 2 Kings xix. 8.

**31. Lachish**—See verse 3, note.

**32. On the second day**—The second day of the siege.

**33. Horam**, like the other ill-fated kings mentioned in this chapter, has left no other record. **Gezer** must

until he had left him none remaining. **34** And from Lachish Joshua passed unto Eglon, and all Israel with him; and they encamped against it, and fought against it: **35** And they took it on that day, and smote it with the edge of the sword, and all the souls that *were* therein he utterly destroyed that day, according to all that he had done to Lachish. **36** And Joshua went up from Eglon, and all Israel with him, unto <sup>a</sup>Hebron; and they fought against it: **37** And they took it, and smote it with the edge of the sword, and the king thereof, and all the cities thereof, and all the souls that *were* therein; he left none remaining, according to all that he had done to Eglon; but destroyed it utterly, and all the souls that *were* there-

<sup>a</sup> See chap. 14. 13; 15. 13; Judges 1. 10.  
<sup>†</sup> Chap. 15. 15; Judges 1. 11.

have been between the Lower Beth-horon and the sea. It does not seem to have been destroyed by Joshua. Some identify it with the village Jazur, four or five miles east of Joppa, but this is uncertain. [It was an important city of the Canaanites, and fell within the borders of Ephraim, (xvi, 3,) but that tribe failed to drive out the original inhabitants. Judg. i, 19. Subsequently Pharaoh, king of Egypt, captured it, slew its Canaanitish inhabitants, and presented it to his daughter, Solomon's wife. Pharaoh burned the city, but Solomon rebuilt and fortified it. 1 Kings ix, 16, 17.]

**34. Eglon**—See on verse 3.

**36. Hebron**—See on verse 3. As the king of Hebron had been executed at Makkedah, his successor is probably referred to as killed in this siege.

[**38. And Joshua returned... to Debir**—Debir has not been with certainty identified with any modern name. Van de Velde finds it in a place called Dilbeh, six miles southwest of Hebron. Compare Stanley's note at chap. xv, 18. Others suppose it to have been nearer Hebron, on the west. Dr. Rosen places it, with much probability, at Dewirban. Its earlier name was *Kirjath-sepher*, (chap. xv, 15,) which means *book city*, and intimates that the original Canaanitish inhabitants were acquainted with writing and books, and that their city became noted

in. **38** And Joshua returned, and all Israel with him, to <sup>1</sup>Debir; and fought against it: **39** And he took it, and the king thereof, and all the cities thereof; and they smote them with the edge of the sword, and utterly destroyed all the souls that *were* therein; he left none remaining: as he had done to Hebron, so he did to Debir, and to the king thereof; as he had done also to Libnah, and to her king. **40** So Joshua smote all the country of the hills, and of the south, and of the vale, and of the springs, and all their kings: he left none remaining, but utterly destroyed all that breathed, as the Lord God of Israel <sup>a</sup>commanded. **41** And Joshua smote them from Kadesh-barnea even unto <sup>1</sup>Gaza, <sup>m</sup>and all the country of Goshen, even unto Gibeon.

<sup>k</sup> Deut. 20. 16, 17.—<sup>l</sup> Gen. 10. 19.  
<sup>m</sup> Chap. 11. 16.

for learning. The same place is called *Kirjath-sannah* in chap. xv, 49, a name of similar meaning.]

**40. 'Country of the hills**—The mountain ridge, which is the backbone of the Holy Land, is cut up into hills by ravines which stretch away to the Dead Sea and the Mediterranean. The heads of these valleys often interlap for a considerable distance, forming numerous steep hills. **The south**—*The Negeb*. This term designates that territory which was subsequently occupied by Judah and Simeon, and also a portion of Edom. It is a geographical term, used constantly to designate the land lying to the south of Palestine, and should always be translated the *south country*, as it is in Gen. xx, 1. In later Hebrew writers it extended from Southern Canaan to Arabia Petræa and Egypt. **The vale**—*The shephelah*. This word, with one exception, (xi, 16,) always designates the maritime plain of Philistia, from Joppa to the borders of Egypt. **The springs**—אֲדָמָה, slopes where torrents flow together; ravines.

**41. [Kadesh-barnea]** was a most important station in the southern border of the Holy Land, the starting-point of the forty years' wandering, the place where Miriam died, and whence the spies went out to explore the Land of Promise. There has been uncertainty

O. T.

**42** And all these kings and their land did Joshua take at one time, "because the Lord God of Israel fought for Israel. **43** And Joshua returned, and all Israel with him, unto the camp to Gilgal.

a Verse 14.—a Chap.

as to its exact location. Stanley proposes to identify it with Petra, the modern Wady Mousa; Robinson locates it at Ain el-Weibeh, twenty miles northwest of Mount Hor; but more recently Captain Palmer argues for the opinion first maintained by Dr. Rowlands, that the ancient **Kadesh-barnea** is represented by the modern Ain Gadis, a fountain in the plateau of Jebel Magrah, some forty miles west of Mount Hor. This view will probably gain general acceptance.] **Gaza** is still standing, and is a place larger than Jerusalem, situated on the Mediterranean Sea in Southern Palestine. It has been the scene of many remarkable events. See at Gen. x, 19. **Country of Goshen**—A city and district generally supposed to be in the mountains of Judah, though some think that it was on the plain. Its name suggests that it may have been founded by a colony from Goshen in Egypt.

**42. At one time**—During one campaign, which commenced with the great battle of Gibeon and Beth-horon. **Because the Lord . . . fought for Israel**—The unprecedented rapidity and success of Joshua's movements is here ascribed to his great ally, Jehovah. The only miraculous interposition in aid of Joshua was on the memorable first day of the campaign; but the marvellous victories obtained in quick succession over a foe which, forty years before, by reason of their stature and the strength of their walled cities struck terror into the hearts of the Hebrew spies, show that God was the author of that courage which now nerved the people, and also of that despair which paralyzed their foes so perfectly that before they could reorganize a combined resistance they were cut off, city by city.

**43. All Israel**—All who had served in this campaign. **Gilgal**—The old camp in the Jordan valley. See note on chap. ix, 6; also x, 9. The transfer

## CHAPTER XI.

**A**ND it came to pass, when Jabin king of Hazor had heard those things, that he sent to Jobab king of Madon, and to the king of Shimron,

10. 3.—b Chap. 19. 15.

of this statement to verse 15 shows the passage in verses 12–15 to be an interpolation.

## CHAPTER XI.

### THE GREAT BATTLE OF MEROM, 1–15.

["The battle of Beth-horon is represented as the most important battle of the Conquest, because, being the first, it struck the decisive blow. But in all such struggles there is usually one last effort made for the defeated cause. This, in the subjugation of Canaan, was the battle of Merom. Round Jabin were assembled the heads of all the tribes who had not yet fallen under Joshua's sword. As the British chiefs were driven to the Land's End before the advance of the Saxon, so at this Land's End of Palestine were gathered for the last struggle, not only the kings of the north, in the immediate neighbourhood, but from the desert valley of the Jordan south of the Sea of Galilee, from the maritime plain of Philistia, from the heights above Sharon, and from the still unconquered Jebus, the Hivite who dwelt in the valley of Baal-gad under Hermon."—Stanley.]

**1. Jabin** (signifying *he shall know, or he is wise*) was probably the royal title of the kings of Hazor. **Hazor** was a Phœnician fortified city in the north of Palestine. It was the principal city of the whole of the North, "the head of all those kingdoms." Ver. 10. [After its destruction by Joshua it was rebuilt and occupied by another Jabin, who attained vast power, and for twenty years greatly oppressed Israel, (Judges iv, 2, 3,) but was in turn defeated by Barak. It was subsequently fortified by Solomon, (1 Kings ix, 15,) but was afterward captured by Tiglath-pileser, king of Assyria. 2 Kings xv, 29. Travellers are not agreed as to its site. Dr. Thomson thinks it is at the modern Hazere, about twelve miles west of the Lake

and to the king of Achshaph, **2** And to the kings that *were* on the north of the mountains, and of the plains south of 'Chinneroth, and in the valley, and in the borders 'of Dor on the west, **3** And to the Canaanite on the east and on the west, and to the Amorite, and the Hit-

c Num. 34. 11.—d Chap. 17. 11; Judges 1. 27; 1 Kings 4. 11.—e Judges 3. 3.

**Merom.** Stanley locates it on an eminence just above Cesarea Philippi; Robinson at Tell Khureibeh, a rocky peak three miles west of Lake Merom; and Porter inclines to locate it a few miles south of this, on a bank of the Wady Hendaj.] **Madon** was a leading city in the same vicinity, but its locality is now unknown. **Shimron**, called also Shimron-Merom, (chap. xii, 20,) was the chief place in a small district afterward belonging to Zebulun, eleven miles northeast of Nazareth. Schwarz thinks that it is the same as the modern Semuniyeh, a few miles west of Nazareth. **Achshaph** was in the territory of Asher. Chap. xix, 25. Robinson identifies it with the ruined town now called Kasaf, ten or twelve miles northwest of Lake Merom.

**2. Kings that were on the north of the mountains**—Heb. *on the north in the mountain*. Mount Hermon and its northern extension, called Anti-Libanus, are perhaps here meant. **Chinneroth** was a small enclosed district north of Tiberias, and by the side of the lake to which it subsequently gave the name *Genesareth*. See at Num. xxxiv, 11; notes on Matt. iv, 13. **The valley**—The plain by the Mediterranean, the *shephelah*. See the note on chap. x, 40. **Borders of Dor**—The word for **borders** is used in the Hebrew only in connexion with Dor, and it designates the plain of Sharon at the foot of Carmel. **Dor**, now Tantura, was probably the southern limit of Phenicia. Of its site there is no doubt. "Its situation, with its little harbour enclosed within the wild rocks rising over the shell-strewn beach, and covered by the fragments of the later city of Tantura, is still a striking feature on the desolate shore."—Stanley.

**3. Amorite**—See the note on chap. ii, 10. All the tribes here named were

tite, and the Perizzite, and the Jebusite in the mountains, "and to the Hivite under 'Hermon 'in the land of Mizpeh. **4** And they went out, they and all their hosts with them, much people, "even as the sand that is upon the sea shore in multitude, with horses and chariots very

f Chap. 13. 11.—g Gen. 31. 49.—h Gen. 22. 17; 32. 13; Judges 7. 12; 1 Sam. 13. 5.

greatly intermingled. They seem to have had no fixed boundaries. The nations of the South, over whom the five kings ruled, are called Amorites. Chap. x, 5. The Jebusites long held fast this stronghold **in the mountains** of Central Palestine, and from it, perhaps, went forth often to trouble Israel. **Hit-tite**—Chap. i, 4, note. For the other tribes see notes and references at chap. iii, 10. **Under Hermon**—This mountain, "almost the only one which deserves the name in Palestine," is the southern extremity of the eastern range of Lebanon, called Anti-Libanus, and it is the highest point of the whole range. "From the moment that the traveller reaches the plain of Shechem in the interior, nay, even from the depths of the Jordan valley by the Dead Sea, the snowy heights of Hermon are visible. The ancient names of its double range are all significant of this position. It was 'Sion,' 'the up-raised;' or 'Hermon,' 'the lofty peak;' or 'Shenir' and 'Sirion,' the glittering 'breastplate' of ice; or, above all, 'Lebanon,' the 'Mont Blanc' of Palestine, the White Mountain of ancient times; the Mountain of the 'Old White-headed Man,' or the 'Mountain of Ice' in modern times."—Stanley. Hermon was probably the scene of our Lord's transfiguration. See notes on Matt. xvii, 1. **Mizpeh**—This appellative is commonly preceded by the article, *the watch-tower*. It was a name given to several localities. **The land of Mizpeh** is probably the same as *the valley of Mizpeh*, verse 8, and may be understood either of the tract of Coele (Hollow) Syria, over which Hermon rises like a watch-tower, or of the plains that stretch off east of Hermon towards Damascus.

**4. Even as the sand that is upon the sea shore**—This exaggerated com-

many. **5** And when all these kings were met together, they came and pitched together at the waters of Merom, to fight against Israel. **6** And the Lord said unto Joshua, 'Be not afraid because of them: for to morrow about this time will I deliver them up all slain

1 Heb. *assembled by appointment.*

parison is in perfect keeping with the style of the Oriental writers. It is to be interpreted rhetorically, and not literally. It is to be expected that an inspired writer will employ the style of his country and age. Josephus reckons this army at three hundred thousand foot, ten thousand horse, and twenty thousand chariots. Anciently chariots supplied the place of artillery in modern times, so that among the Egyptians and Syrians the number of



ASSYRIAN CHARIOT.

these indicated their military power. The Hebrews, having been forbidden to multiply horses, did not to any great extent provide themselves with chariots of war till the reign of David. By reason of this lack of chariots in Joshua's army the odds were heavily against him, so that there was occasion for the encouragement which the Lord gives in verse 6.

**5. Waters of Merom**—This first lake through which the Jordan flows was the Samochonitis of Josephus. Its modern name is Huleh. Its name **Merom** occurs nowhere else in the Bible. It is of a triangular shape, and measures about six miles in each direction. It is surrounded by a marshy basin, which is sufficiently elevated on the southwestern margin to afford an encampment and battle-field. It was

before Israel: thou shalt hough their horses, and burn their chariots with fire. **7** So Joshua came, and all the people of war with him, against them by the waters of Merom suddenly; and they fell upon them. **8** And the Lord delivered them into the hand of Israel,

4 Chap. 10. 8.

the use of "horses and chariots very many" which probably fixed the scene of the encampment on the uplands near by the plain of the lake, along whose level shores they could have full play for their force. See verse 7, note.

**6. Be not afraid**—The vast multitude of enemies provided with war chariots, instruments which Joshua had probably never before encountered in battle, would naturally awaken fear in the Hebrew army and its great leader. To allay this the Lord, whose opportunity is man's extremity, interposes words of cheer and a promise of victory. It is not said that Joshua asked for this, but it was doubtless given in answer to prayer. **To morrow about this time**—Only the God of battles can foretell the very day and hour of his people's triumph. **Thou shalt hough their horses**—They were to disable their horses by cutting the sinews of their legs. For this barbarous treatment of the horse we have in modern English the verb *to hamstring*. As the multiplication of horses was forbidden by God, (Deut. xvii, 16,) they would have been a useless booty. **Burn their chariots**—For they also would have been only a cumbrance to the Hebrews.

**7. Suddenly**—Joshua's victories were achieved by bold and unexpected strokes, appalling and disorganizing the foe by the suddenness of his assault. The Septuagint reads that he fell upon them on the "mountain slopes," or in the hilly region, before they could deploy upon the plain by the lake and use their war chariots to any good purpose. These would only serve to obstruct their movements and impede their flight when attacked among the hills.

**8. The Lord delivered them**—Jehovah is ever recognized as the arbi-

who smote them, and chased them unto  
 'great Zidon, and unto 'Misrephoth-

2 Or, *Zidon-rabbah*.—3 Or, *Salt pits*.

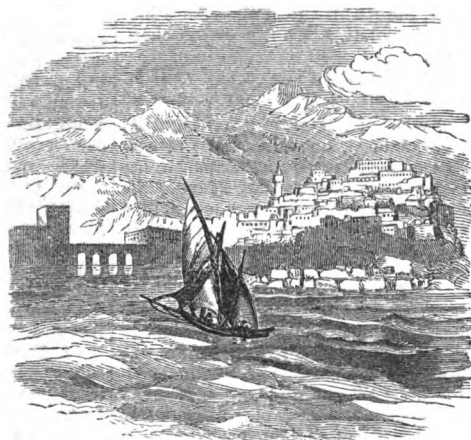
ter of battles. **Chased them**—W.M. Thomson, who has repeatedly traversed this region, and who has acquired a greater familiarity with it than has any other traveller, thus describes this flight and pursuit: "Those whose homes lay beyond the mountains to the north and east sought them by the great wady of the Upper Jordan, now Wady-et-Teim, or out east of Hermon, in Hauran—the land of Mizpeh. Those from the sea-coast of Acre and Carmel fled over these hills and down southwest by Hazor to Misrephoth-maim, (now called Musheirifeh,) on the north border of the plain of Acre. Thence they dispersed along the seaboard to their homes, as far south as Dor. Joshua himself chased a third division along the base of the mountain northward, past Abel-Beth-maacah, through the plain of Ijon, down the tremendous gorge of the Litany, (ancient Leontes,) to the ford at Tamrah, or the bridge at the Khutweh, and thence over the wooded spurs of Jebel Rihan towards great Zidon, behind whose lofty walls the flying host could alone find safety." **Great Zidon**—

This city, one of the most ancient of the world, is situated in Phenicia, on the coast of the Mediterranean. It was formerly surrounded by towering walls, and covered a vast area. Its harbour was crowded with ships from every coast, and its magazines enriched by the treasures and luxuries of the distant East, brought to them by caravans. It had a stupendous colonial system. On its coast was built Berytus, (the modern Beyroot,) Gebel, Arvad, Dor, Accho, and many more, besides Tyre, a daughter which subsequently eclipsed the mother in power and wealth.

maim, and unto the valley of Mizpeh eastward; and they smote them, until

Heb. *Burnings of water*.—k Chap. 13. 6.

Zidon planted colonies in Cyprus, the Grecian Isles, Libya, and in Spain. It afterward declined, but never became extinct like Tyre, and now numbers about ten thousand population. **Misrephoth-maim**—The Hebrew literally signifies *the burnings of waters*. Dr. Thomson identifies it with the modern Musheirifeh, on the coast, midway between Tyre and Mount Carmel. It is remarkable for its noble fountains. The ancient and modern names are nearly identical in form and in signification, and both were suggested by the bright and glowing colour of those magnificent cliffs which overhang the sea. The route from Merom to Dor must have been through this place. Here is a difficult pass commanded by a castle, an ancient structure corresponding to which might have afforded safety to the fugitives. **Valley of Mizpeh**—See note on verse 3. **Eastward**—That is, eastward from the scene of battle. The panic-stricken host fled northward to Zidon, westward to Misrephoth-maim, and eastward to the valley of Mizpeh.



ZIDON.



they left them none remaining. **9** And Joshua did unto them <sup>1</sup>as the Lord bade him: he houghed their horses, and burnt their chariots with fire. **10** And Joshua at that time turned back, and took <sup>m</sup>Hazor, and smote the king thereof with the sword: for Hazor beforetime was the head of all those kingdoms.

**11** And they smote all the souls that were therein with the edge of the sword, utterly destroying them: there was not <sup>a</sup>any left to breathe: and he burnt Hazor with fire. **12** And all the cities of those kings, and all the kings of them, did Joshua take, and smote them with the edge of the sword, and he utterly destroyed them, <sup>a</sup>as Moses the servant of the Lord commanded. **13** But *as for* the cities that stood still <sup>a</sup>in their

strength, Israel burned none of them, save Hazor only; *that* did Joshua burn.

**14** And all <sup>a</sup>the spoil of these cities, and the cattle, the children of Israel took for a prey unto themselves; but every man they smote with the edge of the sword, until they had destroyed them, neither left they any to breathe.

**15** <sup>a</sup>As the Lord commanded Moses his servant, so <sup>a</sup>did Moses command Joshua, and <sup>a</sup>so did Joshua; <sup>a</sup>he left nothing undone of all that the Lord commanded Moses.

**16** So Joshua took all that land, <sup>a</sup>the hills, and all the south country, <sup>a</sup>and all the land of Goshen, and the valley, and the plain, and the mountain of Israel, and the valley of the same; **17** <sup>a</sup>Even from <sup>a</sup>the mount Halak, that goeth up

<sup>1</sup> Verse 6. — <sup>m</sup> Judges 4. 2. — <sup>4</sup> Hebrew, *any breath*. — <sup>n</sup> Num. 33. 52; Deut. 7. 2; 20. 16, 17. — <sup>a</sup> Heb. *on their heap*. — <sup>o</sup> Num. 31. 9; Deut. 10. 11; 20. 14.

<sup>p</sup> Exod. 34. 11, 12. — <sup>q</sup> Deut. 7. 2. — <sup>r</sup> Chap. 1. 7. — <sup>6</sup> Heb. *he removed nothing*. — <sup>s</sup> Chap. 12. 8. — <sup>t</sup> Chap. 10. 41. — <sup>u</sup> Chap. 12. 7. — <sup>7</sup> Or, *the smooth mountain*.

**10. At that time**—After he had utterly routed and pursued the enemy even to distant cities and villages, and had destroyed their horses and chariots. The pursuit may have lasted several days. **Turned back**—From pursuing the foe. **Smote the king**—Jabin, as soon as defeated, seems to have taken refuge in his capital. Joshua did not stop to take Hazor until after he had utterly dispersed the confederate army.

**11. Smote all the souls**—For a justification of this severity see on chap. vi. 21.

**13. The cities that stood still in their strength**, that is, on mounds or eminences, (Heb. עֲלֵהֶם, *on their hill*.) were retained, since they could be easily defended, while the cities on the plains were razed. But **Hazor**, the head of the confederacy, though in a strong position, must fall, as a penalty for the past and a security for the future.

**14. All the spoil of these cities ... Israel took**—Save "the graven images of their gods." Deut. vii. 25.

**15. He left nothing undone**—Joshua here evinces two cardinal virtues: (1) diligent study of the recorded precepts; (2) perfect obedience. Here is the model of all righteous living—the intellect exercised in discovering God's

will, and the heart so imbued with love as to sway the will to execute every dictate of the conscience.

#### SUMMARY OF JOSHUA'S CONQUESTS, 16-23.

The historian, having finished the account of Joshua's Northern Campaign, here adds, as if concluding his record of the conquest, a general summary of all his work.

**16. Took all that land**—The whole land of Canaan. **Hills...** **south country...** **Goshen...** **valley**—Comp. chap. x. 40, 41, notes. **The plain**—The *Arabah*, the valley of the Jordan and the Dead Sea. **The mountain of Israel**—The northern part of the great mountain range which runs through Palestine from north to south. Compare note on chapter ix. 1. In verse 21 this phrase is used in contrast with *mountains of Judah*, the southern part of the same range. **Valley of the same**—That is, valley of Israel, not merely the plain of Philistia, but that of Jezreel also.

**17. From the Mount Halak**—The *bald mount* was south of the land of Canaan, toward Seir or Edom. "It is probably a row of white cliffs, sixty to eighty feet high, which cuts the Arabah obliquely at about eight English miles

to Seir, even unto Baalgad in the valley of Lebanon under mount Hermon: and all their kings he took, and smote them, and slew them. **18** Joshua made war a long time with all those kings. **19** There was not a city that made peace with the children of Israel, save the Hivites the inhabitants of Gibeon: all other they took in battle. **20** For it was of the Lord to harden their

*r* Deuteronomy 7. 24; chapter 12. 7.—8 Till 145: verse 23.—to Chapter 9. 3, 7.—a Deuteronomy 2. 30; Judges 14. 4; 1 Samuel 2. 25;

to the south of the Dead Sea, and divides the great valley into two parts."

—*Keil*. **Baal-gad**, *fortune-bringing Baal*, was evidently a well-known landmark in the time of Joshua, and designates the northern limit of his conquest, but its site has not been certainly identified. Some are disposed to identify it with Baalbek in Coele-Syria; others with Baniyas, near Cæsarea Philippi.

**18. Joshua made war a long time**—The only note of time in this book is the age of Caleb, forty when a spy to search out the land, (chap. xiv. 7,) and eighty-five at the end of the war. Subtract thirty-nine years in the wilderness after the sending of the spies—Calmeth says thirty-eight—and we have six or seven years for the length of the conquest, the first of which was spent in the subjugation of the South. One reason for the length of the war was "lest the beasts of the field increase upon thee." Deut. vii. 22. Another may have been the purpose of God to test their faith in his promises, to bind them together by the endurance of common hardships, and to awaken a strong love for the country purchased at such a cost.

**20. It was of the Lord to harden their hearts**—It is a Hebraism to ascribe to direct divine agency the results of human perverseness, as in the case of Pharaoh. These nations had filled the cup of their iniquity, (Gen. xv. 16,) and their idolatry and crimes demanded punishment. God therefore leaves them to judicial blindness and infatuation, and uses Israel as the rod of his anger to **destroy them utterly**. So their hardened hearts and consequent destruction were but the

hearts, that they should come against Israel in battle, that he might destroy them utterly, and that they might have no favour, but that he might destroy them, as the Lord commanded Moses. **21** And at that time came Joshua, and cut off the Anakim from the mountains, from Hebron, from Debir, from Anab, and from all the mountains of Judah, and from all the mountains of Israel:

1 Kings 12. 15; Romans 9. 18.—*y* Deuteronomy 20. 16, 17.—2 Numbers 13. 22, 33; Deuteronomy 1. 28; chapter 15. 13, 14.

certain outcome, according to Divine arrangement, of their own, as of every sinner's, free and wilful sinning. But we are not to understand, with Calvin, a miraculous operation of God, urging them on to blind fury. Their own self-induced perversity was a sufficient power for this.

**21. At that time**—During the war, the *long time* mentioned in verse 18. **The Anakim** were a race of giants in Southern Palestine. Some escaped to the Philistines and became the progenitors of Goliath. See references in margin, especially Num. xiii. 22, 33. On **Hebron** and **Debir** see notes on chap. x. 3, 38. **Anab** is probably identical with the place of this name which Dr. Robinson discovered about ten miles south of Hebron. But this could hardly be said to be in the **mountains of Judah**, where chap. xv. 48, 50, also locates it. [**Mountains of Judah** and **Israel**—The words **Judah** and **Israel** in this passage do not, as some critics have assumed, betray the hand of a writer who lived after the nation was divided into two rival kingdoms bearing these names. The use of these expressions may easily have grown out of facts existing in Joshua's time. The tribe of Judah first received its allotment, comprising nearly all Palestine south of Jerusalem, and some time elapsed before the rest of Israel—especially seven of the tribes (chap. xviii. 2)—received their allotments. It was therefore perfectly natural at that early time to apply the names here used respectively to the southern and northern parts of the great mountain range of Palestine. The central part of this range, where the sons of Joseph early received their portion, (chaps.

Joshua destroyed them utterly with their cities. **22** There was none of the Anakim left in the land of the children of Israel: only in Gaza, in <sup>a</sup>Gath, <sup>b</sup>and in Ashdod, there remained. **23** So Joshua took the whole land, <sup>c</sup>according to all that the Lord said unto Moses; and Joshua gave it for an inheritance unto Israel <sup>d</sup>according to their divisions by their tribes. <sup>e</sup>And the land rested from war.

<sup>a</sup> 1 Samuel 17. 4. — <sup>b</sup> Chapters 15. 46. — <sup>c</sup> Numbers 34. 2, &c. — <sup>d</sup> Numbers 26. 53; chapters 14 to 19.

xvi, xvii,) was sometimes called Mount Ephraim. Chap. xvii, 15.]

**22. Gath**—The city of the giant Goliath had been searched for in vain, till J. L. Porter in 1857 fixed upon the conspicuous hill now called Tell-es-safieh, at the side of the plain of Philistia, at the foot of the mountains of Judah, ten miles east of Ashdod and south by east of Ekron. Hither the ark was carried during its captivity, (1 Sam. v, 8,) and hither David twice fled for refuge while persecuted by Saul. 1 Sam. xxi, 10; xxvii, 2. **Ashdod** is the modern Esdud, on a small round hill thickly covered with trees, between Jamnia and Gaza, ten miles south of the former. This, like the two other cities here named, belonged to the Philistines, and was the chief seat of the worship of Dagon. See 1 Sam. v, 1-7, and note on Acts viii, 40.

[**23. Joshua took the whole land**—This verse and chap. xxi, 43-45, seem at first sight not to agree with chap. xiii, 1, and chap. xviii, 3, and there have not been wanting critics to urge that these passages are irreconcilably discrepant. But the discrepancy is only apparent. The key to a proper interpretation is furnished in chap. xxiii, 1-5, where in one and the same passage it is assumed that all the Canaanitish enemies are subdued, and yet some nations are to be expelled and their land possessed by Israel. Plainly the author never meant to say that every Canaanite and every city and hamlet in all Palestine was destroyed by the sword of Joshua. The land was thoroughly subdued, and the Canaanitish power and dominion were utterly broken; but the Lord had

## CHAPTER XII.

**N**OW these <sup>a</sup>are the kings of the land, which the children of Israel smote, and possessed their land on the other side Jordan toward the rising of the sun, <sup>b</sup>from the river Arnon <sup>c</sup>unto mount Hermon, and all the plain on the east: **2** <sup>d</sup>Sihon king of the Amorites, who dwelt in Heshbon, <sup>e</sup>and ruled from Arer, which <sup>f</sup>is upon the bank of the river Arnon, and from the middle of the river,

<sup>a</sup> Chap. 14. 15; 21. 44; 23. 4; 23. 1; verse 18. — <sup>b</sup> Num. 21. 24. — <sup>c</sup> Deut. 3. 8, 9. — <sup>d</sup> Num. 21. 24; Deut. 2. 23, 26; 3. 6, 16.

expressly declared that he would not utterly expel the Canaanites at once, but gradually, lest the beasts of the field multiply against them. The possession by the enemy of a number of isolated cities and districts was not therefore inconsistent with the broad statement of this passage. Compare also notes on chap. xxi, 43-45. **The land rested from war**—A concluding statement of the historical portion of the book, repeated at chap. xiv, 15, and used for the same purpose as here, namely, to form a transition from the history of the wars of the conquest to the more peaceful work of distributing the subjugated land among the several tribes.]

## CHAPTER XII.

### LIST OF THE TRANS-JORDANIC CONQUESTS, 1-6.

This chapter concludes the general history of the conquests, and is a *résumé* of the triumphs under Moses and Joshua. For the historical facts referred to in the first six verses see Num. xxi, 21-35, and Deut. ii, 26-37; iii, 1-17.

**1. The river Arnon**—This stream is now called Wady el-Mojeb. It runs circuitously for some eighty miles through a romantic rocky valley, and empties into the Dead Sea near the center of its eastern shore. It became the southern boundary of Reuben, but was originally the border between Moab and the Amorites. See on Num. xxi, 13. **Mount Hermon**—See on chap. xi, 3. **The plain on the east**—The Jordan valley east of the river.

**2. Arer**—See on chap. xiii, 16. **The middle of the river**—The midst

and from half Gilead, even unto the river Jabbok, *which is the border of the children of Ammon*; 3 And "from the plain to the sea of Chinneroth on the east, and unto the sea of the plain, *even the salt sea on the east, the way to*

*d* Deut. 3. 17.—*e* Chap. 13. 20.—*1* Or, *Teman*.  
—*2* Or, *The springs of Piggah, or, The hill*.  
—*f* Deut. 3. 17; 4. 40.

of the valley of the Arnon. This is "a more exact definition of the previous clause, since the Arnon, which flowed through the middle of the valley, formed the actual boundary; whereas Aroer stood not upon the river itself, but on the northern slope of the valley."—*Keil*. Compare chap. xiii, 16, note. **And from half Gilead**—The word **from** should be omitted both here and in the next verse. Sihon ruled over the southern half of Gilead, Og over the northern half. Verse 5. Gilead is the name of the great mountain region of limestone on the east of the Jordan, stretching from Mount Lebanon nearly to the territory of Moab. Jabbok is now the Wady Zurka, which intersects the mountain range of Gilead, and falls into the Jordan about half way between the Sea of Galilee and the Dead Sea. See on Num. xxi, 24. **Ammon** was a son of Lot, born of incestuous intercourse. Gen. xix, 30–38. The Ammonites at one time possessed the whole country between the rivers Arnon and Jabbok, from the Jordan on the west to the wilderness on the east. They were driven out of it by Sihon, king of the Amorites, and he was in turn expelled by the Israelites. Yet long subsequent to these events the country was popularly called the land of the Ammonites, and was even claimed by them. Judges xi, 12–22. For this reason the Jabbok is still called the **border of the children of Ammon**.

3. [From the plain—The **from** here, as in the previous verse, is confusing. The sense and connexion will be better seen in the following literal rendering of the Hebrew: *And (Sihon ruled) the plain, as far as the sea of Chinneroth, eastward, and as far as the sea of the plain, the Salt Sea, eastward, on the way toward Beth-jeshimoth, and from the*

Beth-jeshimoth; and from 'the south, under 'Ashdodth-pisgah: 4 And 'the coast of Og king of Bashan, *which was of 'the remnant of the giants, 'that dwelt at Ashtaroth and at Edrei, 5 And reigned in 'mount Hermon, 'and in Sal-*

*g* Num. 21. 35; Deut. 3. 4, 10.—*h* Deut. 3. 11; chap. 13. 12.—*i* Deut. 1. 4.—*k* Deut. 3. 8.—*l* Deut. 3. 10; chap. 13. 11.

*south under the ravines of Pisgah*. The **plain** is the Jordan valley on the east side from the Dead Sea to the Sea of Galilee.] The **Salt Sea** is so called because of the exceeding saltiness of its waters—twenty-six pounds of salt to one hundred of water; and a whole mountain ridge on its southwest shore is composed of rock salt. It is commonly called the Dead Sea because no living thing abides in its waters. It is thirteen hundred feet below the Mediterranean, and has no outlet. The **Sea of Chinneroth** was afterwards called the Sea of Galilee, Sea of Tiberias, and Lake of Gennesaret. See notes cut at Matt. iv, 13. **Beth-jeshimoth** means *house of desolations*. It was a Moabite city in the desert at the north-eastern extremity of the Dead Sea. Schwarz mentions a *Beth-jisimuth* as still existing in that locality, but the spot needs further examination. **Ashdodth-pisgah**—The ravines of Pisgah; the gorges at the foot or on the sides of the mountain through which the torrents flow. Comp. chap. x, 40, note, and Deut. iii, 17. The hill Pisgah was opposite Jericho, on the mountains of Abarim, but no traces of the name have been met with in modern times in that locality. See on Deut. xxiv, 1.

4. **The coast of Og**—The territory of this king, with its boundaries. **Remnant of the giants**—Or, *of the Rephaim*. A race of giants who once peopled Eastern Palestine. Gen. xiv, 5. On Og's gigantic stature see at Deut. iii, 11. On **Ashtaroth** and **Edrei** see note at chap. xiii, 31.

[5. **Salcah**—A city in the eastern border of Bashan, now called Sulkhad. It stands on a conical hill at the southern extremity of Jebel Hauran. J. L. Porter, writing in 1868, says: "It has long been deserted, and yet, as nearly as I could estimate, five hundred of its

cah, and in all Bashan, <sup>m</sup> unto the border of the Geshurites and the Maachathites, and half Gilead, the border of Sihon king of Heshbon. **6** <sup>n</sup> Them did Moses the servant of the Lord smite: and <sup>o</sup> Moses the servant of the Lord gave it *for* a possession unto the Reubenites, and the Gadites, and the half tribe of Manasseh.

**7** And these *are* the kings of the country <sup>p</sup> which Joshua and the children of Israel smote on this side Jordan on the west, from Baal-gad in the valley of Lebanon even unto the mount Halak, that goeth up to <sup>q</sup> Seir; which Joshua <sup>r</sup> gave

unto the tribes of Israel *for* a possession according to their divisions; **8** <sup>s</sup> In the mountains, and in the valleys, and in the plains, and in the springs, and in the wilderness, and in the south country; <sup>t</sup> the Hittites, the Amorites, and the Canaanites, the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites: **9** <sup>u</sup> The king of Jericho, one; <sup>v</sup> the king of Ai, which *is* beside Beth-el, one; **10** <sup>w</sup> The king of Jerusalem, one; the king of Hebron, one; **11** The king of Jarmuth, one; the king of Lachish, one; **12** The king of Eglon, one; <sup>x</sup> the king of Gezer, one; **13** <sup>y</sup> The king of Debir, one; the king of Geder, one; **14** The king of Hormah,

<sup>m</sup> Dent. 3. 14. — <sup>n</sup> Num. 21. 34. 33. — <sup>o</sup> Num. 32. 29. 33; Deut. 3. 11. 12; chap. 13. 8. — <sup>p</sup> Chap. 11. 17. — <sup>q</sup> Gen. 14. 6; 32. 3; Deut. 2. 1. 4. — <sup>r</sup> Chap. 11. 23.

<sup>s</sup> Chap. 10. 40; 11. 16. — <sup>t</sup> Exod. 3. 8; 23. 23; chap. 9. 1. — <sup>u</sup> Chap. 6. 2. — <sup>v</sup> Chap. 8. 29. — <sup>w</sup> Chap. 10. 23. — <sup>x</sup> Chap. 10. 33. — <sup>y</sup> Chap. 10. 33.

houses are still standing, and from three to four hundred families might settle in it at any moment without laying a stone, or spending an hour's labour on repairs. The circumference of the town and castle together is about three miles." **The Geshurites** were the inhabitants of Geshur, a district on the borders of Bashan and Syria, probably embracing, as Porter concludes, the northern section of the wild and rocky region now known as el-Lejah. **The Maachathites** occupied a region on the north of Palestine, and apparently extending from near the fountains of the Jordan under Hermon eastward to the plain of Damascus and the defiles of the Argob. Both the Geshurites and the Maachathites were warlike peoples, and were not expelled from their coasts by the warriors of Israel. Chap. xiii, 13. On the tribal divisions of this trans-Jordanic territory see notes on chap. xiii, 15-33.]

#### LIST OF THE KINGS SUBDUED BY JOSHUA, 7-24.

[This list is acknowledged by the most rationalistic critics to be a very ancient document. Ewald speaks of it as "a record of remarkable interest in many ways. Its distinctive antiquity would be sufficiently evident from its enumeration of cities which in those early days were great and powerful, but which afterwards sank into abso-

lute insignificance, or were never heard of again." It was not improbably composed by Joshua himself. A number of the kings here mentioned are not otherwise known, but so far as the previous history throws light on it this list follows mainly the order of the conquest. On the apparent exceptions see note on verse 16.

From the fulness of this list as compared with the previous history we at once see that it was no object of the compiler of the Book of Joshua to record a complete history of all the wars and conquests of Joshua. He has given a detailed account of only the most important, but enough to show, together with this list, that under the administration of the great captain the whole land was subdued.]

7-13. For **Baal-gad** and **Halak** see chap. xi, 17. For the Canaanitish tribes see chap. iii, 10. **Jericho**—See chap. ii, 1. **Ai** and **Bethel**—See chap. vii, 2. **Jerusalem**—See chap. x, 1. **Hebron**, **Jarmuth**, **Lachish**, and **Eglon**—See chap. x, 3. **Gezer**—See chap. x, 33. **Debir**—See chap. x, 38. **Geder** is now unknown.

**14. Hormah**—The name of this city was originally *Zephath*, (Judges i, 17,) and a trace of this latter name Dr. Robinson found in the rocky passes-Sufah in the mountain barrier which completes the plateau of Southern Palestine; but the true identification is with Sebaita, some twenty-five miles south-

one; the king of Arad, one; **15** 'The king of Libnah, one; the king of Adullam, one; **16** 'The king of Makkedah, one; 'the king of Beth-el, one; **17** The king of Tappuah, one; 'the king of Hephher, one; **18** The king of Aphek, one; the king of 'Lasharon, one; **19** The

king of Madon, one; 'the king of Hazor, one; **20** The king of 'Shimron-meron, one; the king of Achshaph, one; **21** The king of Taanach, one; the king of Megiddo, one; **22** 'The king of Kedesh, one; the king of Jokneam of Carmel, one; **23** The king of Dor in the

\* Chap. 10. 29.—a Chap. 10. 28.—b Chap. 8. 17; Judges 1. 22.—c 1 Kings 4. 10.

3 Or, *Sharon*. Isa. 33. 9.—d Chap. 11. 10. e Chap. 11. 1; 19. 15.—f Chap. 19. 37.

west of Beer-sheba. See note on Judg. i, 17. The name **Hormah** commemorates the execution of the ban or curse of utter destruction which Moses pronounced on all the dependencies of Arad, (Num. xxi, 2,) and which Judah and Simeon fulfilled. Judges i, 17. **Arad** still exists in Tell Arad, twenty miles south of Hebron. Dr. Robinson describes it as "a barren-looking eminence rising above the country around." Its king troubled Israel in their desert journey. Num. xxi, 1.

**15. Libnah**—See chap. x, 29. **Adullam** is placed, in chap. xv, 35, among the cities of the valley between Jarmuth and Socho. Eusebius and Jerome place it ten miles east of Eleutheropolis, but its site has not been ascertained.

**16. Makkedah**—See chap. x, 10. **Beth-el**—See chap. vii, 2. [Whether the kings of Beth-el and Makkedah here mentioned were slain at the taking of Ai (compare chap. viii, 17, note) and the battle of Beth-horon (chap. x, 28) is somewhat doubtful. It is expressly said that Joshua took Makkedah and destroyed its king in connexion with the great battle of Beth-horon, and it is also said that the men of Beth-el fought against Israel with the men of Ai. But the order of this list would seem to indicate that these kings fell after Joshua had conquered Southern Palestine and was returning northward. It is possible, however, that Beth-el and Makkedah may have recovered somewhat from their fall while Joshua was in the far south, and when he returned northward gave him battle again. The same may be said of Libnah in the preceding verse compared with chap. x, 30. But on the whole it seems more probable that this list does not mean to chronicle the names

of the cities in the exact order of their conquest.]

**17. Tappuah** and **Hephher** are unknown. The former is enumerated, in chap. xv, 34, among the cities of the valley of Judah, and is distinguished from Beth-Tappuah (xv, 53) in the mountains.

**18. Aphek**—This can hardly be the Aphek of the tribe of Asher (chap. xix, 30) which is mentioned in chap. xiii, 4, but it was probably identical with the Aphek not far from Jezreel, where the Philistines gathered their forces before the fearful battle of Gilboa. 1 Sam. xxix, 1. Its site has not been certainly identified. **Lasharon** is mentioned here only and is now unknown. Some think the first syllable is not an integral part of the name, but would read *king of Sharon*. But this is unlikely.

**19, 20.** On the cities mentioned in these verses see chap. xi, 1.

[**21. Taanach**—In the Scripture **Taanach** and **Megiddo** are generally mentioned together. They were the two most distinguished cities in that rich tract of land which forms the western portion of the great Plain of Esdraelon. **Taanach** is still found in the ruins of Taanuk, which are on an elevated mound near the base of the hills of Manasseh, the southeastern part of the Carmel range, and about six miles southwest of the city of Jezreel. **Megiddo** also is identified with the modern el-Lejjun, four or five miles northwest of Taanach. Both these places were chiefly famous for their association with the wars of Israel. Taanach was assigned to the Levites. Chap. xxi, 25.

**22. Kedesh**—This city is commonly called *Kedesh-Naphtali*, because it was in the territory of that tribe. It

\*coast of Dor, one; the king of <sup>b</sup>the nations of Gilgal, one; **24** The king of Tirzah, one: all the kings thirty and one.

## CHAPTER XIII. Now Joshua <sup>a</sup>was old and stricken

<sup>a</sup> Chap. 11. 2.—<sup>b</sup> Gen. 14. 1, 2; Isa. 9. 1.—<sup>c</sup> See chap. 14. 10; 23. 1.—<sup>d</sup> Heb. *to possess it*.

was both a city of refuge (chap. xx, 7) and a Levitical city. Chap. xxi, 32. Hence, as the name indicates, it was *the holy place of Naphtali*, a sanctuary and asylum for all Northern Palestine. Here the tribes assembled, at the call of Barak, to war with Jabin's hosts. Judges iv, 10. From its exposed position on the northern frontier it was among the first to fall into the hands of the Assyrian invaders. 2 Kings xv, 29. Its ruins, still bearing the name *Kedes*, lie on the top and slopes of a round hill in a little plain among the mountains a few miles northwest of Lake Merom.]

**Jokneam** was also a Levitical city in the tribe of Zebulun, (chap. xix, 11; xxi, 34,) and was identified by Robinson with Tell Kaimon, an eminence close to the northern base of Mount Carmel, and on the south bank of the Kishon, a mile from the river. On **Carmel**, see note on chap. xix, 26.

**23. Dor**—See chap. xi, 2. [**King of the nations of Gilgal**—This intimates that Gilgal was a capital whose sovereign ruled several surrounding tribes. This **Gilgal** must be distinguished both from that in the Jordan valley and that in the hills of Ephraim. It was probably the *Galutis* of Eusebius and Jerome, on the Mediterranean plain, about eighteen miles northeast of Joppa, and near to Antipatris. It is supposed by Robinson and others to be the same as the modern village of Jiljulieh, two miles southeast of the site of Antipatris.]

**24. Tirzah** is chiefly famous for having become at a later period the royal residence of the first kings of Israel. See 1 Kings xiv, 17, note. Robinson identifies it with the modern Telluzah, a large village a few miles north of Shechem, in a slightly and commanding position, and surrounded by immense groves of olive trees.

in years; and the Lord said unto him<sup>a</sup> Thou art old and stricken in years, and there remaineth yet very much land<sup>b</sup> to be possessed. **2** <sup>c</sup>This is the land that yet remaineth: <sup>d</sup>all the borders of the Philistines, and all <sup>e</sup>Geshuri,

Dent. 31. 3.—<sup>b</sup> Judges 3. 1.—<sup>c</sup> Joel 3. 4.—<sup>d</sup> Verse 13; 2 Sam. 3. 3; 13. 37, 38.

## PART SECOND.

### DIVISION AND SETTLEMENT OF CANAAN.

#### CHAPTERS XIII-XXIV.

## CHAPTER XIII.

### LIST OF UNCONQUERED CITIES AND DISTRICTS, 1-6.

**1. Joshua was old**—It was time for Joshua to be placed on the retired lists. Since he could not vigorously carry on the war, and no great captain had been raised up, it was deemed by God better that the delicate question of division should be made by Joshua, whose influence and authority would go far towards an amicable partition of the land. Joshua was now about one hundred years old. [**Much land to be possessed**—The writer proceeds (verses 2-6) to name the unconquered districts. Joshua had effectually subdued Palestine, and gained for Israel a firm and lasting foothold there. It does not militate against this fact that there remained still unsubdued a number of scattered cities and provinces in various parts of the land. See note on chap. xi, 23. ~~It is~~ usual, when a land is invaded and subdued, for the unconquered tribes to forsake the plains and seek refuge in the hills; but the unconquered nations here enumerated abode chiefly in the plains.]

**2. All the borders of the Philistines**—This territory is in the southern part of the Holy Land, lying on the Mediterranean. It was a confederacy of five powerful cities, Gaza, Ashdod, Ashkelon, Gath, and Ekron. These enemies of the sea-coast afterwards gave great trouble to the Hebrews. The **Philistines**, according to Gen. x, 14, sprang from Mizraim. See note, Acts viii, 40. **All Geshuri**—Hebrew, *all the Geshuri*. These are not to be confounded with the Geshurites of

**3** \*From Sihor, which *is* before Egypt, even unto the borders of Ekron northward, *which* is counted to the Canaanite: 'five lords of the Philistines; the Gazathites, and the Ashdothites, the Eshkalonites, the Gittites, and the Ekronites; also \*the Avites: **4** From the

e Jer. 2. 18.—f Judges 3. 3; 1 Sam. 6. 4, 16; Zeph. 2. 5.—g Deut. 2. 23.—2 Or, *The cave*.

chap. xii, 5, but were a nomadic and predatory people of the desert south of Philistia. David invaded their country and smote them while he dwelt at Ziklag. 1 Sam. xxvii, 8.

**3. Sihor** is not, in this passage, the Nile, as some have supposed, but rather the Wady el-Arish or Rhinocorura, **which is before Egypt**, that is, east of Egypt, constituting the southern boundary of Canaan. It is also called "the river of Egypt." Chap. xv, 4. **Ekron**, the most northerly city of the Philistines, is represented by the modern village of Akir twenty-four miles west of Jerusalem, containing about fifty mud houses, without a remnant of antiquity except two large, finely built wells. [**Which is counted to the Canaanite**—As all that belonged to the Canaanite was now to be divided among the nine and one half tribes of Israel, it was important to know the whole extent of their ancient territory. The Philistines were not of Canaanitish but Egyptian origin, being descended from Mizraim. Gen. x, 14. They seem to have expelled the original Canaanites, and dwelt in their coasts by the sea.] **Gazathites, and Ashdothites**—See chap. xi, 22, note. **Eshkalon** stood upon the Mediterranean, about fifteen miles north of Gaza. Retaining nearly the same name, it now consists of very thick walls and ruins of temples and theatres. **Gittites**—People of Gath. **Avites**—An early, but probably not an aboriginal, people in Philistia.

**4. [From the south]**—This is to be connected with the **Avites** in the preceding verse, and stands in contrast with **northward** in the same verse. The Masoretic pointing is here noticeably wrong. Verses 2 and 3 describe the unconquered territory in the south, from its northern limit, Ekron, to its southern, the land occupied by the

south, all the land of the Canaanites, and \*Mearah that *is* beside the Sidonians, <sup>a</sup>unto Aphek, to the borders of <sup>b</sup>the Amorites; **5** And the land of <sup>c</sup>the Giblites, and all Lebanon toward the sunrising, <sup>d</sup>from Baal-gad under mount Hermon unto the entering into Hamath.

A Chap. 19. 30.—i See Judges 1. 34.—j 1 Kings 5. 18; Ps. 83. 7; Ezek. 27. 9.—l Chap. 12. 7.

Avites; verses 4–6 describe the northern lands.] **Mearah** belonged to the Sidonians. The word **beside** is a mis-translation. **Mearah** signifies a *cavern*. Its location is a matter of conjecture. **Aphek** is identified by Gesenius with Aphaca of classical times, famous for its temple of Venus. Its modern name is Afka, situa ed some eighteen miles northeast of Beyroot. It was assigned to the tribe of Asher. Chap. xix, 30. **To the borders of the Amorites**—This is taken by most interpreters to refer to the land of Bashan, which formerly belonged to the Amorites and was ruled by Og.

[**5. Giblites**—Inhabitants of Gebal, the Gyblos of the Greeks, the modern Jebail, situated on the sea-coast at the foot of the northern slopes of Lebanon, and about seventeen miles north of Beyroot. A multitude of gray granite columns are built into the modern walls and houses, choke up the harbour, and lie scattered over the surrounding fields, and they attest the antiquity of the town. The **Giblites** were employed in building Solomon's temple, (1 Kings v. 18, note,) and, according to Ezek. xxvii, 9, were skilled in ship-building. **Baal-gad**—See on chap. xi, 17. **Hamath** was probably founded by the youngest son of Canaan, (Gen. x, 18,) and so was one of the oldest cities in the world. In Amos vi, 2, it is called "the great." Its king Toi made peace with David, (2 Sam. viii, 9,) but Solomon seems to have subjugated the kingdom and made it a part of his own empire. 2 Chron. viii, 3. It early fell into the hands of the great Assyrian conquerors. 2 Kings xviii, 34. It still exists, in the beautiful valley of the Orontes, about sixty miles southeast of Antioch, and has a population of 30,000. It lies on both sides of the river, and is



**6** All the inhabitants of the hill country from Lebanon unto <sup>m</sup> Misrephoth-maim, and all the Sidonians, them <sup>n</sup> will I drive out from before the children of Israel: only <sup>o</sup> divide thou it by lot unto the Israelites for an inheritance, as I have commanded thee.

**7** Now therefore divide this land for an inheritance unto the nine tribes, and the half tribe of Manasseh, **8** With whom the Reubenites and the Gadites have received their inheritance, <sup>p</sup> which Moses gave them, beyond Jordan east-

<sup>m</sup> Chap. 11, 8. — <sup>n</sup> See chap. 23, 13; Judges 2, 21, 23. — <sup>o</sup> Chap. 14, 1, 2. — <sup>p</sup> Num. 32, 33; Deut.

noted for the immense wheels, eighty feet in diameter, which are turned by the rapid current and used for irrigation. **The entering into Hamath** is a geographical term used to designate the northern border of Israel. Num. xxxiv, 8; 1 Kings viii, 65; 2 Kings xiv, 25. It was evidently some great pass connected with the Lebanon mountains, but which one has been a matter of dispute. Robinson and Porter identify it with the depression between the northern end of Lebanon and the Nusairiyeh mountains, which opens westward, towards the coast of the Mediterranean. But as the Israelites never occupied territory so far north as that, most sacred geographers identify this **entering** with the southern opening into the great valley of Coele-Syria. This is by far the most notable *entrance into* the ancient kingdom and land of Hamath.]

**6. Misrephoth-maim**—See chap. xi, 8, note. **Them will I drive out**—God's promises of good to man are all grounded on the implied condition of his obedience and faithful co-operation. This promise never was fulfilled, through the failure of the Hebrew nation to maintain an all-conquering faith in their divine Ally. **Divide thou it**—The pronoun **it** is to be referred to the *land* in the first verse, and the intervening verses are to be read parenthetically. Without a special command, Joshua, who supposed that all the land must be first conquered, would not have dared to allot territory still held by the enemy. **By lot**—A difficulty here arises. The land was to be

ward, *even* as Moses the servant of the Lord gave them; **9** From Aroer, that *is* upon the bank of the river Arnon, and the city that *is* in the midst of the river, <sup>q</sup> and all the plain of Medeba unto Dibon; **10** And <sup>r</sup> all the cities of Sihon king of the Amorites, which reigned in Heshbon, unto the border of the children of Ammon; **11** And Gilead, and the border of the Geshurites and Machathites, and all mount Hermon, and all Bashan unto Salcah; **12** All the kingdom of Og in Bashan, which reigned

3, 12, 13; chap. 22, 4. — <sup>q</sup> Verse 16; Num. 21, 30. — <sup>r</sup> Num. 21, 24, 25. — <sup>s</sup> Chap. 12, 5.

apportioned by lot, and yet, according to Num. xxvi, 53-56, it was also to be divided according to the size of the tribes. The best solution of this difficulty is the supposition that the **lot** only determined the relative *location* of each portion, (Num. xxxiii, 54.) while the *extent* and *bounds* were to be fixed by a board of commissioners. See chap. xiv, 1, note. The manner of the lot is unknown, but probably there were two urns, one containing the names of the tribes, and the other the location of the portions; then by drawing one card or pebble from each urn, the question would be decided by the divine Providence, which directed the lots. The **lot** thus publicly drawn would allay jealousies and prevent disputes. As the result was in exact harmony with Jacob's prophecy in his dying hour two hundred and fifty years before, and in striking fulfilment of Moses' prediction just before his death, it would confirm the Israelites' faith in Jehovah, who had inspired these predictions, and so guided the lots as to secure their accomplishment.

#### THE TRANS-JORDANIC ALLOTMENTS REVIEWED, 7-14.

**8. With whom**—That is, with the half tribe of Manasseh—not the same half which received its portion of territory west of the Jordan, opposite their Eastern brethren, but the other half.

**9-12.** On the places named in these verses see the notes on verses 16-31, where the tribal territories are fully described.

in Ashtaroth and in Edrei, who remained of 'the remnant of the giants: \* for these did Moses smite, and cast them out. **13** Nevertheless the children of Israel expelled \* not the Geshurites, nor the Maachathites: but the Geshurites and the Maachathites dwell among the Israelites until this day. **14** \* Only unto the tribe of Levi he gave none inher-

itance; the sacrifices of the Lord God of Israel made by fire *are* their inheritance, \* as he said unto them.

**15** And Moses gave unto the tribe of the children of Reuben *inheritance* according to their families. **16** And their coast was \* from Aroer, that *is* on the bank of the river Arnon, \* and the city that *is* in the midst of the river, \* and

† Deut. 3. 11; chap. 12. 4. — u Num. 21. 24, 25. — v Verse 11. — w Num. 18. 20, 23, 24; chap.

14. 3, 4. — x Verse 33. — y Chap. 12. 2. — z Num. 21. 28. — t Num. 21. 30; verse 9.

**13. Expelled not the Geshurites** — See chap. xii, 5. Geshur and Maacah so late as David's time were small independent States. 2 Sam. iii, 3; xiii, 37. The contrast between the radical policy of Moses and the conservative policy of the children of Israel in respect to these States seems to imply a censure upon the Israelites.

**14. Only unto the tribe of Levi** — Moses did not give any inheritance to the nine and a half tribes, not from lack of purpose, but from lack of opportunity. But the Levites he excluded from a territorial allotment by an express prohibition to Joshua. They received scattered cities with a narrow margin of pasture lands, but no separate share of the land. See chap. xxi. **Sacrifices** is here used, in a broad sense, to include all offerings, even those, like the show bread, which were eaten and not burned. The Vulgate has it *sacrificia et victimae*. They were to receive a tenth of the fruits of the field, the trees, and the cattle. Twelve tribes received allotments because the two sons of Joseph were each reckoned as a tribe.

#### REUBEN'S LOT, 15-23.

[From this point on through chapter xix follows a minute description of the territorial possessions assigned by Joshua to the tribes of Israel, and, while to a modern reader these chapters may appear as a dry and tiresome list of names, we should remember that they were as necessary and important as are the details of a modern deed of real estate to prevent future litigation. These lists of cities and borders were evidently compiled from the most ancient registers, and in all probability are substantially identical

with those written by Joshua's own hand, or under his supervision and direction. Their minuteness not only shows the care of the commissioners who determined them, but also the progress already made in the art of mensuration. See notes on xviii, 4, 9.

**15. Children of Reuben** — In Num. xxxii the children of Reuben and Gad are represented as petitioning Moses for an allotment on the east of Jordan, and they received their portion chiefly between the Arnon and the Jabbok. This district is now called the Belka, and Burckhardt describes the country and climate as exceedingly picturesque and delightful. "In the Belkan mountains we were refreshed by cool winds, and everywhere found a grateful shade of pine, oak, and wild pistachio trees, with a scenery more like that of Europe than any I had yet seen in Syria. The superiority of the pasturage of the Belka over that of all southern Syria is the cause of its possession being much contested. The Bedouins have this saying: 'Thou canst not find a country like the Belka.'" Reuben and Gad had much cattle, and no wonder they desired a possession in these rich and delightful pasture lands.

**16. Aroer** — A city on the northern bank of the river Arnon, and on the southern border of the territory conquered from Sihon, king of the Amorites. Compare Num. xxi, 26. Its ruins, called *Araayr*, were discovered by Burckhardt on the summit of a lofty wall of rock overlooking the ancient Arnon. It is to be distinguished from the Aroer before Rabbah (verse 25) and the Aroer in the south of Judah. 1 Sam. xxx, 28. **The city that is in the midst of the river** is a subject

all the plain by Medeba; 17 Heshbon, and all her cities that *are* in the plain; Dibon, and <sup>a</sup>Bamoth-baal, and

3 Or, *The high place of Baal, and house of Baal-meon*; see Num. 32. 38.

of dispute. Some think it is the city Aroer itself. Others conjecture that Aroer consisted of two parts, or an upper and lower city, one on the high bank of the river, and the other in the valley below, where it may have been surrounded by the waters of the stream. Others think it was a city at the junction of the Arnon and one of its tributaries, where Burckhardt saw a hill with ruins on it. Keil thinks that it was Ar of Moab, and at that junction *Ar Moab* is located on Menke's map. **Plain by Medeba**—"The whole plain of Medeba was occupied by the Reubenites; but the city itself was, perhaps, strongly fortified, and suffered to remain, like many in western Palestine, in the hands of its old inhabitants. Its ruins still exist, and bear their old name under the Arabic form *Mudeba*. They lie about four miles southeast of Heshbon, with which they are connected by an ancient paved road. The city occupied a low hill, a mile and a half in circumference. The whole site is covered with ruins; not a solitary building remains standing. The plain around it, though now desolate, is fertile, and thickly dotted with ancient cities."—*J. L. Porter*.

17. **Heshbon**—The ancient capital of Sihon, king of the Amorites. See on Num. xxi, 26–28. Its ruins, some twenty miles east of the Jordan at the spot where it empties into the Dead Sea, still bear the name of *Heshan*. It was on the summit and sides of a low hill that rises from the undulating plain, and commands a wide prospect. After its capture by the Israelites it was rebuilt by the tribe of Reuben, (Num. xxxii, 37,) and afterwards assigned to the Levites. Chap. xxi, 39. **Dibon**—A city three miles north of the Arnon, captured and occupied by the Israelites after they defeated Sihon. Num. xxi, 30. It was rebuilt by the tribe of Gad, and called *Dibon-gad*. Num. xxxii, 34; xxxiii, 45. In Isa.

Bethbaal-meon, 18 <sup>a</sup>And Jahaza, and Kedemoth, and Mephaath, 19 <sup>c</sup>And Kirjathaim, and <sup>d</sup>Sibmah, and Zareth-

b Num. 21. 38.—c Num. 32. 87.  
d Num. 32. 38.

xv, 9, it is called *Dimon*. It is identified with extensive ruins still bearing the name of *Diban*. Both Medeba and Dibon are mentioned on the famous Moabite stone recently discovered near this place. See note on 1 Kings xvi, 23. **Bamoth-baal**—That is, *high places of Baal*, so called, probably, because it had been a noted place of Baal worship. Knobel regards this place as identical with the modern Jebel Attarus, a mountain a few miles northwest of Dibon, but the true site of the place is as yet only a matter of conjecture. **Bethbaal-meon**—Called also *Baal-meon* (Num. xxxii, 38) and *Beon*. Num. xxxii, 3. It was evidently also associated with the worship of Baal. Its ruins are found in the modern *Main*, a few miles southwest of Medeba and a little north of the Wady Zerka.

18. **Jahaza**—Written also *Jahaz*. It was the place of the decisive battle of the Israelites with Sihon, (Num. xxi, 23,) and seems to have been on the confines of the desert, to the southeast of Heshbon, but its site has not been discovered. **Kedemoth** was also a city of this eastern desert, but as this region has not yet been explored its exact situation is not known. **Mephaath** is always mentioned in connexion with the two cities previously named, but, like them, is unknown. In the time of Eusebius it was the station of a Roman garrison to check the wandering Arabs of the desert.

19. **Kirjathaim**—The word means *the double city*, and in the English version is sometimes written *Kiriathaim*. In its plain Chedorlaomer and his confederate kings smote the Emim in the days of Abraham. Gen. xiv, 5. There is some uncertainty as to its site, but J. L. Porter very plausibly identifies it with Kureijat, a ruined town on the southwestern slope of Jebel Attarus. **Sibmah**—From Isa. xvi, 8, 9, and Jer. xlviii, 32, this place seems to have been famous for the cultivation of the vine.

shahar in the mount of the valley, **20** And Beth-peor, and "Ashdodpishgah, and Beth-jeshimoth, **21** 'And all the cities of the plain, and all the kingdom of Sihon king of the Amorites, which reigned in Heshbon, 'whom Moses smote' with the princes of Midian, Evi, and Rekem, and Zur, and Hur, and Reba, *which were* dukes of Sihon, dwelling in the country. **22** 'Balaam also the son of Beor, the 'soothsayer,

*e* Deut. 3. 17; chap. 12. 3.—*4* Or, *Springs of Pishgah*, or, *The hill*.—*f* Deut. 3. 10.

According to Jerome it was hardly five hundred paces distant from Heshbon, but no trace of its name has yet been found among the ruined cities of that district. **Zareth-shahar**—This place was in a **mount of the valley**, that is, a mountain overlooking the valley of the Jordan and Dead Sea. Seetzen conjectured that its name still lingered in the ruins of *Sara*, a little northwest of Jebel Attarus, and near the mouth of the Wady Zerka.

**20. Beth-peor**—That is, *house of Peor*. The town probably got its name from having been the chief seat of the worship of the Moabite god *Baal-peor*. Num. xxv, 3-5. It was situated on or beside Mount Peor, and close to the valley where the Israelites encamped immediately before descending into the plain of the Jordan. Deut. iii, 29. It was in this valley—apparently the modern Wady Hesban—Moses was buried, (Deut. xxxiv, 6,) and Mount Pisgah, on which he died, could not have been far distant to the south. The valley of Heshbon has never been fully explored. "Whatever traveller may succeed in doing so will be rewarded by the discovery of the ruins of Beth-peor, and the closest approximation that has yet been made to the place of Moses' sepulchre."—*J. L. Porter*. **Ashdodpishgah and Beth-jeshimoth**—See notes on chap. xii, 3.

**21. All the cities of the plain**—That is, all the other minor cities of the southern plain which had not been particularly described. **All the kingdom of Sihon**—These words must not be taken as the entire extent of the territory belonging to Sihon, but must be qualified by the statement of verse

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did the children of Israel slay with the sword among them that were slain by them. **23** And the border of the children of Reuben was Jordan, and the border *thereof*. This *was* the inheritance of the children of Reuben after their families, the cities and the villages thereof.

**24** And Moses *gave inheritance* unto the tribe of Gad, *even* unto the children of Gad according to their families.

*o* Num. 21. 24.—*h* Num. 31. 8.—*i* Num. 22. 5; 31. 8.—*5* Or, *diviner*.

**27**, that the northern part of his kingdom, which extended even to the Sea of Chinnereth, was allotted to Gad. The words are therefore to be understood of the southern part of his territory, which, lying south of Mount Gilead, and including by far the larger part of the kingdom, with its capital and most important cities, might easily have been called **all the kingdom**. **Dukes of Sihon**—For their defeat by Moses see Num. xxxi, 1-12. These *dukes* were sheiks of the neighbouring towns, tributary to and dependent upon Sihon.

**22. Balaam...the soothsayer**—A Syrian prophet and diviner whom Balak hired to curse Israel, but whose curses were supernaturally turned to blessings in his mouth. His history and oracles are detailed in Num. xxii-xxiv.

**23. This was the inheritance of...Reuben**—The tribe of Reuben never did excel. Compare Gen. xlix, 4. They were never noted for mighty deeds, and their indifference in the war with Sisera, when the mighty ones went up to battle and they "abode among the sheepfolds to hear the bleatings of the flocks," is properly satirized in the song of Deborah. Judges v, 16, note. Their territory was overrun by the army of Tiglath-pileser, and they were carried away captive into upper Mesopotamia. 1 Chron. v, 26. Then their depopulated cities and country were repossessed by their ancient owners, the Moabites, and hence it is that we find so many cities of Reuben afterwards in possession of the Moabites.

GAD'S LOT, 24-28.

**24. The tribe of Gad** had their inheritance in the central district of

O. T.

**25** \*And their coast was Jazer, and all the cities of Gilead, and half the land of the children of Ammon, unto Aroer

† Num. 32. 35.—‡ Comp. Num. 21. 26, 28, 29, with

eastern Palestine, between Reuben and Manasseh, so that the mountains of Gilead fell largely to them. Mr. Buckingham describes this elevated region as having "its plains covered with a fertile soil, its hills clothed with forests, and at every new turn presenting the most magnificent landscapes that could be imagined. Every new direction of our path opened up to us views which surprised and charmed us by their grandeur and beauty. Deep valleys, filled with murmuring streams and verdant meadows, offered all the luxuriance of cultivation, and herds and flocks gave life and animation to the scene." Mr. E. Smith travelled through Gilead in 1834, and found the ground clothed with luxuriant grass a foot or more in height, and decked with a rich variety of wild flowers.

**25. Jazer**—Written also *Jaazer*. It was an important city, having dependent villages, (Num. xxi, 32,) and giving its name to the surrounding country, "the land of Jazer." Num. xxxii, 1. It was one of the four cities of Gad assigned to the Levites. Chap. xxi, 39. Jeremiah (chap. xlviii, 32) speaks of the "sea of Jazer," which may have been some lake or pool in the vicinity. Burckhardt, Van de Velde, and others, identify it with a ruined town called *Seir* or *Sir*, some twelve miles north of Heshbon. **All the cities of Gilead**—That is, of the southern portion of Gilead, for the northern was given to Manasseh. Ver. 31. **Half the land of the children of Ammon**—The country between the Arnon and the Jabbok. See Judges xi, 13, note. This ancient possession of the children of Lot Israel captured, not of Ammon, but of Sihon, king of the Amorites, who had previously taken it out of the hand of the king of Moab. Num. xxi, 26. Yet it retained the name of its ancient owners. **Aroer that is before Rabbah**—That is, Aroer is before or in front of Rabbah to one who advances towards Rabbah from the Jordan. This Aroer

that is before Rabbah; **26** And from Heshbon unto Ramath-mizpeh, and Betonim; and from Mahanaim unto the

Deut. 2. 19; Judg. 11. 13, 15.—m 2 Sam. 11. 1; 12. 26.

is supposed by many to be identical with the ruined site Ayra, which Burckhardt discovered about seven miles southwest of es-Salt, and nearly half way between the Jordan and Rabbah. **Rabbah** was the great city and capital of the Ammonites, and is called in Deut. iii, 11 *Rabbath of the children of Ammon*, and here Og's great iron bedstead was preserved. But as Israel was not to meddle with the children of Ammon, (Deut. ii, 19,) Rabbah was not disturbed, nor included in the territory of Gad. It was afterwards besieged and taken by David. 2 Sam. xii, 29. Its ruins are known under the modern name of *Amman*, about twenty-two miles east of the Jordan.

**26. From Heshbon**—Which belonged to the Reubenites, (ver. 17,) but stood so near the boundary between Reuben and Gad as to be occupied in common by both tribes. Compare verse 17 and chap. xxi, 39, notes. **Ramath-mizpeh**—Probably identical with *Ramoth-gilead* and *Mizpeh of Gilead*, which was allotted to the Levites and appointed one of the cities of refuge. Chap. xx, 8; xxi, 38. Most modern scholars are inclined to locate it at the village of *es-Salt*, thirty miles north of Heshbon. "This is indicated," says Porter, "(1) by its position on the summit of a steep hill; (2) by its old ecclesiastical name, *Saltus Hieraticus*, which appears to point to its original sacerdotal and holy character; (3) by the fact that about two miles to the northwest of es-Salt is the highest peak of the mountain range, still bearing the name *Jebel Jilead*; (4) by the statement of Eusebius that Ramoth-Gilead lay in the fifteenth mile from Philadelphia towards the west, and this is the exact distance of es-Salt from Rabbath-Ammon." From its lofty position and sacred character it became a great sanctuary of the eastern tribes. See Judg. x, 17, note. **Betonim**—Probably identical with a ruined village Batneh, marked on the

border of Debir; **27** And in the valley, 'Beth-aram, and Beth-nimrah, and Succoth, and Zaphon, the rest of the kingdom of Sihon king of Heshbon, Jordan and *his* border, *even* unto the edge of the sea of Chinnereth on the other side Jordan eastward. **28** This is the in-

n Num. 32. 36.—o Gen. 32. 17;

maps of Menke and Van de Velde about five miles west of es-Salt. **Mahanaim**—The place where Jacob met with the angels of God, and therefore called by a name which signifies a *double host* or *camp*. Gen. xxxii, 2, note. It stood on the border between Gad and Manasseh, (verse 30,) and was assigned to the Levites. Chap. xxi, 38. Here after Saul's death Abner made Ishbosheth king, (2 Sam. ii, 8,) and to this place David fled during the rebellion of Absalom. Its site is yet a matter of uncertainty. Some think it is the modern Mahneh, near Jebel Ajlun; while Porter suggests that it may have stood upon the site now occupied by the ruins of Gerasa. **The border of Debir** is utterly unknown. The Hebrew for

of Debir is דְּבִיר, and the first letter ל, *lamedh*, may be a part of the name, *Lidbir*. Reland thinks it may be the same as *Lodebar*, which, according to 2 Sam. ix, 4, must have been in this same vicinity.

**27. The valley**—The Jordan valley from the border of Reuben northward to the sea of Chinnereth. **Beth-aram** is doubtless the same as *Beth-haran* in Num. xxxii, 36. In Eusebius, Jerome, and the Talmud it is called Bethramtha. It has not been accurately identified, but very probably will be found at the ruins called er-Ram just north of the Wady Heshban. The site of **Beth-nimrah** is still preserved in Nimrin, located, according to Robinson's map, near the mouth of the Wady Shoaib, and about twelve miles north of er-Ram. In Num. xxxii, 3, it is called simply *Nimrah*. From its abundance of water and likeness of name in the Septuagint it seems to meet the requirements of the Bethabara of the New Testament. See note on John i, 28. **Succoth**—An

inheritance of the children of Gad after their families, the cities and their villages.

**29** And Moses gave inheritance unto the half tribe of Manasseh: and *this was the possession* of the half tribe of the children of Manasseh by their families.

1 Kings 7. 46.—p Num. 34. 11.

important place east of the Jordan, where Jacob built a house and made booths for his cattle after his meeting with Esau. Gen. xxxiii, 17. Its exact location is unknown. **Zaphon** is mentioned again only at Judges xii, 1, where see note. No modern trace of it has been discovered. **The rest of the kingdom of Sihon**—That is, the portion of it that was left after allotting the southern part to the tribe of Reuben. See note on verse 21. **Sea of Chinnereth**—See note on chap. xi, 2. The subsequent fate of the children of Gad was very like that of the tribe of Reuben. See note on verse 23.

MANASSEH'S (EASTERN) LOT, 29-33.

**29. The half tribe of Manasseh**—The division of a tribe in Israel into two parts is a strange and singular fact. In some respects it seems accidental, in other respects providential. "Machir, Jair, and Nobah, the sons of Manasseh, were no shepherds. They were pure warriors, who had taken the most prominent part in the conquest of those provinces which up to that time had been conquered, and whose deeds are constantly referred to with credit and renown. Num. xxxii, 39; Deut. iii, 13-15. 'Jair the son of Manasseh took all the tract of Argob... sixty great cities.' 'Nobah took Kenath and the daughter towns thereof, and called it after his own name.' Deut. xxxii, 42. 'Because Machir was a man of war, therefore he had Gilead and Bashan.' Chap. xvii, 1. The district which these ancient warriors conquered was the most difficult in the whole country. And had they not remained in these wild and inaccessible districts, but had gone forward and taken their lot with the rest, who shall say what changes might not have occurred in the history of their nation

**30** And their coast was from Mahanaim, all Bashan, all the kingdom of Og king of Bashan, and "all the towns of Jair, which *are* in Bashan, threescore cities: **31** And half Gilead, and "Ashtarothe, and Edrei, cities of the kingdom of Og in Bashan, *were pertaining* unto the children of Machir the son of Manasseh, *even* to the one half of the "children of Machir by their families. **32** These *are the countries* which Moses did dis-

q Num. 32. 41; 1 Chron. 2. 23.—r Chap. 12. 4.  
s Num. 32. 39, 40.

through the presence of such energetic and warlike spirits?"—*Grove*, in Smith's Dict. But perhaps these very warlike spirits were providentially settled in these eastern hills to save western Palestine from the proximity of dangerous foes that might otherwise have settled there.

The country of Bashan, occupied by these Manassites, was, according to Porter, "the richest in all Palestine. It is to this day the granary of a great part of Syria. Its whole surface is dotted with ruined or deserted towns and villages."

**30. All Bashan**—This region, distinguished for its fertility, thrifty herds and flocks, and lofty oaks, extended from Gilead on the south to Mount Hermon on the north, and from the Jordan valley on the west far into the eastern and northeastern desert. See on Deut. iii, 1-14. **All the towns of Jair**—That is, the towns that were taken by Jair, the son of Manasseh, and called by his own name. Num. xxxii, 41. They have the name *Havoth-jair* and *Bashan-havoth-jair*, (Deut. iii, 14,) and Porter affirms the two names are not to be confounded. "The towns of Havoth-jair were situated in Gilead south of the river Hieromax, while those of Bashan-havoth-jair were *in Bashan*, and identical with the sixty great cities of Argob." According to this distinction the **threescore cities** here mentioned constituted *Bashan-havoth-jair*. See 1 Kings iv, 13, note.

**31. Half Gilead**—The northern half, for the southern was assigned to Gad. Ver. 25. **Ashtarothe**—Generally supposed to be identical with the

tribute for inheritance in the plains of Moab, on the other side Jordan, by Jericho, eastward. **33** "But unto the tribe of Levi Moses gave not *any* inheritance: the LORD God of Israel *was* their inheritance," as he said unto them.

#### CHAPTER XIV.

**A**ND these *are the countries* which the children of Israel inherited in the land of Canaan, "which Eleazar the

t Verse 14; chap. 18. 7.—u Num. 18. 20; Deut. 10. 9; 18. 1, 2.—a Num. 34. 17, 18.

*Ashteroth-karnaim* of Gen. xiv. 5. It was doubtless so called from being the seat of worship of the Phœnician goddess Ashtoreth, the Greek Astarte. Its ruins are supposed to lie at the modern Tell-Astereli, some fifteen miles east of the Sea of Galilee. **Edrei** was the other chief city of the kingdom of Bashan, and here King Og was defeated and slain. Num. xxi, 33-35. It was a stronghold among the rocks, and its ruins have been found in the modern Edra, thirty miles or more northeast of the Sea of Galilee. J. L. Porter visited the ruins a few years ago and thus wrote: "The situation is most remarkable; without a single spring of living water; without river or stream; without access, except over rocks and through defiles all but impassable; without tree or garden. In selecting the site every thing seems to have been sacrificed to security and strength. The huge masses of shattered masonry could scarcely be distinguished from the rocks that encircled them, and all, ruins and rocks alike, are black as if scathed by lightning." **Unto the children of Machir**—"Because he was a man of war, therefore he had Gilead and Bashan." Chap. xvii, 1. **Even to the one half**—The heads of the families of this half are named in 1 Chron. v, 24.]

#### CHAPTER XIV.

INTRODUCTION TO THE WEST JORDANIC ALLOTMENTS, 1-5.

{ **1. These are the countries**—Passing from the eastern side of the Jordan, our historian now traces the boundaries of the tribes on its western

priest, and Joshua the son of Nun, and the heads of the fathers of the tribes of the children of Israel, distributed for inheritance to them. **2** <sup>a</sup>By lot *was* their inheritance, as the Lord commanded by the hand of Moses, for the nine tribes, and *for* the half tribe. **3** <sup>a</sup>For Moses had given the inheritance of two tribes and a half tribe on the other side Jordan: but unto the Levites he gave none inheritance among them. **4** For <sup>a</sup>the children of Joseph were two tribes, Manasseh and Ephraim: therefore they gave no part unto the Levites in the land, save cities to

<sup>b</sup> Num. 26. 55; 33. 54; 34. 13.—<sup>c</sup> Chap. 13. 8, 23. <sup>d</sup> Gen. 48. 5; 1 Chron. 5. 1, 2.—<sup>e</sup> Num. 35. 2; chap. 21. 2.

side, constituting the main area of the Holy Land. The directions of Moses (Num. xxvi, 53–56) were obeyed in the allotment. Yet God so overruled the lots as to fulfil the predictions of the prophecies of the dying Jacob. Gen. xlix. **Eleazar the priest**—The term *High Priest* had not yet been invented. Eleazar was the third son of Aaron, and came into the high-priesthood by the death of his two sacrilegious brothers, Nadab and Abihu. See notes on Exod. vi, 23; Lev. x, 1; Num. iii, 4; Num. xx, 28. He aided Moses in the census of the people, (Num. xxvi, 3,) assisted at the inauguration of Joshua, and now is the proper person to superintend the sacred lots by which the conquered lands were divided. The original document describing the division we might naturally suppose to be prepared under his superintendence and preserved in the archives of the tabernacle. In the form in which the records here stand in the sacred volume they form a part of the *law*, and they were, we might suppose, preserved with the sacred records in the ark of the covenant. The persons who were to divide western Palestine among the nine tribes and the half tribe of Manasseh were designated by Jehovah before the death of Moses, and their names are given in Num. xxxiv, 17–28.

**4. Joseph...two tribes**—So making up the twelve tribes without reckoning the tribe of Levi, who were to have no allotment, but were to be

dwell *in*, with their suburbs for their cattle and for their substance. **5** <sup>a</sup>As the Lord commanded Moses, so the children of Israel did, and they divided the land.

**6** Then the children of Judah came unto Joshua in Gilgal: and Caleb the son of Jephunneh the <sup>a</sup>Kenezite said unto him, Thou knowest <sup>a</sup>the thing that the Lord said unto Moses the man of God concerning me and thee <sup>b</sup>in Kadesh-barnea. **7** Forty years old *was* I when Moses the servant of the Lord <sup>c</sup>sent me from Kadesh-barnea to spy out the land; and I brought him word

<sup>f</sup> Num. 32. 12; chap. 15. 17.—<sup>g</sup> Num. 14. 24, 30; Deut. 1. 36, 38.—<sup>h</sup> Num. 13. 26.—<sup>i</sup> Num. 13. 6; 14. 6.

scattered among the tribes as judicial and ecclesiastical advisers and judges among the people. }

#### CALEB'S INHERITANCE, 6–15.

**6. Children of Judah came**—Caleb was of the tribe of Judah, and probably by his request the elders of his own tribe accompany him to Gilgal, lest they might suspect that he was using his office of commissioner to carve out a splendid portion for himself. They may have seconded his petition as having an important bearing on the question of their own portion, which would naturally contain the tract of Caleb, their tribesman, so that the granting of his request would virtually establish southern Canaan as their lot. **Caleb** was one of the two spies so famous for their faith in Jehovah, and for their courage and independence in making a very unpopular minority report, for which they narrowly escaped stoning at the hands of the infuriated people. Num. xiv, 6–10. They were spared in the ensuing plague which swept off the faithless ten, and were also excepted when Moses declared that none who were above twenty years old when they came out of Egypt should enter Canaan. Num. xiv, 29, 30. **Kenezite**—That is, a son of Kenaz. He was a pure Hebrew, not an Edomite. **Kadesh-barnea**—Chap. x, 41, note.

**{ 7. Forty years old was I**—When, in the plains of Moab near the banks of the Jordan, Moses numbered Israel, not a man was left of those who



again as *it was* in mine heart. 8 Nevertheless <sup>a</sup>my brethren that went up with me made the heart of the people melt: but I wholly <sup>1</sup>followed the Lord my God. 9 And Moses swore on that day, saying, <sup>2</sup>"Surely the land <sup>a</sup>whereon thy feet have trodden shall be thine inheritance, and thy children's for ever, because thou hast wholly followed the Lord my God. 10 And now, behold, the Lord hath kept me alive, <sup>a</sup>as he

<sup>k</sup> Num. 13. 31, 32; Deut. 1. 28.—<sup>l</sup> Num. 14. 24; Deut. 1. 36.—<sup>m</sup> Num. 14. 23, 24; Deut. 1. 36;

had heard the law thundered from Sinai, save these two veterans who now stand face to face, Caleb and Joshua. Num. xxvi, 63. The desert of the sojourn had been the nation's tomb. Joshua had succeeded Moses as leader of the tribes; Caleb now comes forward to claim the patrimony that had been promised by Jehovah to him. **In mine heart**—Heart means here not the affections solely, but the understanding. See note on Rom. x, 10. He made his report a perfect transcript of things as he saw them, uncoloured by cowardice, or faithlessness to Jehovah, or compliance with the people.

8. **My brethren**—Words of tenderness for his long-remembered comrades. **Heart...melt**—In modern sense this would indicate compassion; in the ancient, *fear*. **Wholly followed the Lord my God**—This phrase **wholly followed** is emphatically repeated from Jehovah's own words, (Num. xiv, 24; Deut. i, 36,) here reiterated at verse 9 and at verse 14. This wholeness of his adherence to Jehovah is explained by his and Joshua's loyal speech, given Num. xiv, 6-10. There no treachery of their **brethren** the fellow-spies, no panic of their own, no fury of the people, could disturb the calmness of their witness for God. Then and there the sentence of death in the wilderness, passed upon the entire people, left them untouched. And of that eventful day these two Hebrew princes were now the sole living and speaking mementoes.

9. **Moses swore**—The oath was God's own oath, (Num. xiv, 24; Deut. i, 13,) but declared and accepted by Moses.

10. **Kept me alive**—Not only ex-

said, these forty and five years, even since the Lord spake this word unto Moses, while the *children of Israel* <sup>1</sup>wandered in the wilderness: and now, lo, I *am* this day fourscore and five years old. 11 <sup>2</sup>As yet I *am as* strong this day as *I was* in the day that Moses sent me: as my strength *was* then, even so *is* my strength now, for war, both <sup>a</sup>to go out, and to come in. 12 Now therefore give me this mountain, whereof

chap. 1. 3.—<sup>n</sup> Num. 13. 22.—<sup>o</sup> Num. 14. 30.—<sup>1</sup> Heb. *walked*.—<sup>p</sup> Deut. 34. 7.—<sup>q</sup> Deut. 31. 2.

cepted me from the immediate plague inflicted on the rebellious, and from the death-sentence that laid the nation as corpses in the desert, but from all the decay of years, and the perils of this war of conquest.

11. **Strong this day**—As strong to defend his heritage as he was forty-five years ago to win it. He had kept the ten commandments which his own ears had heard from Jehovah's voice so well, that they had been permanent youth in his blood and bones. **Go out**—To the battle. **Come in**—With the spoils. See Judges i, 20. This was no senile boast of youthful strength, as the three sons of Anak found to their cost. Chap. xv, 14. The old hero never became, like his fellow Joshua, ruler of all Israel, but he had a son-in-law-nephew that did. }

12. **Give me this mountain**—Hebron is the highest point of southern Palestine, (see chap. x, 3, note,) higher even than Jerusalem. "The spot on which Caleb had set his heart was the fertile valley of Hebron. Of all the country which the twelve spies, with Caleb and Joshua at their head, had traversed, this is the one scene which remains fixed in the sacred narrative, as if because fixed in the memory of those who made their report. There was one field in the whole land which they might fairly call their own, the field which contained the rocky cave of Machpelah, with the graves of their first ancestors. But it was not even this sacred enclosure which had most powerfully impressed the simple explorers of that childlike age. It was the winding valley whose terraces were covered with the rich verdure and the

the Lord spake in that day; for thou heardest in that day how 'the Anakim *were* there, and *that* the cities *were* great and fenced: 'if so be the Lord *will* be with me, then 'I shall be able to drive them out, as the Lord said. **13** And Joshua 'blessed him, 'and gave unto Caleb the son of Jephunneh Hebron for an inheritance. **14** 'He-

bron therefore became the inheritance of Caleb the son of Jephunneh the Kenezite unto this day, because that he 'wholly followed the Lord God of Israel. **15** And 'the name of Hebron before *was* Kirjath-arba; *which* *Arba* *was* a great man among the Anakim. 'And the land had rest from war.

*r* Num. 13. 23, 33.—*s* Psu. 18. 32, 34; 60. 12; Rom. 8. 31.—*t* Chap. 15. 14; Judges 10. 2.  
*u* Chap. 23. 6.—*v* Chap. 10. 37; 15. 13; Judges

1. 20; see chap. 21. 11, 12; 1 Chron. 6. 53, 56.—*x* Chap. 21. 12.—*y* Verses 8, 9.—*z* Gen. 23. 2; chap. 15. 13.—*a* Chap. 11. 23.

golden clusters of the Syrian vine, so rarely seen in Egypt, so beautiful a vesture of the bare hills of Palestine. In its rocky hills are still to be seen the ancient winepresses. Thence came the gigantic cluster, (Num. xiii, 24,) the only relic of the Promised Land which was laid at the feet of Moses."—*Stanley*. **Anakim**—The *long-necked*; called also sons of Anak; a race of giants in southern Canaan. See on Num. xiii, 28, 33.

**13. And Joshua blessed him**—Bade him God speed in his warfare, and invoked the help of Jehovah to attend him. **And gave unto Caleb**—Joshua could not resist an appeal from his venerable associate spy, based on facts of which he himself had been cognizant.

**15. Before was Kirjath-arba**—That is, City of Arba. The original name, in Abraham's day, was Hebron. Afterwards Arba, a giant, one of the Anakim, conquered the city and called it the City of Arba. See chap. x. 3, note. **And the land had rest from war**—This is only a repetition of chap. xi, 23, to prepare the way for the account of the peaceful allotment of the land. As Caleb's portion was really "among the children of Judah," the actual conquest of it is recorded under the head of Judah's lot. See chap. xv, 13–19.

## CHAPTER XV.

### ORIGINAL LOT OF JUDAH, 1–63.

[The tribe of Judah received the first allotment, and a very disproportionate share of the Land of Promise, for its territory embraced nearly the half of western Palestine. This original lot, however, was afterwards diminished by

assigning a part of it to Simeon. Chap. xix, 1. The original borders, districts, and cities of Judah are detailed with great minuteness in this chapter, and to a much greater extent than those of any other tribe. Grove suggests that "this may be due either to the fact that the lists were reduced to their present form at a later period, when the monarchy resided with Judah, and when more care would naturally be bestowed on them than on those of any other tribe; or to the fact that the territory was more important, and more thickly covered with towns and villages, than any other part of Palestine."—*Smith's Bib. Dict.* Many and great were the prophetic blessings pronounced on Judah by his father. Gen. xlix, 8–12. He was to be the pride and glory of his brethren, the mighty conqueror, whose symbol was the lion, and whose pre-eminence was represented by the sceptre and the ruler's staff, never to depart "until Shiloh come." The same prophetic blessing also characterized his section of the Promised Land. "The elevation of the hills and tablelands of Judah is the true climate of the vine, and at Hebron, according to the Jewish tradition, was its primeval seat. He bound 'his foal unto the vine, and his ass's colt unto the choice vine; he washed his garments in wine, and his clothes in the blood of grapes.' Gen. xlix, 11. A vineyard on a hill of olives, with the 'fence,' and the 'stones gathered out,' and the 'tower in the midst of it,' is the natural figure which, both in the prophetic and evangelical records, represents the kingdom of Judah. Isa. v, 1; Matt. xxi, 33. The vine was the emblem of the nation on the coins of the Maccabees, and in the colossal

## CHAPTER XV.

**THIS** then was the lot of the tribe of the children of Judah by their families; <sup>a</sup>*even* to the border of Edom the wilderness of Zin southward *was* the uttermost part of the south coast. **2** And their south border was from the shore of the salt sea, from the <sup>b</sup>bay that looketh southward: **3** And it went out to the south side <sup>c</sup>to <sup>d</sup>Maaleh-acrabbim, and passed along to Zin, and ascended up on the south side unto Kadesh-barnea, and passed along to Hezron, and went up to Adar, and fetched a

<sup>a</sup> Num. 34. 8. — <sup>b</sup> Num. 33. 36. — <sup>c</sup> 1 Heb. *tongue*.  
<sup>d</sup> Num. 34. 4.

cluster of golden grapes which overhung the porch of the second temple." — *Stanley*.

**1. Even to the border of Edom** — The latter part of this verse should be rendered, *to the border of Edom the wilderness of Zin southward from the extremity of Temun*. Temau was a district in the land of Edom, and lay, perhaps, not far southeast of the Dead Sea. Its position, however, is unknown. The sense of the whole verse is: Judah's lot extended into the extreme south, bordering on Edom and the desert of Zin. The Edomites occupied the mountainous region directly south of the Dead Sea, and the wilderness of Zin was the desert tract extending westward from this, in which lay Kadesh. See on Num. xx. 1; xxxiii. 36.

**2. Their south border** seems to have fetched a curve or semicircle from the south end of the Dead Sea, sweeping far round by the wilderness of Zin, and thence northwesterly to the Mediterranean. **Salt sea** — Now commonly called the Dead Sea, and supposed to cover the ancient vale of Siddim and the destroyed cities of Sodom and Gomorrah. See on Gen. xiv. 3; xix. 25. **The bay that looketh southward** — Literally, *the tongue that turneth southward*. The southernmost portion of the Dead Sea somewhat resembles a tongue in shape. Compare Isa. xi. 15.]

**3. It went out to the south side** — Or, *on the south side*. That is, it started out on its southward course. **Maaleh-acrabbim** — The word means *ascent of scorpions*, and was probably the

compass to Karkaa: **4** *From thence* it passed <sup>e</sup>toward Azmon, and went out unto the river of Egypt; and the goings out of that coast were at the sea: this shall be your south coast. **5** And the east border *was* the salt sea, *even* unto the end of Jordan. And *their* border in the north quarter *was* from the bay of the sea at the uttermost part of Jordan: **6** And the border went up to <sup>f</sup>Beth-hoglah, and passed along by the north of Beth-arabah; and the border went up to the stone of Bohan the son of Reuben: **7** And the border went up toward

<sup>2</sup> Or, *The going up to Acrabbim*. — <sup>d</sup> Num. 34. 5. — <sup>e</sup> Chap. 18. 19. — <sup>f</sup> Chap. 18. 17.

name of a pass in the bald mountain (Halak) eight miles south of the Dead Sea, described in note, chap. xi. 17. It doubtless derived its name from its scorpions, which abound in all this region. **Passed along to Zin** — That is, went along till it joined the edge of the wilderness of Zin, which stretches off to the west and southwest of Mount Hor. **Kadesh-barnea** — The modern Ain Gadis. See chap. x. 41, note. **Hezron, Adar, and Karkaa** are now unknown. Compare Num. xxxiv. 1-5.

**4. Azmon** is also unknown. **River of Egypt** — Wady-el-Arish. See note chap. xiii. 3. **At the sea** — The Mediterranean Sea.

**5. East border was the salt sea** — Which formed a boundary line for nearly fifty miles. **End of Jordan** — That is, the mouth of the Jordan; called also in this same verse *the uttermost part of Jordan*. **Bay of the sea** — The northern tongue or extremity of the Dead Sea, at the point where it receives the waters of the Jordan.

**6. Beth-hoglah** — The modern Ain Hadjla, a fine spring of beautiful sweet water at the north of the Dead Sea, about two miles west of the Jordan. **Beth-arabah** — *House of solitude*: in the desert of Judah, and apparently not far from Beth-hoglah. It is mentioned again in verse 61 and chap. xviii. 22, and in chap. xviii. 18 is called simply Arabah; first allotted to Judah, then relinquished to Benjamin. **Stone of Bohan** — This cannot be located. It was a memorial of a Reubenite warrior slain in the conquest of the land.

Debir from <sup>a</sup>the valley of Achor, and so northward, looking toward Gilgal, that ~~is~~ before the going up to Adummim, which ~~is~~ on the south side of the river: and the border passed toward the waters of Enshemesh, and the goings out thereof were at <sup>b</sup>Enrogel: **8** And the border

<sup>a</sup> Chap. 7. 26. — <sup>b</sup> 2 Sam. 17. 17; 1 Kings 1. 9.   
 <sup>c</sup> Chap. 18. 16; 2 Kings 23. 10; Jer. 19. 2, 6.

**7. Achor**—See chap. vii, 24, note. This **Debir** is not the same with that named in x, 38, but another, evidently not far from the Valley of Achor. Its site is unknown. **Gilgal**—See on chap. v, 9. It is called *Geliloth*, chap. xviii, 17. [**Adummim**—Literally, *the ascent of the red ones*, and so called because of the frequent effusion of blood there by robbers, (compare Luke x, 30, note,) or else from some early tribe of red men (possibly Edomites) who dwelt there. Keil thinks the name originated in the red colour of the rocks; but Stanley says there are no red rocks here, but the whole pass is white limestone. Adummim was probably at or near the modern *ed-Dem*, marked on Menke's map about half way between Jerusalem and Jericho. This is on the **south side** of Wady Kelt, which is doubtless **the river** here referred to.] **En-shemesh**—The *fountain of the sun*, usually identified with the Well of the Apostles, below Bethany on the road to Jericho; but Dr. Robinson says, "It may very possibly have been the fountain near St. Saba." **En-rogel**—The *fountain of the fuller*. The Arabic version of this verse calls it the *Well of Job*, which is its modern name. [An old tradition and common opinion has identified it with the deep well situated just below the junction of the Valley of Hinnom with that part of the Valley of Jehoshaphat. It is also called the Well of Nehemiah. But Dr. Bonar identifies it with the Fountain of the Virgin, and more recently M. Ganneau maintains the same opinion, having discovered a rock Zehwele near this fountain, which he identifies with the Stone of Zoheleth mentioned 1 Kings i, 9.]

**8. Valley of the son of Hinnom**—A long-standing and almost unanimous opinion of all explorers of the Holy Land identifies this valley

went up <sup>1</sup>by the valley of the son of Hinnom unto the south side of the <sup>2</sup>Jebusite; the same <sup>3</sup>is Jerusalem: and the border went up to the top of the mountain that *lieth* before the valley of Hinnom westward, which <sup>4</sup>is at the end <sup>5</sup>of the valley of the giants northward:

<sup>1</sup> Chap. 18. 28; Judges 1. 21; 19. 10.   
 <sup>2</sup> Chap. 18. 16.

with the deep and narrow ravine that bounds Jerusalem on the west and south. But Capt. Warren, of the Palestine Exploration Company, is convinced that the Hinnom is identical with the Kedron Valley, which is on the east of Jerusalem. In Jer. xix, 2, the valley is said to be "by the entry of the east gate," but there the Hebrew is the *Charsuth*, or Potter's Gate, and the precise meaning is by no means clear. But Robinson (Bib. Res., vol. i, p. 269) says that several Arabic writers of the twelfth century call the Kedron valley *Jehennam*. According to Capt. Warren the border of Judah and Benjamin ran over the southern slope of the mount of Olives, "across from the rock Zoheleth in Siloam to the Virgin's Fount, thence up the Kedron until nearly opposite the south-southeast angle of the noble sanctuary, where it crossed over the hill of Moriah at the southern side of the temple, thence up the Tyropœan Valley to the Jaffa Gate, and so on to Lifta." But this needs confirmation, and ill agrees with what follows. **South side of the Jebusite**—That is, the boundary line ran south of Jerusalem, the city of the Jebusite. The Jebusite citadel, which was taken by David and called the stronghold of Zion, (2 Sam. v, 7,) is commonly supposed to have been on the modern Zion; but Capt. Warren's topography places the boundary on the north side of the modern Zion. **The mountain that lieth before the valley of Hinnom westward**—This most naturally indicates the eminence west of Jerusalem which forms the western side or wall of the upper part of what is now commonly called the Valley of Hinnom. The brow of this hill, according to Robinson, is a rocky ridge. **Which is at the end of the valley of the giants northward**—This is obscure.

9 And the border was drawn from the top of the hill unto "the fountain of the water of Nephtoah, and went out to the cities of mount Ephron; and the border was drawn "to Baalah, which is "Kirjath-jearim: 10 And the border compassed from Baalah westward unto mount Seir, and passed along unto the side of mount Jearim, which is Chesalon, on the north

m Chap. 18. 15. — n 1 Chron. 13. 6.  
o Judges 18. 12.

What is at the end of the valley? and is this point north of the valley, or the valley north of the point in question? We take the meaning to be, that the mountain (just mentioned) is at the northern end of the Valley of the Giants. **The valley of the giants**, or of *Rephaim*, is usually identified with the upland plain to the southwest of Jerusalem. "This plain," says Robinson, "is broad, and descends gradually towards the southwest until it contracts in that direction into a deeper and narrower valley, called lower down Wady el-Werd, which unites further on with Wady Ahmed, and finds its way to the western plain." So it is sufficiently enclosed with hills to be called a **valley**, (*emek*), and no other valley or plain so well answers the Scripture notices as this. Here the Philistines encamped when they came to war with David. 2 Sam. v, 18.]

9. **Nephtoah** is identified by Dr. Barclay with Ain Lifta, a spring three miles northwest of Jerusalem, near a village of the same name. **Mount Ephron** is probably the range of hills on the west side of the Wady Beit Hauina, the traditional Valley of the Terebinth. **Baalah**, or **Kirjath-jearim**, is identified by Dr. Robinson with the modern Kuryet-el-Enab. See chap. ix, 17, note.

10. **Compassed** — That is, encompassed; described a curve. **Mount Seir** must not be confounded with that of Idumea. It is a range running southwest from Kirjath-jearim, between the Wady Aly and the Wady Ghurab. The name still continues in the place called Sairah. **Chesalon** is the modern Kesla, seen by Dr. Robinson on a high point of the lofty ridge south of the Wady Ghurab. [He also recognized **Beth-**

side, and went down to Beth-shemesh, and passed on to "Timnah: 11 And the border went out unto the side of "Ekron northward: and the border was drawn to Shicron, and passed along to mount Baalah, and went out unto Jabneel; and the goings out of the border were at the sea. 12 And the west border was "to the great sea, and the coast

p Gen. 38. 13; Judges 14. 1. — q Chap. 19. 43.  
r Verse 47; Num. 34. 6, 7.

**shemesh** in the modern Ain-shems, just south of the great Wady Surar. The ruins, which consist of many foundations and remains of ancient walls of hewn stone, are "upon and around the plateau of a low swell or mound between the Surar on the north and a smaller wady on the south." To this place the Ark was brought after its capture by the Philistines. 1 Sam. vi, 9.] **Timnah**, from which Samsou fetched his wife, is the modern Tibneh, about two miles west of Beth-shemesh. This Timnah must be distinguished from another place of the same name on the mountains, mentioned at verse 57.

[11. **Unto the side of Ekron northward** — That is, on the north side of Ekron. This was the most northerly of the five great Philistine cities. Compare chap. xiii. 3. It was the last place to which the captured Ark was taken, (1 Sam. v, 10,) and thence it was transported on the new cart to Beth-shemesh. Its site is found in the modern Akir, in a north-westerly direction from Beth-shemesh, and about half way between the latter city and the sea. The site of **Shicron** is unknown. **Mount Baalah** is also uncertain, but probably was the name of a range of hills seen from Ekron on the east of Wady Rubin. **Jabneel** is doubtless the same as *Jabneh*, which Uzziah took from the Philistines. 2 Chron. xxvi, 6. The name and site are still found in Yebna, a village situated on an eminence in the midst of a rich plain, two miles from the sea and three from Ekron. **The goings out... at the sea** — That is, the northern boundary terminated at the Mediterranean Sea.

12. **To the great sea and the coast** — That is, the coast of the Medi-

*thereof*: this is the coast of the children of Judah round about according to their families. **13** \* And unto Caleb the son of Jephunneh he gave a part among the children of Judah, according to the commandment of the LORD to Joshua, *even* \* the city of Arba the father of Anak, which *city is* Hebron. **14** And Caleb drove thence \* the three sons of Anak, \* Sheshai, and Ahiman, and Talmai, the

\* Ch. 14. 13.—† Ch. 14. 15.—3 Or, *Kirjath-arba*.—u Judg. 1. 10, 20.—v Num. 13. 22.—w Ch. 10. 38;

nean from Jebneel southward formed Judah's western boundary.

The writer, having now given the boundaries of Judah, is about to give a list of the cities within these bounds. But before proceeding to do so he enters a brief account of Caleb's conquest of his portion, which Joshua had allotted him. See chap. xiv, 6–15. As Caleb's possession included the most important city and central seat of the whole tribe of Judah, it is natural that the fact of its conquest should be recorded here.

As verses 13–19 are nearly identical with Judges i, 10–20, some have supposed that this passage in Joshua was copied from that in Judges; and others, on the contrary, maintain that the passage in Judges was taken from this. Keil, however, urges that both passages were drawn from one common source, a document older than either the Book of Joshua or that of Judges.]

**13. Hebron**—See at chap. xiv, 12.

**14. The three sons of Anak**—Joshua had cut off the Anakim from the mountains and destroyed their cities, (chap. xi, 21,) but after his army retired northward these three old chiefs had rallied their scattered adherents and repossessed their cities.

**15. Debir**—See on chap. x, 38.

{ We have now, in 16–19, a glimpse of romance in Hebrew history. It was memorable tradition connected with the capture of Debir, and with the history of one of the princely families of the period.

**16. Caleb said**—The veteran leader finding Debir, perhaps after his previous conquests, a more difficult fortress, arouses his warriors with the promise of a prize. **Smiteth Kirjath-sepher**—

children of Anak. **15** And \* he went up thence to the inhabitants of Debir: and the name of Debir before *was* Kirjath-sepher. **16** \* And Caleb said, He that smiteth Kirjath-sepher, and taketh it, to him will I give Achsah my daughter to wife. **17** And \* Othniel the \* son of Kenaz, the brother of Caleb, took it: and he gave him Achsah his daughter to wife. **18** And \* it came to pass, as

Judg. 1. 11; \* Judg. 1. 12.—y Judg. 1. 13; 3. 9.—s Num. 32. 12; chap. 14. 6.—u Judg. 1. 14.

The old name of the city, as quoting the warrior's own words. **My daughter to wife**—Said in the spirit of the Oriental as well as the Roman rule, by which the parent was absolute lord of his children, and of the Oriental custom of marrying parties without regard to previous affection or even acquaintance. Saul thus promised his daughter to the slayer of Goliath. 1 Sam. xvii, 25.

**17. Othniel the son of Kenaz, the brother of Caleb**—The Septuagint, by mistake, here makes Othniel to be the brother of Caleb, thus making him marry his own brother's daughter, his niece; a marriage if not unlawful, yet questionable. But the Septuagint corrects itself at Judges i, 13, where all versions agree that Kenaz was Caleb's brother, and Othniel Kenaz's son. Othniel therefore married his own cousin. **Gave him Achsah**—In being offered as a prize to the warriors it is probable that, in accordance with the spirit of the times, Achsah found a gratification to her feminine pride. The onset of battle was to be made all the more bravely for her beauty, rank, and dower. Of course, all the probabilities of winning lay within the circle of a few well-known heroes, and she would have the assurance of marrying the bravest man of Caleb's principedom. And her best ambition was gratified, since Providence and Othniel's bravery gave her the man of her probable choice—certainly the man who raised her from the rank of daughter of the sheikh to that of wife of the ruler of all the united tribes. Judges iii, 9.

**18. And it came to pass**—We have now full proof that Caleb acted from affection to his daughter and with her

she came *unto him*, that she moved him to ask of her father a field: and <sup>b</sup>she lighted off *her ass*; and Caleb said unto her, What wouldest thou? **19** Who answered, Give me a <sup>c</sup>blessing; for thou hast given me a south land; give me also springs of water. And he gave her the upper springs, and the nether springs. **20** This is the inheritance of the tribe of the children of Judah according to their families. **21** And the uttermost cities of the tribe of the chil-

<sup>b</sup> See Gen. 24. 64; 1 Sam. 25. 23.

confiding love. **As she came**—In bridal procession, all riding upon asses, from her father's house to the house of her bridegroom, by whom she is escorted to his and her future home. See note on Matt. xxv, 1-6. **She moved him**—Her bridegroom, by the side of whom, probably, she rode in procession. She believes the request of Othniel would be with Caleb even more powerful than her own; but he, perhaps silently, declines. **To ask... a field**—"Underneath the hill on which Debir stood is a deep valley, rich with verdure from a copious rivulet, which, rising at the crest of the glen, falls, with a continuity unusual in the Judean hills, down to its lowest depth. On the possession of these upper and lower 'bubbings,' so contiguous to her lover's prize, Achisah had set her heart."—*Stanley*. **Lighted off**—At her bridegroom's door, where she and her father meet each other. **What wouldest thou**—The heart of her father at this melting moment is open to any request, and she seizes the golden chance. }

**19. A blessing**—A special favour, a gift. **Springs of water**—As her portion was a field having a southern exposure to blazing suns and sultry winds, she argues the eminent propriety of supplementing the gift by adding a well-watered adjoining tract. He gave her the **upper springs and the nether**, a tract of hill and dale abounding in water.

The cities of Judah are grouped in four divisions corresponding to the physical geography of Judah's lot: the NEGEB, or south country, verses 21-32; the SHEPHELAH, or valley, 33-47; the

dren of Judah toward the coast of Edom southward were Kabzeel, and Eder, and Jagur, **22** And Kinah, and Dimonah, and Adadah, **23** And Kedesh, and Hazor, and Ithnan, **24** Ziph, and Telem, and Bealoth, **25** And Hazor, Hadattah, and Kerioth, *and* Hezron, which is Hazor, **26** Amam, and Shema, and Moladah, **27** And Hazar-gaddah, and Heshmon, and Beth-palet, **28** And Hazar-shual, and Beer-sheba, and Bizjothjah, **29** Baalah, and Iim, and

<sup>c</sup> Gen. 33. 11; Deut. 33. 7; 1 Sam. 25. 27.

MOUNTAIN, 48-60; and the WILDERNESS, 61, 62. The cities of the Shephelah and the Mountain are enumerated by groups. These cities are nearly all unknown. For an elaborate attempt to identify them, see Wilton's *Negeb*, Part III, page 70. In the following notes nothing is said on the names of those places of which no modern trace has been certainly discovered.

**26. Moladah**, afterwards given to Simeon, is the modern *el Milh*, about twenty miles south of Hebron. [This place was identified by Dr. Robinson. It has two wells about forty feet deep, and the ruins of a former city cover a space around of nearly half a mile square. It was inhabited again after the exile. Neh. xi. 26. The sides of the wells are, according to Tristram, "of hard marble. polished and deeply fluted all round by the ropes of the water drawers, perhaps for four thousand years. Eight ancient water-troughs stand irregularly around, some oblong, many cup-shaped, and others apparently the scooped pedestals of ancient columns, which have once supported a portico over the well."] ]

**28. Beer-sheba**—This spot, so much associated with patriarchal history, has been identified with the modern Bir-es-Seba, some thirty miles southwest of Hebron. It afterwards became famous as the southern limit of the Holy Land, in the formula "From Dan to Beer-sheba." For the origin of the name and history see at Gen. xxi, 31; xxvi, 33. Two deep wells are still found there, and a number of smaller ones. The largest well is twelve and a half feet in diameter, and about fifty in depth.

Azem, **30** And Eltolad, and Chesil, and Hormah, **31** And 'Ziklag, and Madmannah, and Sansannah, **32** And Lebaoth, and Shilhim, and Ain, and Rimmon: all the cities *are* twenty and nine, with their villages. **33** *And* in the valley, 'Eshtaol, and Zoreah, and Ashnah, **34** And Zanoah, and En-gannim, Tappuah, and Enan, **35** Jarmuth, and Adullam, Socoh, and Azekah, **36** And Sharaim, and Adithaim, and Gederah,

*d* 1 Sam. 27. 6. — *e* Num. 13. 23.

**30. Hormah**—This is doubtless the same city whose king Joshua smote, and whose original name was *Zephath*. It is located by Robinson and others at the pass *es-Sufah*, far to the south of Hebron; but Palmer, more correctly, identified it with Sebaita some twenty-five miles southwest of Beer-sheba. See note on Judges i, 17.

**32. All the cities are twenty and nine**—This does not agree with the names detailed in the text, which are thirty-six at least. To remove this discrepancy the Rabbins assume that the cities given to Simeon are not counted. But there were twelve or fifteen given to that tribe. Others suggest that several of these places were mere hamlets, and were not counted; or that compound names have been separated, or epithets prefixed been made into names; still others, that one place may have had several names, or that there is an error in the numerical letters for twenty-nine. The Syriac reads thirty-six, an evident change in that version to meet the difficulty. It is more probable that several names were added by a later hand after the country was more thickly peopled, possibly to gratify local pride, and the number twenty-nine was not changed.

**33. In the valley**—Heb., *Shephelah*, the lowland. See on chap. x, 40. These cities are enumerated in four groups. A portion of these in the north was afterwards conceded to Dan. **Eshtaol** and **Zoreah** afterwards became famous in the tribe of Dan as the scene of Samson's childhood and first daring exploits, (Judges xiii, 25,) and also the place of his burial. Judges xvi, 31. The exact site of Eshtaol is unknown; but Zoreah, or

\*and Gederothaim; fourteen cities with their villages: **37** Zenan, and Hada-shah, and Migdal-gad, **38** And Dilean, and Mizpeh, 'and Joktheel, **39** Lachish, and Bozkath, and Eglon, **40** And Cabbon, and Lahmam, and Kithlish, **41** And Gederoth, Beth-dagon, and Namah, and Makkedah; sixteen cities with their villages: **42** Libnah, and Ether, and Ashan, **43** And Jiphtah, and Ashnah, and Nezib, **44** And Kei-

*3* Or, *or*. — *f* 2 Kings 14. 7.

Zorah, still exists in the modern Surah, just below the summit of a sharp-pointed hill on the north side of the Wady Ghurab. The prospect from the top of this hill is extensive and fine.

**34. Zanoah** is very probably the modern Zanuah, a little to the east of Zorah.

[**35. Jarmuth** was one of the five cities whose kings joined in a league against the Gibeonites, and were defeated in the great battle of Beth-horon. Chap. x, 3. It has been identified with the modern village Yarmuk, about eight miles northeast of Eleutheropolis. It is situated on the crest of a rugged hill, and well named Jarmuth, which means *the lofty*. **Socoh** became afterwards distinguished from being associated with the combat between David and Goliath. 1 Sam. xvii, 1. It was identified by Robinson with the ruins of Shuweikeh, a few miles south of Jarmuth and on the opposite side of the Wady-es-Sumpt.]

**36. Fourteen cities**—Fifteen are enumerated, which discrepancy may be explained as that in verse 32, or by supposing, as is very probable, that the last named city, **Gederothaim**, is an ancient gloss introduced by some confusion of **Gederah** with the *Gederoth* of verse 41.

**37–41.** This second group of the cities in the Shephelah, sixteen in number, are now nearly all unknown. On **Lachish** and **Eglon**, see chap. x, 3.

**42.** The third group lay southeast of the second. On **Libnah**, see chap. x, 29.

[**43. Nezib** has been identified by Drs. Robinson and Porter with the ruins of Beit Nusib, about seven miles east of Eleutheropolis, on the way to Hebron. "It is neither in the moun-



lah, and Achzib, and Mareshah; nine cities with their villages: **45** Ekron, with her towns and her villages: **46** From Ekron even unto the sea, all that lay 'near Ashdod, with their villages: **47** Ashdod with her towns and her villages; Gaza with her towns and her villages, unto 'the river of Egypt, and 'the great sea, and the border *thereof*.

*4 Heb. by the place of. —g Verse 4. —h Num.*

tains nor in the plain, but in the low hilly country which connects the two. The ruins are of considerable extent. The most important are a massive tower sixty feet square, the masonry of which appears to be of the Jewish type. Near it are the foundations of another great fabric, and the site is strewn with broken columns and large building stones."—*Porter*.]

**44. Keilah** was a walled town not far from Nezib. Its inhabitants were delivered from the oppression of the Philistines by David and his men, who afterwards for a time settled in the town. 1 Sam. xxiii, 1-13. "Eight Roman miles from the ancient Eleutheropolis, on the way to Hebron, is a large ruined tower or castle called *Kela*. It stands on a projecting cliff on the right bank of Wady-el-Feranj. There can be little doubt that this is the long lost Keilah."—*Porter*. [**Achzib** is probably identical with *Chezib*, (Gen. xxxviii, 5,) now Kusaba, fifteen miles southwest of Beit-jibrin. **Mareshah** is supposed by Robinson and Tobler to be the ruins called Marash, one mile and a half south of Beit-jibrin, on a gently-swelling hill leading down from the mountains to the great western plain. The ruins are not extensive, but Robinson thinks they were used in building the neighbouring Eleutheropolis.]

**45.** The fourth group lay on the Philistine coast, and were then in the possession of the Philistines. **Ekron**—See chap. xiii, note.

**47. Ashdod and Gaza**—See on chaps. xi, 22; x, 41. These cities of the Philistines are thus aggregated, because they were not conquered.

**48. Mountains**—The highlands of Judah were bounded by the lowlands on the west, the wilderness adjacent to

**48** And in the mountains, Shamir, and Jattir, and Socoh, **49** And Dannah, and Kirjath-sannah, which *is* Debir, **50** And Anab, and Eshtemoh, and Anim, **51** 'And Goshen, and Iholon, and Giloh; eleven cities with their villages: **52** Arab, and Dumah, and Eshean, **53** And 'Janum, and Beth-tappuah, and Aphekah, **54** And Humtah, and

*34. 6. —i Chap. 10. 41; 11. 16. —5 Or, Janua.*

the Dead Sea on the east, the Negeb on the south, and a line touching Jerusalem on the north. At Hebron the land is three thousand feet above the level of the sea. Many fruitful valleys, whose lower declivities are clothed with verdure, wind into the mountain from the lowlands between rugged chalk cliffs. The cities of this district are enumerated in five groups, or, if we accept the text of the Septuagint between verses 59 and 60, we have six groups. **Jattir** Robinson identifies with the ruins of **Attir**, ten miles south of Hebron. **Socoh** must be distinguished from Socol on the plain. See on verse 35. Robinson recognized it in Shuweikeh, (the diminutive of Shaukeh,) a little northwest of Jattir.

**49. Kirjath-sannah**—The English reader will be assisted in his understanding of many of these names if he remembers that *Kirjath* means *city*. The word following completes the sense, as Kirjath-sannah, city of literature. **Debir**—See on chap. x, 38.

**50. Anab** is still existing northwest of Socoh, without change of name. **Eshtemoh** is probably the modern Semua, "a considerable village, with remains of a wall, built of stones more than ten feet in length."—*Robinson*.

**51. Giloh**, perhaps identical with the modern Rafat, a little south of Eshtemoh, was the birth-place of Ahithophel, and the scene of his suicide. 2 Sam. xv, 12; xvii, 23.

**52.** This next group of cities was north of the last named, in the vicinity of Hebron. **Dumah**—Robinson passed the ruins of Ed-Daumeh six miles southwest of Hebron, which are probably the remains of this place.

**53. Beth-tappuah**, five miles west of Hebron, is now called Tefhuh. It is well peopled, and stands in the midst

\***Kirjath-arba** which is **Hebron**, and **Zior**; nine cities with their villages: **55** **Maon**, **Carmel**, and **Ziph**, and **Jutta**, **56** **And Jezreel**, and **Jokdeam**, and

£ Chap. 14. 15;

of olive groves and vineyards, with marks of thrift. Portions of an old wall and fortress are visible among the houses. **Aphekah** is probably the same as **Aphek**. See on chap. xii, 18.

**54. Hebron**—See chap. x, 3, note.

**55.** The third cluster of mountain cities lies east of the other two, toward the desert. **Maon**, modern **Main**, nine miles south-southeast of **Hebron**, is conspicuously situated on a conical hill. The summit is crowned with ruins, foundations of hewn stone, a square enclosure, and several cisterns. The view is fine. Many towns of **Judah** are in sight. **Carmel**, now called **Kurmul**, is a few miles northwest of **Maon**. **Robinson** says that here he found more extensive ruins than he had yet anywhere seen, unless perhaps at **Beth-el**. The city was built in a semicircular amphitheatre shut in by rocks, in which there is an artificial reservoir one hundred and seventeen by seventy-four feet. The ruins consist chiefly of foundations and broken walls, scattered in every direction, and thrown together in mournful confusion and desolation. **Ziph**, modern **Zif**, five miles southeast of **Hebron**, is in ruins. Twice did its treacherous people attempt to betray **David**, the youthful outlaw, into the hands of his persecutor, **Saul**. 1 Sam. xxiii, 19; xxvi, 1. **Jutta** is in the vicinity of **Ziph**, at the southwest, and is now called **Yutta**. **Robinson** describes it as having the appearance of a large **Mohammedan** town, on a low eminence, with trees around. He agrees with **Reland** that this is the city **Juda**, (Luke i, 39,) the residence of **Zacharias** and **Elizabeth**, and the birthplace of **John** the Baptist. The pronunciation is softened in the New Testament.

**56. Jezreel** cannot be located. It was the country of **Ahinoam**. 1 Sam. xxv, 43. It must not be confounded with the city in the plain of **Esdraelon**.

**57. Gibeah**, meaning *hill*, is identi-

**Zanoah**, **57** **Cain**, **Gibeah**, and **Timnah**; ten cities with their villages: **58** **Halhul**, **Beth-zur**, and **Gedor**, **59** **And Maarath**, and **Bethanath**, and **Eltekon**;

verse 13.

fied by **Robinson** with **Jebah**, a village upon a detached hill in **Wady-el-Musurr**, ten miles southwest of **Jerusalem**. **Timnah** is a different place from that near to **Adullam**, (verses 10 and 35,) though some have confounded them.

**58. Halhul** still retains its name, and is found four miles north of **Hebron**. Here is a ruined mosque, the reputed sepulchre of the prophet **Jonah**, "looking," says **Robinson**, "much like the church of a New England village."

**Beth-zur**, *house of the rock*, is five miles north of **Hebron**, and is still called **Beit-zur**, the exact Arabic of the Hebrew name. "Its principal ruin is the tower, of which only one side is now standing. There are hewn stones and fragments of columns scattered about, and many foundations of buildings."—*Robinson*. The tradition that **Philip** baptized the **Eunuch** here is improbable, since it is not on the route from **Jerusalem** to **Gaza**. **Gedor** is identified by **Robinson** with the modern ruins called **Jedur**, about eight miles north of **Hebron**.

[**59. Bethanath** is found in the ruined village **Beit-annun**, about three miles northeast of **Hebron**. "The principal ruin is a building eighty-three feet long and seventy-two broad. The remains of the town lie on a gentle slope north of this edifice. The foundations remain, and the streets and form of the dwellings can still be traced."—*Robinson*.]

Between the 59th and 60th verses the **LXX** in the **Codex Alexandrinus** and **Vaticanus** insert another group of eleven cities, namely, **Tekoah**, **Ephratha** or **Bethlehem**, **Phagor**, **Aitan**, **Khulan**, **Tatam**, **Thobes**, **Karem**, **Galem**, **Thether**, and **Manoch**. Whether these cities have been added by the **LXX** without authority, or were really found in the earliest MSS. of this book, is a question which is not easy to determine. **Hengstenberg** maintains the former opinion and **Keil** the latter. Some

six cities with their villages: **60** <sup>1</sup>Kirjath-baal which ~~is~~ Kirjath-jearim, and Rabbah; two cities with their villages. **61** In the wilderness, Beth-arabah, Middin, and Secacah, **62** And Nibshan, and the city of salt, and En-gedi; six

cities with their villages. **63** As for the Jebusites the inhabitants of Jerusalem, "the children of Judah could not drive them out: " but the Jebusites dwell with the children of Judah at Jerusalem unto this day.

[Chap. 13, 14. — *m* See Judges 1.

8, 21; 2 Sam. 5. 6. — *n* Judges 1. 21.

find a motive for the erasure of the whole group from the Hebrew text in the desire of the Jews to deny that Jesus sprang from the tribe of Judah.

**60.** On **Kirjath-baal** see note on chap. ix, 17.

**61. The wilderness**—The wild and rugged territory along the west side of the Dead Sea. Only six cities are mentioned as belonging to this entire district.

**62. En-gedi** is the modern Ain Jidy, on the western shore of the Dead Sea. Here is a rich plain, half a mile square, where are found foundations and heaps of stone. Its vineyards were celebrated by Solomon, its balsam by Josephus, its palms by Pliny.

[**63. The Jebusites**—The hardy and warlike mountaineers who inhabited Jerusalem. They occupied the strongest natural fortress in the country, and it was not until the time of David that they were dispossessed of this their ancient seat. 2 Sam. v, 6–10. **Judah could not drive them out**—Their inability arose from a decay of heroism and perseverance. They failed to meet the condition on which all their successes depended. "Be strong and of good courage." It seems that the united army under Joshua made no direct attempt on Jerusalem after king Adoni-zedek was slain at Makkedah. And when Joshua, by reason of age, ceased to go to war, and the several tribes were left, like Caleb, to subdue and possess their own allotted territory, Judah's courage and faith failed, and the Jebusites continued to dwell among them. They succeeded, however, at one time in capturing and burning the lower city, (Judges i, 8, note,) but the old mountaineers held the high citadel. Benjamin also tried, but ineffectually, to drive them out. Judges i, 21. **Unto this day**—This shows that at the

time of the writer David had not yet dislodged the Jebusite from his stronghold, and we must date this book before his day.]

## CHAPTER XVI.

### OUTLINE OF JOSEPH'S LOT, 1–4.

[Chapters XVI and XVII belong together, and describe the allotment made to the house of Joseph, composed of the two powerful tribes of Ephraim and Manasseh. "We are so familiar," says Stanley, "with the supremacy of the tribe of Judah, that we are apt to forget that it was of comparatively recent date. For more than four hundred years—a period equal in length to that which elapsed between the Norman Conquest and the Wars of the Roses—Ephraim, with its two dependent tribes of Manasseh and Benjamin, exercised undisputed preëminence. Joshua, the first conqueror; Gideon, the greatest of the judges, whose brothers were 'as the children of kings,' and whose children all but established hereditary monarchy in their own line; Saul, the first king, belonged to one or the other of these three tribes.

"It was not till the close of the first period of Jewish history that God 'refused the tabernacle of Joseph, and chose not the tribe of Ephraim: but chose the tribe of Judah, even the Mount Zion which he loved.' *Psa. lxxviii, 67.* That haughty spirit which could brook no equal or superior, which chafed against the rise even of the kindred tribe of Manasseh, in the persons of Gideon and Jephthah, (Judges viii, 1; xii, 1,) and yet more against the growing dominion of Judah in David and Solomon, till it threw off the yoke altogether and established an independent kingdom, would naturally claim, and could not rightly be refused, the choicest portion of the land.

## CHAPTER XVI.

**A**ND the lot of the children of Joseph <sup>1</sup>fell from Jordan by Jericho, unto the water of Jericho on the east, to

<sup>1</sup> Heb. *went forth*.

'Blessed of the Lord be his land; for the precious things of heaven, for the dew, and for the deep that coucheth beneath, and for the precious fruits brought forth by the sun, and for the precious things put forth by the moon, and for the chief things of the ancient mountains, and for the precious things of the lasting hills, and for the precious things of the earth and the fulness thereof, and for the good will of him that dwelt in the bush, let the blessing come upon the head of Joseph.' If Judah was the wild lion that guarded the south, and couched in the fastness of Zion, so Ephraim was to be the more peaceful but not less powerful buffalo, who was to rove the rich vales of Central Palestine, and defend the frontier of the north. 'His glory is like the firstling of his bullock, and his horns are like the horns of unicorns, (buffaloes;) with them shall he push the people together to the ends of the earth, and they are the ten thousands of Ephraim, and they are the thousands of Manasseh.'" Deut. xxxiii, 13-17.

1. **Children of Joseph**—That is, Ephraim and the western half of Manasseh. Their lots were first drawn together that these brothers might be contiguous, but there was a subsequent division of their joint territory. **The lot...fell**—Hebrew, *went forth*; that is, from the urn in which the lots were cast. See note on chap. xiii, 6. "It is remarkable that of the whole inheritance assigned to the children of Joseph only the southern boundary is given. But this may be explained partly on the ground that this double tribe had no definite boundary on the north, but merely had a number of cities allotted to them within the line which formed the boundary of Asher and Issachar, (chap. xvii, 10, 11,) and partly from the fact that the Josephites did not expel the Canaanites from the northern part of the territory

the wilderness that goeth up from Jericho throughout mount Beth-el, <sup>2</sup> And goeth out from Beth-el to <sup>a</sup> Luz, and passeth along unto the borders of Archi to

<sup>a</sup> Chap. 18. 13; Judges 1. 26.

assigned them, but only gradually brought them into subjection and dwelt among them. Hence the limits of their land in this direction were not always the same; and at one time, when they expressed some discontent at the portion allotted to them, Joshua told them that they might enlarge their possessions if they could drive out the Canaanites. Chap. xvii, 12-18."—*Keil*. **From Jordan by Jericho**—Literally, *Jordan of Jericho*; that is, a part of the Jordan directly opposite Jericho, and which might therefore be regarded as belonging especially to Jericho. **The water of Jericho**—This has been commonly understood of the fountain Es Sultan, a mile northwest of Riha, and probably the scene of Elisha's miracle. 2 Kings ii, 19-22. As the border ran on the north side of Jericho, (chap. xviii, 12,) and on the east of the wilderness, (for so the Hebrew should here be rendered,) it seems to have turned northward from the water of Jericho, and went up so far as to include in Benjamin's territory Zemaraim, the modern Es Sumra, about five miles north of Jericho. Accordingly we understand this border between Ephraim and Benjamin to have commenced at a point of the Jordan directly opposite Jericho, perhaps at the mouth of Wady Nawaimeh, and, running westward, fetched a curve near Jericho and its great fountain, thence, passing northward along the eastern side of the wilderness that stretches east of Beth-el, it went up to Es Sumrah, and then passed westward to Ophni, the modern Jifna, which was also assigned to Benjamin. Chap. xviii, 24.] **The wilderness**—The wild region of country that lies on the east of Beth-el, and is called in chap. xviii, 12, the wilderness of Beth-aven. **Mount Beth-el**—The mountain range on which Beth-el was situated.

2. **From Beth-el to Luz**—Beth-el and Luz were the same city. See note O. T.

Ataroth, **3** And goeth down westward to the coast of Japhleti, <sup>b</sup> unto the coast of Beth-horon the nether, and to <sup>c</sup> Gezer: and the goings out thereof are at the sea. **4** <sup>d</sup> So the children of Joseph, Manasseh and Ephraim, took their inheritance.

**5** And the border of the children of Ephraim according to their families was

<sup>b</sup> Chap. 18, 13; <sup>2</sup> Chron. 8, 5.—<sup>c</sup> 1 Chron. 7, 28; 1 Kings 9, 15.—<sup>d</sup> Chap. 17, 14.

on chap. vii, 2. The **Beth-el** of the text is to be understood of the Mount Bethel named in the preceding verse. **Borders of Archi**—Or, *of the Archite*. No trace of this name is found in the vicinity of Beth-el. Perhaps in this name we have the last faint trace of one of the original Canaanitish tribes. **Ataroth** is supposed by Dr. Robinson to be identical with a large village called Atara, on the summit of a hill about six miles northwest of Beth-el; [but this verse and chap. xviii, 13 seem rather to place it between Beth-el and Beth-horon, so that we may rather identify it with the Atara which lies some three miles south of Beth-el. Here Robinson noticed considerable ruins of an ancient town. At Ataroth the border turned westward toward Beth-horon.]

**3. On Japhleti**, or the *Japhletite*, the note on **Archi** (verse 2) will also apply. On **Beth-horon** see at chap. x, 10, and **Gezer**, chap. x, 33. **The sea**—The Mediterranean.

#### EPHRAIM'S BORDERS, 5-10.

[This outline of Ephraim's borders has evidences of being merely a fragment, and much corrupted at that. All scholars have acknowledged the difficulty of reconciling its different statements, and all attempts at emendation are at best conjectural.

**5. The border... on the east side was Ataroth-addar**—We understand Ataroth-addar to be identical with the Ataroth of verses 2 and 7. At this point the border between Ephraim and Benjamin went northward towards Bethel, and westward towards Beth-horon, so that it was regarded as a prominent point in Ephraim's *eastern* border, where it joined the western border of Benjamin. **Unto Beth-horon**

*thus*: even the border of their inheritance on the east side was <sup>a</sup> Ataroth-addar, <sup>b</sup> unto Beth-horon the upper; **6** And the border went out toward the sea to <sup>c</sup> Michmethah on the north side; and the border went about eastward unto Taanath-shiloh, and passed by it on the east to Janohah; **7** And it went down from Janohah to Ataroth, <sup>d</sup> and to

<sup>e</sup> Chap. 18, 13.—<sup>f</sup> 2 Chron. 8, 5.—<sup>g</sup> Chap. 17, 7. <sup>h</sup> 1 Chron. 7, 28.

**the upper**—Before these words something seems to have fallen out of the text. The words themselves evidently belong to the southern border, for the upper Beth-horon was about five miles directly west of Ataroth.

**6. And the border went out toward the sea**—The Mediterranean. Here the sentence should end, for to **Michmethah** evidently belongs to the northern boundary, and to another sentence. **Toward the sea**, then, completes the account of the boundary in the southwest. We would commence a new sentence with the word **Michmethah**, and render, *Michmethah was on the north side*. Or perhaps it would be better to emend the reading by means of the parallel in chap. xvii, 7, and read, *The border was from Asher to Michmethah on the north*. Michmethah is there said to lie *before Shechem*, but that is indefinite. It is generally supposed to have been northeast of Shechem, but the exact site is unknown. **Went about**—That is, fetched a circuit, or slightly turned its course, **eastward unto Taanath-shiloh**. This is not improbably identical with Ain Tana, about eight miles southeast of Shechem. **Janohah** is still preserved in the village of Yanun, about two miles south of Ain Tana. Van de Velde says that "entire houses and walls of the ancient city are still existing, but covered with immense heaps of earth and rubbish."

**7. From Janohah to Ataroth**—In this verse we have a confusion of the northern and southern borders, resulting doubtless from some transposition in the text. We propose to read, **and it went down from Janohah, and went out at Jordan**, and regard the words to **Ataroth** and to **Naa-**

Naarath, and came to Jericho, and went out at Jordan. 8 The border went out from Tappuah westward unto the <sup>1</sup>river Kanah; and the goings out thereof were at the sea. This <sup>is</sup> the inheritance of the tribe of the children of Ephraim by their families. 9 And <sup>the</sup> separate cities for the children of Ephraim <sup>were</sup> among the inheritance of the children of Manasseh, all the cities with their villages. 10 <sup>And</sup> they drave not out

† Chap. 17. 9.—k Chap. 17. 9.—l Judg. 1. 29;  
see 1 Kings 9. 16.

rath, and came to Jericho, as a fragment transposed from its proper place in the text, and its immediate connexion lost.

8. **From Tappuah westward unto the river Kanah**—This is a completion of the northern boundary westward from the central ridge of Palestine. The site of **Tappuah** is unknown. **The river Kanah** is uncertain. Robinson identifies it with a wady still bearing the name Kanah, which rises south of Shechem and runs southwest, and empties into the Mediterranean four miles north of Joppa. But this is too far south to be a boundary between Ephraim and Manasseh. Compare chap. xvii, 8, 9. It is more probably identical with the Wady Kasab, (stream of reeds,) which falls into the sea nearly west of Shechem.

9. **Separate cities**—That is, cities separated or selected out of Manasseh for the use of Ephraim. Of these only Tappuah is named in chap. xvii, 8, 9. Compare also 1 Chron. vii, 28, 29. It is generally supposed, that when the boundary lines had been drawn, the territory of Ephraim was found not as large proportionally as his numbers and importance demanded. But the relation of Ephraim and Manasseh was such that they might be regarded as having one lot. Compare chap. xvii, 14. Hence they held many cities in common, and hence too, perhaps, the reason why no complete enumeration of the cities of these two brother tribes is anywhere given.]

10. **The Canaanites that dwelt in Gezer**—These held their ancient seat until the days of Solomon. 1 Kings ix, 16. Compare Judges i, 29. **Under**

the Canaanites that dwelt in Gezer: but the Canaanites dwell among the Ephraimites unto this day, and serve under tribute.

### CHAPTER XVII.

**T**HERE was also a lot for the tribe of Manasseh; for he <sup>was</sup> the <sup>1</sup>first-born of Joseph; <sup>to wit</sup>, for <sup>2</sup>Machir the firstborn of Manasseh, the father of Gilead: because he was a man of war,

a Gen. 41. 51; 46. 20; 48. 13.—b Gen. 50. 23;  
Num. 26. 29; 32. 39, 40; 1 Chron. 7. 14.

**tribute**—This implies the power to extirpate, but instead of this a fatal compromise was made. Josephus explains the reason: "After this the Israelites grew effeminate as to fighting any more against their enemies, but applied themselves to agriculture, which producing abundance and riches, they indulged in luxury and pleasure, and, contenting themselves with the tributes that were paid them, permitted the Canaanites to live in peace."

### CHAPTER XVII.

#### MANASSEH'S LOT IN WESTERN PALESTINE, 1-13.

1. **Manasseh**, the firstborn of Joseph, and retaining the rights of primogeniture, is put second because of Ephraim's political superiority. Compare note at the beginning of chap. xvi. Thus the prophetic words of their grandfather Jacob are fulfilled: "Ephraim will be greater than Manasseh." Gen. xlviii, 5, 14-19. **Machir** designates not the man but the family. His descendants, Jair and Nobah, conquered Bashan. Num. xxxii, 41, 42. The portion of the half tribe of Manasseh east of the Jordan is here brought in to give a complete view of the settlement of that tribe. See note on chap. xiii, 29. **For he was the first-born of Manasseh**—And therefore was honourably entitled to a share of the good land promised to the fathers. **The father of Gilead**—Literally, *the father of the Gilead*; that is, the country, as designated by the Hebrew article. He had a son by that name. Num. xxvi, 29. The term **father**, when followed by the name of a country, signifies *lord* or *possessor*, and is

therefore he had <sup>c</sup>Gilead and Bashan. **2** There was also *a lot* for <sup>d</sup>the rest of the children of Manasseh by their families; <sup>e</sup>for the children of <sup>f</sup>Abiezer, and for the children of Helek, <sup>g</sup>and for the children of Asriel, and for the children of Shechem, <sup>h</sup>and for the children of Hephher, and for the children of Shemida: these *were* the male children of Manasseh the son of Joseph by their families. **3** But <sup>i</sup>Zelophehad, the son of Hephher, the son of Gilead, the son of Machir, the son of Manasseh, had no sons, but daughters: and these *are* the names of his daughters, Mahlah, and Noah, Hoglah, Milcah, and Tirzah. **4** And they came near before <sup>j</sup>Eleazar the priest, and before Joshua the son of Nun, and before the princes, saying, <sup>k</sup>The Lord commanded Moses to give us an inheritance among our brethren.

<sup>c</sup> Deut. 3. 15.—<sup>d</sup> Num. 26. 29-32.—<sup>e</sup> 1 Chron. 7. 18.—<sup>f</sup> 1 Num. 26. 30, *Jeaser*.—<sup>g</sup> Num. 26. 31.—<sup>h</sup> Num. 26. 32.—<sup>i</sup> Num. 26. 33; 27. 1; 36. 2.

usually applied to the conqueror of the country. The Machirites had already received their portion east of Jordan. See chap. xiii, 29-33.

**2. The rest of the children of Manasseh**—That is, as the next two verses explain, the descendants of the five sons named, and also of the five daughters of Hephher, whose son Zelophehad had no male children. The western lot was thus divided into ten portions, (verse 5,) because there were claimants through five males and five females, the latter being descendants of Hephher. The claim of the latter had been at one time a matter of doubt, as the question of woman's rights has been a matter of dispute in all countries. But Moses had very wisely carried the question to the Lord for his decision, who recognized their rights as inheritors. Num. xxvii, 6, 7.

**4. Before Eleazar**—As one of the commission to divide the land. Chap. xiv, 1.

**[5. Ten portions**—Or, *ten measurements*, alluding to the custom of measuring off land with a line or a chain. Since each of the five daughters of Zelophehad obtained a portion, neither Hephher nor Zelophehad are reckoned.

**7. Coast of Manasseh**—The southern boundary from east to west. "The author gives the boundary again from

Therefore, according to the commandment of the Lord, he gave them an inheritance among the brethren of their father. **5** And there fell ten portions to Manasseh, beside the land of Gilead and Bashan, which *were* on the other side Jordan; **6** Because the daughters of Manasseh had an inheritance among his sons: and the rest of Manasseh's sons had the land of Gilead. **7** And the coast of Manasseh was from Asher to <sup>i</sup>Michmethah, that *lieth* before Shechem; and the border went along on the right hand unto the inhabitants of En-tappuah. **8** Now Manasseh had the land of Tappuah: but <sup>j</sup>Tappuah on the border of Manasseh *belonged* to the children of Ephraim; **9** And the coast descended <sup>k</sup>unto the <sup>l</sup>river Kanah, southward of the river: <sup>m</sup>these cities of Ephraim *are* among the cities of Manasseh.

<sup>i</sup> Chap. 14. 1.—<sup>j</sup> Num. 27. 6, 7.—<sup>k</sup> Chap. 16. 6.—<sup>l</sup> Chap. 16. 8.—<sup>m</sup> Chap. 16. 8.—<sup>n</sup> Chap. 16. 8.—<sup>o</sup> Chap. 16. 9.

east to west, as in the case of Judah, (chap. xv, 2, ff.) the sons of Joseph (xvi, 1, ff.) and Benjamin. xviii, 12, ff. So the author of the Apocalypse, also, names the gates of the New Jerusalem, beginning from the east, (Rev. xxi, 13,) and Ezekiel (xlviii, 1, ff.) designates the several tribe divisions in the like manner from east to west."—*Fay.*] **Asher** is here not the portion of the tribe, which could not constitute a starting point for a line, but a city, probably the modern Yasir, about half way between Shechem and Bethshean, or about fifteen miles northeast of the former city. For **Michmethah** and **river Kanah**, see on chap. xvi, 6-8. **Shechem** is a very ancient city, called Neapolis, corrupted to Nablus and Nablus, in the narrow valley between Mounts Ebal and Gerizim. See note and cuts at John iv, 5. "The streets are narrow; the houses high and in general well built, all of stone, with domes upon the roofs, as at Jerusalem."—*Robinson*. **En-tappuah** some understand of a fountain near the city of Tappuah, (chap. xvi, 8;) others, as another name of the city itself. The **land of Tappuah** mentioned in the next verse must mean the country in the neighbourhood of Tappuah.

**9. Cities of Ephraim are among the cities of Manasseh**—Compare chap.

seh: the coast of Manasseh also *was* on the north side of the river, and the outgoings of it were at the sea: **10** Southward *it was* Ephraim's, and northward *it was* Manasseh's, and the sea is his border; and they met together in Asher on the north, and in Issachar on the east. **11** And Manasseh had in Issachar and in Asher Beth-shean and her towns, and Ibleam and her towns, and the inhabitants of Dor and her towns, and the inhabitants of Endor and her towns, and the inhabitants of Taanach

and her towns, and the inhabitants of Megiddo and her towns, *even* three countries. **12** Yet the children of Manasseh could not drive out *the inhabitants* of those cities; but the Canaanites would dwell in that land. **13** Yet it came to pass, when the children of Israel were waxen strong, that they put the Canaanites to tribute; but did not utterly drive them out.

**14** And the children of Joseph spake unto Joshua, saying, Why hast thou given me *but* one lot and one portion

p 1 Chron. 7. 29.—q 1 Sam. 31. 10; 1 Kings 4. 12.  
r Judges 1. 27, 28.

s Chap. 16. 10.—t Chap. 16. 4.  
u Gen. 48. 22.

xvi, 8, note. "The line which separated the possessions of the two brothers ran to the south of the river Kenath, but the cities which were upon the river were assigned partly to Ephraim and partly to Manasseh; those upon the south being assigned to the former, and those upon the north to the latter."  
—*Musius*. In verse 10 we find Manasseh interlaced with other border tribes.

**10. Met together in Asher**—Touched upon, bordered on, (literally, *struck*,) Asher on the north, etc.

**11. Beth-shean**—*House of rest*; the halting place for caravans from Syria or Midian to Egypt, and the emporium for the commerce of these countries. It afterwards was called in the Greek Scythopolis, and is identified with the modern Beisan, at the east end of the plain of Esdraelon, five miles west of the Jordan. "The site of the ancient city, as of the modern village, was a splendid one, in this vast area of plain and mountain, in the midst of abundant waters and of exuberant fertility. It must have been a city of temples."—*Robinson*.

**Ibleam** was near Megiddo, (2 Kings ix, 27,) but its exact site is unknown. **Dor**—See on chap. xi, 2.

**Endor**, the abode of the necromancer consulted by Saul, (1 Sam. xxviii, 7, note,) is now a village of the same name, nearly four miles south of Mount Tabor. For **Taanach** and **Megiddo** see on chap. xii, 21. [It is noticeable that after the mention of **Ibleam** and **her towns**, in this verse, the **inhabitants** of the next four cities are named as a possession of Manasseh. This sudden transition, and the introduction

of the accusative sign **לְ** before **inhabitants**, have greatly perplexed critics. It seems best, with Knobel, to suppose that the idea of possession conveyed by the English version, (*Manasseh had*,) and also by **לְ** at the beginning

of the verse in the Hebrew, is carried over in the writer's mind, and applied to the inhabitants of these towns as being Manasseh's possession, and rendering a tribute service. **Three countries**—Or, a *triple province*, having a sort of political combination. Others render *three heights*, and understand that the last three cities stood on hills, "a tripolis of mountain cities, in distinction from the places on the plain."  
—*Fay*.]

**12. Could not drive out**—See on chap. xv, 63, and xvi, 10.

#### COMPLAINT OF THE CHILDREN OF JOSEPH, 14-18.

[According to Ewald, this passage is "one of the most remarkable relics of the oldest historical composition. The narration almost stammers, as if it had yet to learn an easy flow. Its prose is as rough and hard as a stone." The event described probably occurred some time after the Josephites had received their portion, and when Joshua was dwelling in Timnath-serah. Chap. xix, 50.]

**14. The children of Joseph**—Both tribes selfishly combine to bring to bear upon Joshua, a fellow-tribesman, the pressure of their influence to secure an addition to their portion.



to inherit, seeing I *am* <sup>a</sup> great people, forasmuch as the Lord hath blessed me hitherto? **15** And Joshua answered them, If thou *be* a great people, *then* get thee up to the wood *country*, and cut down for thyself there in the land of the Perizzites and of the <sup>a</sup>giants, if mount Ephraim be too narrow for thee. **16** And the children of Joseph said, The hill is not enough for us: and all

• Gen. 48. 19; Num. 26. 34, 37.—3 Or, *Rephaim*, Gen. 14. 5; 15. 20.

**One lot**—The intimation is, that while Joshua professes to treat them as two independent tribes, he has really given them a lot only sufficient for one. **The Lord hath blessed me hitherto**—A reference to their tribal supremacy. See note introductory to chap. xvi.

**15. If thou be a great people**—Here is notable irony, but no “mockery,” as Ewald assumes. The great captain could wield cutting sarcasm as well as deadly weapons. It is the best medicine for conceit and self-adulation. Joshua, in his management of this matter, shows great breadth of view and freedom from partisan bias. His own tribe shall receive no more than even-handed justice had allotted. **The wood** is either the region of Mount Gilboa, west of Beth-shean, or that between Shechem and Carmel. [The ancient forests, which thickly covered these mountains and hills, are referred to in 1 Sam. xiv. 25; 2 Sam. xviii. 6. Ewald understands **the wood** metaphorically of the multitude of tall Perizzites and giants, whom these brave Josephites are counselled to cut down.] **And cut down**—Either the forests, or the gigantic foemen who have possession of them, or both. Enlarge your territories for yourselves by your bravery, and thus show that ye are really a great people. **Giants**—*Rephaim*. See on chap. xii. 4. **Mount Ephraim**—This complaint of the Josephites was probably not made immediately after the allotment, but some time later, when the mountainous tract of Ephraim had become commonly designated by the name of this tribe.

**16. The hill is not enough**—And yet they wanted more hill. They did not wish to go into the valleys.

the Canaanites that dwell in the land of the valley have <sup>a</sup>chariots of iron, *both they who are* of Beth-shean and her towns, and *they who are* <sup>a</sup>of the valley of Jezreel. **17** And Joshua spake unto the house of Joseph, *even* to Ephraim and to Manasseh, saying, Thou art a great people, and hast great power: thou shalt not have one lot *only*: **18** But the mountain shall be thine; for it is a

• Judges 1. 19; 4. 3.—• Chap. 19. 18; 1 Kings 4. 12.

**Chariots of iron**—Strengthened with iron, and possibly armed with scythes. The timidity and lack of trust in Jehovah evinced by these Josephites is most clearly seen when viewed in the light of the specific command and promise of God: “When thou goest out to battle against thine enemies, and seest *horses and chariots* and a people more than thou, be not afraid of them, for the Lord thy God is with thee.” Deut. xx. 1. **Beth-shean**—Verse 11. [**The valley of Jezreel**—That noble and beautiful plain, the richest and most celebrated in Palestine, called in its Greek form Esdraelon, and associated with many of the most famous events of sacred and of common history. It has the form of a triangle, whose base runs fifteen miles southwesterly from the foot of Mount Tabor, and whose southwest side sweeps along the base of Mount Carmel to the Mediterranean Sea. The sons of Joseph were afraid to cope with the inhabitants of this valley, and wanted more territory among the hills. **The valley of Jezreel** was, strictly speaking, the eastern branch of Esdraelon, running towards the Jordan along the Wady Jalud.]

**17. Joshua spake**—The old hero still remains firm, and continues to answer only by yet more stinging irony. **Thou shalt not have one lot only**—Thy unconquered territory even in the mountains shall be another lot, if only thou art a great people enough to take it.

**18. The mountain**—The same as the wood, verse 15, and referring probably to Gilboa. **The outgoings of it**—“The fields and the plains bordering upon the wood.”—*Keil*. “The defiles and avenues of approach.”—

wood, and thou shalt cut it down: and the outgoings of it shall be thine: for thou shalt drive out the Canaanites, though they have iron chariots, and though they be strong.

*v* Deut. 20. 1.—*a* Chap. 19. 51; 21. 2; 22. 9; Jer.

*Bush*. "Extremities."—*Furst*. [Though they have iron chariots, and though they be strong—It is altogether better to translate the word חָזַק, here twice

rendered **though**, by its ordinary meaning. *for*. This particle occurs five times in this verse, and has the same causal meaning every time. Render: *For the mountain is thine; for it is a forest and thou shalt cut it down, and thine shall be its outgoings; for thou shalt drive out the Canaanite; for iron chariots are his! for strong is he!* The force of Joshua's words is in the irony they contain. The meaning is, *Because* the Canaanite has iron chariots and is so mighty, therefore **thou**—a great people—ought to glory in driving him out. He is a foeman worthy of thy steel.]

## CHAPTER XVIII.

### THE TABERNACLE ERECTED AT SHILOH, 1.

The location of the tribes was not yet completed, but it had proceeded so far that it was desirable that the tabernacle should be permanently established in a central place. This could not well be accomplished till Ephraim, in whose borders it was to be located, had received his portion.

1. **Shiloh**—*Rest*; the first national capital and sanctuary in Palestine. Bethel, "the house of God," from its sacred name and associations, would probably have been selected if it had not been in the hands of the Canaanites. Shiloh, now *Seilun*, remarkable for its seclusion, not for its natural strength or beauty, is situated near the central thoroughfare of Palestine, twenty miles north of Jerusalem and ten south of Nablus. [Tristram describes the modern site as "a mass of shapeless ruins, scarcely distinguishable from the rugged rocks around them, with large hewn stones occasionally marking the site of ancient

## CHAPTER XVIII.

AND the whole congregation of the children of Israel assembled together at Shiloh, and set up the

7. 12.—*b* Judges 18. 31; 1 Sam. 1. 3, 24; 4. 3, 4.

walls. There is one square ruin, probably a mediæval fortress-church, with a few broken Corinthian columns, the relics of previous grandeur. Straggling valleys, too open to be termed glens, within an amphitheatre of dreary round-topped hills, bare and rocky, without being picturesque, are the only characteristics of this featureless scene." This same writer thus discusses the question why so unattractive a spot as Shiloh should have been chosen as the religious centre of Israel for so many generations: "One reason may probably be found in this very natural unattractiveness, inasmuch as it was a protest against the idolatry of the people of the land, which selected every high hill and every noble grove as the special home of their gods; here being neither commanding peak nor majestic cedar, neither deep glen nor gushing fountain. Moreover, it was a central point for all Israel, equidistant from north to south, easily accessible to the trans-Jordanic tribes, and in the heart of that hill-country which Joshua first subdued, and which remained to the end of Israel's history the district least exposed to the attacks of Canaanitish or foreign invaders." Here the remaining seven tribes received their allotments, here the yearly feasts were held, and here the ark remained more than three hundred and fifty years, till taken by the Philistines. 1 Sam. iv, 1–11. The place was afterwards forsaken and accursed of God. Psa. lxxviii, 60; Jer. vii, 12–14, and xxvi, 6. **Tabernacle**—This was, according to the rabbinical representation, still a tent, or, rather, a low structure of stones with a tent drawn over it: "Although a city grew round it, and a stone gateway rose in front of it, yet it still retained its name 'camp of Shiloh' and the 'tent that God had pitched among men.'"—*Stanley*. Its structure is described in Exod. xxv, xxvi.

tabernacle of the congregation there: and the land was subdued before them.

**2** And there remained among the children of Israel seven tribes, which had not yet received their inheritance. **3** And Joshua said unto the children of Israel, "How long *are* ye slack to go to possess the land, which the Lord God of your fathers hath given you? **4** Give out from among you three men for *each* tribe: and I will send them, and they shall rise, and go through the land, and describe it according to the inheritance of them; and they shall come *again* to

me. **5** And they shall divide it into seven parts: "Judah shall abide in their coast on the south, and "the house of Joseph shall abide in their coasts on the north. **6** Ye shall therefore describe the land *into* seven parts, and bring the *description* hither to me, "that I may cast lots for you here before the Lord our God. **7** "But the Levites have no part among you; for the priesthood of the Lord *is* their inheritance: "and Gad, and Reuben, and half the tribe of Manasseh, have received their inheritance beyond Jordan on the east, which

c Judges 18. 9; Eccles. 9. 10; Zeph. 8. 16.  
d Chap. 15. 1.—e Chap. 16. 1, 4.

f Chap. 14. 2; verse 10.—g Chap. 13. 33.  
h Chap. 13. 8.

#### THE FURTHER SURVEY AND DIVISION OF THE LAND, 2-10.

[We are not to understand that this survey consisted of an exact geographical measurement of the land, nor that it was made with a view to define the precise boundaries of the remaining tribes. It was to gain a fuller information on the topography of the country and the qualities of the different sections. See note on verse 4. Hence the objection of some, that the Canaanites still remaining in the land would not have allowed twenty-one men to pass through and measure their districts, is of no force. These men passed through the land, and took a list of the cities, arranging them into seven groups or parts, (verse 9,) and thus prepared the way for casting lots for them at Shiloh. Whether they were at all molested in taking this survey is not said.]

**2. Seven tribes**—There seem to have been two causes for this delay in the allotment to these tribes: (1) The fondness for a roving life which these tribes had acquired, and their indisposition to settle down in agricultural pursuits; (2) But chiefly the fact that from the hasty character of the first survey it was found that the lot of Judah, already assigned, was too large, and a new and more accurate survey must be made. With respect to the first cause Bush says: "What a striking picture of the too common apathy and sluggishness of the candidate for the heavenly inheritance! Who does not find that corruptions gather strength

by indulgence, and that graces decay for want of exercise? Therefore let us look to ourselves that we lose not the things that we have wrought."

**4. Give out**—Heb., *appoint*. The commission of twenty-one was fairly constituted; each tribe was equally represented. [**Describe it**—Write down in a book (compare verse 9) a list of the cities, and a description of the different localities, and, as Rosenmüller observes, "what lands were barren, and what were fertile; whether a district were hilly or flat, whether well watered or destitute of springs, and any thing else which served to show the goodness of the soil, and the comparative worth of different localities." **According to the inheritance of them**—That is, with reference to its being divided as an inheritance of the remaining seven tribes.] Josephus says, "Joshua thought the land should be divided by estimation of its goodness, rather than the largeness of its measure." For the adjustment of the lots to the size of the tribes, see on chap. xiii, 6.

**5. Judah shall abide**—That is, shall maintain the same relative position, but not necessarily the same amount. See chap. xix, 9, where Simeon's portion is taken out of Judah's, to produce equality.

**6. Before the Lord**—Before the tabernacle at Shiloh, (verse 10,) in which dwelt the Shekinah, the Divine Presence.

**7. Levites have no part**—See on chap. xiii, 33.

Moses the servant of the Lord gave them. **8** And the men arose, and went away: and Joshua charged them that went to describe the land, saying, 'Go and walk through the land, and describe it, and come again to me, that I may here cast lots<sup>k</sup> for you before the Lord in Shiloh. **9** And the men went and passed through the land, and described it by cities into<sup>l</sup> seven parts in a book, and came again to Joshua to the host at Shiloh. **10** And Joshua cast<sup>m</sup> lots for them in Shiloh before the Lord: and there Joshua divided the land unto the children of Israel according to their divisions.

**11** And the lot of the tribe of the

<sup>k</sup> Gen. 13. 17.—<sup>l</sup> 1 Sam. 14. 41; Acts 1. 24, 26.  
<sup>l</sup> Acts 13. 19.—<sup>m</sup> Prov. 18. 18; Ezek. 47. 22.

**9. [Seven parts in a book]**—The cities and districts were divided into seven parts or groups, and described in a written document. Herodotus (II, 109) thought that land-surveying had its origin in Egypt, and thence passed over into Greece, and in Egypt the Hebrews may have acquired some knowledge of this art; but, as shown above, we need not understand this description of the Israelitish territory as a scientific survey.] **Came again to Joshua**—We have no note of the time occupied by the survey. Josephus says seven months, while the Rabbins say seven years. **To the host**—The Israelitish camp, which assembled at **Shiloh** to witness this allotment of the rest of the land.

#### BENJAMIN'S LOT, 11-28.

Benjamin's lot lay on the south of the sons of Joseph, so that the descendants of Rachel were all adjoining, and in the very heart of the land. As Benjamin's lot included Mount Moriah, the site of the sacred edifice, we find here a remarkable fulfilment of the prophecy in Deut. xxxiii, 12. "Hemmed in as it was between the two powerful neighbours of Ephraim and Judah, the tribe of Benjamin, nevertheless, retained a character of its own, eminently indomitable and insubordinate. The wolf which nursed the founders of Rome was not more evidently repeated in the martial qualities of the people of Romulus, than the

children of Benjamin came up according to their families: and the coast of their lot came forth between the children of Judah and the children of Joseph. **12** "And their border on the north side was from Jordan; and the border went up to the side of Jericho on the north side, and went up through the mountains westward; and the goings out thereof were at the wilderness of Beth-aven. **13** And the border went over from thence toward Luz, to the side of Luz<sup>o</sup> which is Beth-el, southward; and the border descended to Ataroth-addar, near the hill that *lieth* on the south side<sup>p</sup> of the nether Beth-horon. **14** And the border was drawn

<sup>n</sup> See chap. 16. 1.—<sup>o</sup> Gen. 28. 19; Judges 1. 23.  
<sup>p</sup> Chap. 16. 3.

wolf to which Benjamin is compared in his father's blessing, (Gen. xlix, 27,) appears in the eager, restless character of his descendants."—*Stanley*.

**11. Lot...of Benjamin came up**—"The lot comes up when it is drawn out of the urn."—*Masius*.

**12. Their border on the north side** was identical with the south border of Ephraim, (chap. xvi, 1-13,) as far as Lower Beth-horon.

**13. [Went over from thence]**—According to our note on chap. xvi, 1, this border turned off north of Jericho, and ran up so as to take in Zemairaim, (verse 22;) thence it passed westward to Ophni, (verse 24,) where it curved to the south so as to run down near Beth-el. **To the side of Luz... southward**—Literally, *to the shoulder of Luz*, that is, some eminence in the vicinity. **Southward** here does not mean that the border ran on the south side of Beth-el, but it designates the general course of the border as it passed near Beth-el. **Descended to Ataroth-addar**—That is, the border ran southward by the side of Luz as far as Ataroth.] See notes on chap. xvi, 5, 6. **The nether Beth-horon** still exists in the modern Beit-Ur-el-Tahta, situated on the top of a low ridge, which is separated by a narrow valley from the mountain on which the Upper Beth-horon stands. See note on chap. x, 10. South of this rises an eminence which is doubtless the hill here referred to.

*thence*, and compassed the corner of the sea southward, from the hill that *lieth* before Beth-horon southward; and the goings out thereof were at <sup>a</sup>Kirjath-baal which *is* Kirjath-jearim, a city of the children of Judah: this *was* the west quarter. **15** And the south quarter *was* from the end of Kirjath-jearim, and the border went out on the west, and went out to <sup>b</sup>the well of waters of Nephtoah. **16** And the border came down to the end of the mountain that *lieth* before <sup>c</sup>the valley of the son of Hinnom, *and* which *is* in the valley of the giants on the north, and descended to the valley of Hinnom, to the side of Jebusi on the south, and descended to <sup>d</sup>En-rogel, **17** And was drawn from the north, and went forth to En-shemesh, and went forth toward Geliloth, which

*is* over against the going up of Adummim, and descended to <sup>e</sup>the stone of Bohan the son of Reuben, **18** And passed along toward the side over against <sup>f</sup>Arabah northward, and went down unto Arabah: **19** And the border passed along to the side of Beth-hoglah northward: and the outgoings of the border were at the north <sup>g</sup>bay of the salt sea at the south end of Jordan: this *was* the south coast. **20** And Jordan was the border of it on the east side. This *was* the inheritance of the children of Benjamin, by the coasts thereof round about, according to their families. **21** Now the cities of the tribe of the children of Benjamin according to their families were Jericho, and Beth-hoglah, and the valley of Keziz, **22** And Beth-arabah, and Zemaraim, and Beth-el,

<sup>a</sup> See chap. 15. 9. — <sup>b</sup> Chap. 15. 9. — <sup>c</sup> Chap. 15. 8.   
 <sup>d</sup> Chap. 15. 7.

<sup>e</sup> Chap. 15. 6. — <sup>f</sup> Chap. 15. 6. — <sup>g</sup> 1 Or, *The plain*. — <sup>h</sup> 2 Heb. *to tongue*.

[**14. Compassed the corner of the sea southward**—Rather, *turned toward the side of the sea southward*. The meaning is simply that from the Lower Beth-horon Benjamin's western border turned southward towards the sea. It did not run *unto* the sea, as some have thought, nor is the reference here to Ephraim's border, which ran off from this point unto the Mediterranean. Dr. Thomson needlessly supposes that the pool of Gibeon is the sea here intended. But in giving these boundaries the word *sea* is so constantly used of the Mediterranean that it is very arbitrary to take it in this single instance in so limited a sense. **The goings out** of Benjamin's western border were not at the sea, but at **Kirjath-baal which is Kirjath-jearim**. On this city see note at chap. ix, 17. It lay almost directly south of Beth-horon, so that we must understand Benjamin's western border to have formed a curve turning from Beth-horon first seaward and then winding gradually round to Kirjath-jearim on the southern border. **This was the west quarter**—Literally, *the side of the sea*; that is, towards the sea.

**15. End of Kirjath-jearim**—The extreme western suburbs of the town. The suburbs of the Levitical cities were a thousand cubits from the outer wall, or nearly half a mile, and the suburbs

of Kirjath-jearim may have extended much further. This will explain the obscure statement that follows: **the border went out on the west, or seaward**. That is, the southern border of Benjamin, starting from Kirjath, ran first westward to the extreme suburbs of the city, perhaps a mile or two; then, starting again from the city, it ran eastward, and was identical with the northern border of Judah. See notes on chap. xv, 5–9.

**20. Jordan was the border. . on the east**—But only from the Dead Sea to the mouth of the Wady Kelt, or the Wady Nuwaimel, opposite Jericho, (chap. xvi, 1, note.) a distance of seven or eight miles. The Benjamites cared little for the plain. They preferred rocky heights and deep ravines, where they naturally became skilled in the use of the sling. See note on Judges xx, 16.]

**21. Cities of. . Benjamin**—In this list, as in that of the cities of Judah, no note is made on those cities that are now unknown. **Jericho**—Chap. ii, 1. **Beth-hoglah**—Chap. xv, 6.

**22. Beth-arabah**—Chap. xv, 6. [**Zemaraim**—This place is without much doubt identical with the ruins five miles north of Jericho, called es-Sumrah. The name is radically the same, and the site is where we should naturally expect to find the ruins of

**23** And Avim, and Parah, and \*Ophrah, **24** And Chephar-haammonai, and Ophni, and \*Gaba; twelve cities with their villages: **25** Gibeon, and Ramah, and Beeroth, **26** And Mizpeh, and Chephirah, and Mozah, **27** And Rekem, and Irpeel, and Taralah, **28** And \*Zelah, Eleph, and \*Jebusi which is Jerusalem, Gibeath, and Kirjath; fourteen cities with their villages. This is

1 Sam. 13. 17.—2 Ezra 2. 26; Neh. 7. 30.  
y 2 Sam. 21. 14.

this ancient town of Benjamin. **Beth-el**—Chap. vii, 2.

**23. Avim**—This is supposed by Knobel and others to stand for *At*, the city near Beth-el which was among the first destroyed by Joshua. See chap. vii, 2, note. **Parah**—"Jerome states that this village still existed in his time, and was situated five miles east of Beth-el. It seems highly probable that we have this old name retained in the wild glen called Wady Farah, which runs down the eastern declivities of Benjamin. It falls into the Wady Suweinit, and in the fork there are the ruins of an ancient village called Farah."—*Porter*. **Ophrah** is identified by Robinson with Taiyibeh, a village five miles northeast of Bethel, occupying a commanding site, and containing ancient ruins.]

**24. Ophni** is doubtless the Gophna of Josephus, (Wars, iii, 3, 5,) and is represented in the modern Jifna, three miles northwest of Beth-el. [**Gaba**, better spelled *Geba*, is not to be confounded with Gibeah of verse 28, (as the English version and some interpreters do at 1 Sam. xiii, 16, where see note.) It still exists under the scarcely altered name *Jeba*, on the top of a steep hill between the Wadies Suweinit and Farah, about six miles southeast by south from Beth-el. This height was held by a Philistine garrison in the time of Saul, (1 Sam. xiii, 3,) but was taken from them by the daring feat of Jonathan. At a later period it was fortified by Asa, (1 Kings xv, 22,) and was inhabited again after the captivity. Ezra ii, 26.

**25. Gibeon**—See chap. ix, 3. **Ramah** is associated with many interesting incidents in the subsequent history

the inheritance of the children of Benjamin according to their families.

## CHAPTER XIX.

**A**ND the second lot came forth to Simeon, *even* for the tribe of the children of Simeon according to their families: \*and their inheritance was within the inheritance of the children of Judah. **2** And \*they had in their

\* Chap. 15. 8.—a Verse 9.  
b 1 Chron. 4. 23.

of Israel. It is to be found in the modern er-Ram, six miles north of Jerusalem. It stands on the top of a conical hill, half a mile east of the great northern road from Jerusalem. Broken columns are found in the vicinity, and many large hewn stones, remains of the ancient city, are still to be seen in the walls and foundations of the modern houses. **Beeroth**—See chap. ix, 17.]

**26. Mizpeh**—Probably the modern Neby Samwil. See note on 1 Sam. vii, 5. **Chephirah**—See chap. ix, 17.

**28. Jebusi**, or, *the Jebusite*. See chap. x, 1. **Gibeath**, commonly called *Gibeah*, famous as the birth-place and residence of Saul, the first king of Israel. It was the scene of that atrocious crime which led almost to the annihilation of the tribe of Benjamin. Judges xix, 15. ff. Robinson identifies it with the lofty and commanding hill el 'Fal, three or four miles north of Jerusalem. **Kirjath**—See chap. ix, 17. "For a short time Benjamin rose to the highest rank in the commonwealth, when this tribe gave birth to the first king. Its ultimate position in the nation was altered by the one great change which affected the polarity of the whole political and geographical organization of the country, but of none more than that of Benjamin, when the fortress of Jebus, hitherto within its territory, was annexed by Judah, and became the capital of the monarchy."—*Stanley*.

## CHAPTER XIX.

SIMEON'S LOT, 1-9.

**1. Simeon**...within the inheritance of Judah—As Judah's lot was assigned first, when the Hebrews had

inheritance Beer-sheba or Sheba, and Moladah, **3** And Hazar-shual, and Balah, and Azem, **4** And Eltolad, and Bethul, and Hormah, **5** And Ziklag, and Beth-marcaboth, and Hazar-susah, **6** And Beth-lebaoth, and Sharuh; thirteen cities and their villages: **7** Ain, Remmond, and Ether, and Ashan; four cities and their villages: **8** And all the villages that were round about these cities to Baalath-beer, Ramath of

the south. This is the inheritance of the tribe of the children of Simeon according to their families. **9** Out of the portion of the children of Judah was the inheritance of the children of Simeon: for the part of the children of Judah was too much for them: therefore the children of Simeon had their inheritance within the inheritance of them.

**10** And the third lot came up for the children of Zebulun according to their

c Judges 1. 17.—d 1 Chron. 4. 32.

e Num. 23. 19, 20.—f Verse 1.

larger expectations than they ever realized, it was very natural that they should assign too large a portion to Judah. This error is now discovered and rectified by carving Simeon's lot out of Judah's. Simeon's inheritance, except the first thirteen cities, was not a compact territory, but it consisted chiefly of cities scattered about in Judah. Thus was fulfilled the prophetic declaration of Jacob respecting Simeon and Levi, that they should be "divided in Jacob and scattered in Israel." Gen. xlix, 5-7. "Simeon is the exact counterpart of Reuben. With Reuben he marched through the desert. As Reuben in the east, so Simeon in the west, blends his fortunes with those of the Arab hordes on the frontier, and dwindles away accordingly, and only reappears in the dubious but characteristic exploits of his descendant Judith."—Stanley.

**2. Beer-sheba**—See on chap. xv, 28. **Sheba** is probably a repetition of the copyist, otherwise there would be fourteen cities instead of thirteen, as stated in verse 6.

As the cities of Simeon were taken out of the portion originally assigned to Judah, all whose sites are now known are described in the notes on chap. xv. Some of the names here given do not appear there, some may be different names of the same place, but in the absence of any certain knowledge of them we do best to abstain from mere conjectural comments.

**8. All the villages**—All the surrounding villages and country that were subject to the cities named.

**9. Too much for them**—This may mean that it was more than Judah could subdue and retain, or that it exceeded

their necessities, or that it was too large relatively. It reflects great honour upon Judah that they should, without selfish remonstrances and murmurings, submit to this diminution of their lot. The national feeling must have been yet strong in this patriotic tribe, for States are always tenacious of their boundaries.

#### ZEBULUN'S LOT, 10-16.

**10. Zebulun**—"The four tribes of Zebulun, Issachar, Asher, and Naphtali obtain contiguous portions in the north of Palestine, as they were allied in birth, and as they marched through the desert. They formed, as it were, a state by themselves. A common sanctuary seems to have been intended for them in Mount Tabor."—Stanley. As Zebulun preceded his elder brother Issachar in the blessing of the patriarch Jacob and the lawgiver Moses, so he precedes him in the allotment. [Jacob predicted that Zebulun should "dwell at the haven of seas," (Gen. xlix, 13,) and Josephus well explains that his "lot included the land which lay as far as the lake of Gennesaret, and that which belonged to Carmel and the sea." It thus lay between two seas, and had, perhaps, fishermen on the Sea of Galilee, and merchants navigating the Mediterranean along with the Phenicians. Moses also said prophetically of this tribe, "They shall suck of the abundance of the seas and of treasures hid in the sand." Deut. xxx, 19. These prophecies do not necessarily imply that Zebulun's territory would border on these seas.

**10. The border...unto Sarid**—This southern border of Zebulun, like the north border of Ephraim, (chap.

families: and the border of their inheritance was unto Sarid: **11** And their border went up toward the sea, and Maralah, and reached to Dabbasheth, and reached to the river that is before Jokneam; **12** And turned from Sarid eastward toward the sunrising unto the border of Chisloth-tabor, and then goeth out to Daberath, and goeth up to Japhia, **13** And from thence passeth

g Gen. 49. 13.—A Chap. 12. 22.

xvi, 6,) seems to start from a central point in the line, and go first westward and then eastward. Verse 12. The position of **Sarid** was probably not far from Mount Tabor, but its site is unknown, and therefore the exact line of this border cannot now be traced.

**11. Toward the sea**—The Mediterranean. But apparently not to the sea, for Asher reached to Carmel, (verse 26,) and, according to chap. xvii, 10, touched Manasseh on the south. **Maralah** may, perhaps, be found in the little village Mahil, which occupies the top of a hill four miles southwest of Nazareth, and contains the ruins of a temple and other vestiges of antiquity. But this is not certain. **Jokneam**—The modern Tell Kaimon, close to the base of Carmel and on the south bank of the Kishon. See on chap. xii, 22. So **the river** here mentioned must be the ancient Kishon. See on Judges v, 21.]

**12. Chisloth-tabor**, Robinson is inclined to identify with the village of Iksal, near the base of Mount Tabor, on a low, rocky ridge, and containing many excavated sepulchres. On Mount Tabor see note at Judges iv, 6. **Daberath** has been identified with the modern Deburieh, a small village just at the northwestern base of Tabor. **Japhia**, now called Yafa, is a half hour's ride southwest of Nazareth, and contains about thirty houses. It is the traditional birthplace of St. James.

**13. Gittah-hepher** was the birthplace of the prophet Jonah. 2 Kings xiv, 25. Modern monastic tradition identifies it with el-Meshad, one of the many Moslem tombs of Jonah, about five miles northeast of Nazareth. **Remmon**, Robinson conjectures, is

on along on the east to Gittah-hepher, to Ittah-kazin, and goeth out to Remmon-methoar to Neah; **14** And the border compasseth it on the north side to Hannathon: and the outgoings thereof are in the valley of Jiphtah-el: **15** And Kattath, and Nahallal, and Shimron, and Idalah, and Beth-lehem: twelve cities with their villages. **16** This is the inheritance of the chil-

1 Or, which is drawn.

Rummanneh, seven miles north of Nazareth. **Methoar** is not a proper name, but a participle, which may be rendered as in the margin, *which is drawn*, or, with Gesenius, *which stretches or extends*, to Neah. The site of **Neah** is unknown.

[**14. The border... on the north side**—The northern border cannot be accurately traced, for **Hannathon**, the only city named, is unknown, and the identification of **the valley of Jiphtah-el** with the great Wady Abilin, as Robinson proposes, is hardly a settled thing. But regarding the identity as established, all we know of the northern border of Zebulun is, that it terminated on the west in the Wady Abilin. The western border is not given here at all, but is vaguely intimated in verse 27, where a boundary of Asher is described.

**15. Beth-lehem** is the only one of the five cities named in this verse which has been with any certainty identified. Dr. Robinson found it about six miles west of Nazareth, still bearing the name *Beit-lahm*, but only a miserable village, with no traces of antiquity except the name. This verse seems to be only a fragment of the list of cities belonging to Zebulun; a supposition confirmed by the mention of **twelve cities** when only five are named. Even if we suppose that all the border cities named are counted, we meet with as great a difficulty, for then we have at least sixteen cities named. We may appropriately say with Keil: "From all that has been hitherto ascertained, we can merely decide respecting the inheritance of Zebulun that it comprised the western half of the plain of Esdraelon, between Jokneam and Tabor, and extended to the mountains of Galilee."]



dren of Zebulun according to their families, these cities with their villages.

**17** And the fourth lot came out to Issachar, for the children of Issachar according to their families. **18** And their border was toward Jezreel, and Chesulloth, and Shunem, **19** And Haphraim, and Shihon, and Anaharath, **20** And Rabbith, and Kishion, and Abez, **21** And Remeth, and En-

gannim, and En-haddah, and Beth-pazzez; **22** And the coast reacheth to Tabor, and Shahazimah, and Beth-shemesh; and the outgoings of their border were at Jordan: sixteen cities with their villages. **23** This is the inheritance of the tribe of the children of Issachar according to their families, the cities and their villages.

**24** And the fifth lot came out for the

#### ISSACHAR'S LOT, 17-23.

The territory of this tribe was bounded on the north by Zebulun, on the east by the Jordan, and on the south and west by Manasseh. It took in a large portion of the most beautiful and desirable parts of the great plain of Esdraelon. For the sake of securing themselves in so desirable a portion as the fertile plain of Esdraelon the children of Issachar became humbly subservient to the Canaanites of the adjacent fortified towns, and to the proud country of Phenicia on the near sea-coast. They assumed a position of almost slavish servitude to them, becoming their common carriers, mule-drivers, and servants of all work, thereby fulfilling the prophecy of the dying Jacob: "Issachar is a strong ass couching down between two burdens: and he saw that rest was good, and the land that it was pleasant, and bowed his shoulder to bear, and became a servant to tribute." Gen. xlix, 14, 15.

**18. Their border was toward Jezreel**—Or, rather, it encompassed this city. The writer begins to trace the border, but really enumerates the cities included within it. These were all in the eastern part of the plain of Esdraelon. **Jezreel**, a name often applied to the plain of Esdraelon, is here limited to a city standing on a gentle swell which rises out of it. It was the chief residence of King Ahab, and seat of the worship of Baal and Astarte, the cult of the Phenician Jezebel. It was remarkable for its central location, and the great beauty and commanding character of its site. Its modern name is Zerin, containing only a few wretched hovels clustering around an old, ruined tower. **Chesulloth**—Probably the same as *Chisloth-tabor* in verse 12. [**Shunem** was at the modern village of

Solam, which lies at the western base of the Little Hermon, and about three miles north of Jezreel. Here the Philistines encamped before Saul's last battle, (1 Sam. xxviii, 4,) and here was the home of the Shunammite woman whose son Elisha raised to life. 2 Kings iv, 8.

**21. En-gannim** is still found in Jenin, six or seven miles south of Jezreel. "It is now the chief town between Nazareth and Nablus, and contains about two thousand inhabitants, nearly all Moslems. It deals largely in all the products of the country, and with the Bedouins on the east of the Jordan."—*Thomson*. "The most remarkable thing here is the fine flowing public fountain, rising in the hills back of the town, and brought down so as to issue in a noble stream in the midst of the place."—*Robinson*.]

**22. Coast reacheth**—This probably means the northern coast or border, where it joined on Zebulun. **Tabor** is here generally supposed to mean not the mountain, but a town on it afterwards given to the Levites. 1 Chron. vi, 77. **Sixteen cities**—This is exactly the number given above, if Tabor be taken as a city.

#### LOT OF ASHER, 24-31.

[The position of Asher may be generally described as extending along the shore of the Mediterranean from Tannur, on the south of Mount Carmel, to Zidon on the north, and bounded on the east by Zebulun and Naphtali. His territory included the rich plain of Phenicia, and some of the most celebrated cities of antiquity. Truly did Jacob prophesy: "His bread shall be fat, and he shall yield royal dainties," (Gen. xlix, 20;) and Moses: "He shall dip his foot in oil; his shoes shall be iron and brass." Deut. xxxiii, 24, 25.

tribe of the children of Asher according to their families. **25** And their border was Helkath, and Hali, and Beten, and Achshaph, **26** And Alammelech, and Amad, and Mishal; and reacheth to Carmel westward, and to Shihor-libnath; **27** And turneth toward the sun-rising to Beth-dagon, and reacheth to Zebulun, and to the valley of Jiph-

4 Chap. 11. 8; Judges 1. 31.

The great Phenician plain near Acre was rich in corn and wine and oil, and in the Zidonian metallic manufactures probably many Asherites learned to be skilful workmen in iron and brass. Compare 1 Kings vii, 14. When other tribes were at war with Jabin's hosts Asher dwelt quietly by his harbours. Judges v, 17. Asher never conquered the Phenician territory, but was content to dwell among the Canaanites and learn their ways. See Judges i, 31, 32. Stanley remarks; "One name only of the tribe of Asher shines out of the general obscurity—the aged widow who, in the very close of the Jewish history, departed not from the Temple at Jerusalem, but served God with prayers and fastings night and day. (Luke ii, 36, where see notes.) So insignificant was the tribe to which was assigned the fortress which Napoleon called the key of Palestine."]

**25. Achshaph**—See on chap. xi, 1. In this list, as in other extended lists of cities, no note is usually taken of those whose sites are now unknown.

**26. [Carmel]**—A range of connected hills, whose average height is fifteen hundred feet, running from the northern hills of Samaria northwesterly, and terminating in a lofty promontory which projects boldly into the Mediterranean just south of the bay of Acre. All travellers agree in giving glowing descriptions of the grandeur, beauty, and excellency of Carmel. "There is not a flower," says Van de Velde, "that I have seen in Galilee, or on the plains along the coast, that I did not find on Carmel." Mr. Carne says: "No mountain in or around Palestine retains its ancient beauty so much as Carmel. Its groves are few but luxuriant. It is no place for crags and precipices, or rocks of the wild goats; but its surface is

thamel toward the north side of Beth-emek, and Neiel, and goeth out to Cabul on the left hand, **28** And Hebron, and Rehob, and Hammon, and Kanah, *even* unto great Zidon; **29** And *then* the coast turneth to Ramah, and to the strong city <sup>2</sup> Tyre; and the coast turneth to Hosah; and the outgoings thereof are at the sea from the coast to

2 Heb. Tzor, 2 Sam. 5. 11.

covered with a rich and constant verdure."] **Shihor-libnath**, river of *whiteness*, is a matter of great dispute. Every stream, from the Belus southward to the Crocodile River inclusive, has been selected as the river here mentioned. It must have been south of Dor, (Tantura,) which belonged to Asher. Chap. xvii, 11.

**27. Beth-dagon**, house of Dagon, must be distinguished from that in chap. xv, 41. It was probably a Philistine colony, and situated somewhere east or northeast of Tantura. **Zebulun** is not a city, but the tribe. On **Jiphthah-el**, see at verse 14. **Cabul** is probably the modern village Kabul, which stands on the top of a rocky ridge eight miles east of Acre.

**28. Kanah**—Not Cana of Galilee, but probably the large village Kanah, five miles southeast of Tyre. **Zidon**—See chap. xi, 8, note. It was never conquered by Asher.

**29. Ramah**—Robinson confidently identifies this place with the modern village Rameh, which stands on an isolated hill about ten miles southeast of Tyre. It has no traces of antiquity except some very ancient sarcophagi. **Tyre**, a rock, is a colony of Zidon, and is a few miles south on the sea-coast. The old city stood on the main land and was strongly fortified. New Tyre, which was taken by Alexander the Great, was built on a rock in the sea. It is probably Old Tyre that is named in the text, but Keil endeavours to prove that New Tyre was in existence in the days of Joshua, discrediting Josephus, who says that it was built two hundred and forty years before the Temple of Solomon. It was a great commercial emporium, and became the burden of prophecies (see Isa. xxiii; Ezek. xxvi) which have been

\* Achzib: 30 Ummah also, and Aphek, and Rehob: twenty and two cities with their villages. 31 This is the inheritance of the tribe of the children of Asher according to their families, these cities with their villages.

1. Gen. 38. 5; Judges

remarkably fulfilled. **Achzib**, now called Zib, is on the coast nine miles north of Acre.

30. **Ummah**—Dr. Thomson endeavours to identify it with Alma, in the highlands on the coast. **Aphek**—See on chap. xiii, 4. But that Aphek could hardly have been assigned to Asher, being too far beyond his border. **Twenty and two cities**—It frequently happens that the cities named do not agree with the number given. To adjust this difficulty various assumptions have been made, as noted in chap. xv, 32.

#### NAPHTALI'S LOT, 32-39.

[The territory of Naphtali was bounded on the east by the Jordan and sea of Galilee, on the south by Zebulun, on the west and north by Asher. The northern limit probably ran into the splendid valley of the Litany, which separates the two great ranges of Lebanon. The excellence of Naphtali's portion is indicated in Moses' song, where he speaks of him as "satisfied with favour, and full with the blessing of the Lord, possessing the west and the south." Deut. xxxiii, 23. The latter part should be rendered, "Possess thou the sea and the sunny clime." "Naphtali possessed," says J. L. Porter, "a greater variety of soil, scenery, and climate than any of the other tribes. Its northern portions are the highlands of Palestine. The sublime ravine of the Leontes separates its mountains from the chain of Lebanon, of which, however, they may be regarded as a prolongation. The scenery is here rich and beautiful. In the centre of this park-like region lie the ruins of the sanctuary of the tribe, the northern city of refuge, Kadesh-Naphtali. The ridge rises gradually towards the south, and culminates at Safed, which has an elevation of nearly three thousand feet.

32 The sixth lot came out to the children of Naphtali, *even* for the children of Naphtali according to their families. 33 And their coast was from Heleph, from Allon to Zaanannim, and Adami, Nekeb, and Jabneel, unto Lakum; and

1. 31; Micah 1. 14.

"The southern section of Naphtali was the garden of Palestine. The little plains along the shore of the Sea of Galilee and the vales that run up into the mountains are of unrivalled fertility. Josephus describes the plain on the shore of the lake as an earthly paradise, where the choicest fruits grew luxuriantly, and where eternal spring reigned. His words were not much exaggerated, for now, though more a wilderness than a paradise, its surpassing richness is apparent."

Jacob spoke of Naphtali as "a hind let loose." Gen. xlix, 21. The tribe had many a noble and fleet warrior, but, like the timid hind, they shrunk from aggressive war, and left several of their cities in the hands of the Canaanites. Judges i, 33. The valiant Barak lacked confidence to venture alone against the hosts of Sisera, (iv, 8,) but when fully roused, like a hind brought to bay, he scorned his soul to death on the high places of the battlefield. Judges v, 18, note.]

From his exposed position on the northern frontier Naphtali was the first to fall into the hands of the Assyrian invaders, (2 Kings xv, 29,) but after the captivity the Israelites largely settled again in this territory. His lot included the scene of the great victory of Joshua over the northern confederacy, and also many places where the Greater Joshua, by his mighty miracles and wondrous teachings, confounded his foes and laid the foundation of his everlasting kingdom. This region is Galilee of the Gentiles, whose "people, which sat in darkness, saw great light." Isa. ix, 1; Matt. iv, 16.

33. The cities here mentioned are so far unknown that there is great difficulty in attempting an accurate description of the boundaries of this tribe. The northern and a part of the western boundary seem to have been

the outgoings thereof were at Jordan: **34** And then the coast turneth westward to Aznoth-tabor, and goeth out from thence to Hukkok, and reacheth to Zebulun on the south side, and reacheth to Asher on the west side, and to Judah upon Jordan toward the sunrise-

[Deuteronomy

identical, running mainly in a northeasterly direction, and **Heleph**, the starting point, seems to have been some central place on this line, from which the border ran first eastward, but somewhat towards the north, and then seaward. Verse 34. [Van de Velde proposes to identify **Heleph** with Beitlif, an ancient site about twelve miles southeast of Tyre and about the same distance west of Kades. It stands on the edge of a very marked ravine, which may very possibly have formed a part of the border of Naphtali and Asher. **Allon**—As the Hebrew word means an *oak*, some critics very plausibly understand it of some remarkable tree near **Zaanannim**, and render, *From the oak at Zaanannim*. This was probably the same tree by which Heber the Kenite pitched his tent. See Judges iv, 11, note. **Outgoings...at Jordan**—That is, this northwestern boundary terminated at the upper sources of the Jordan.]

**34. Turneth westward**—Probably in a southwesterly direction. [**Hukkok** is recognised by Robinson and others in the modern Yakuk, a village six or seven miles northwest from the Sea of Galilee. **Zebulun on the south...Asher on the west**—This is merely giving the boundaries in general terms. **And to Judah upon the Jordan**—This is a faulty translation. **And to Judah** belongs to the previous sentence, which describes the western border. Literally, *It touched Asher on the west and at Judah*. Judah was evidently a city on the western border, perhaps at Jehudiyah, marked on Van de Velde's map east of Tyre and a few miles north of Tibnin. The rest of the verse forms a distinct sentence: **Jordan toward the sunrise**—That is, the Jordan formed the eastern boundary.

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ing. **35** And the fenced cities are Ziddim, Zer, and Hammath, Rakkath, and Chinnereth, **36** And Adamah, and Ramah, and Hazor, **37** And Kedesh, and Edrei, and En-hazor, **38** And Iron, and Migdal-el, Horem, and Beth-anath, and Beth-shemesh; nineteen cities with

32. 23.

**35. Hammath**—Not the Hamath of the north, (chap. xiii, 5,) but doubtless the modern Hammam, or warm springs, which send up their hot and sulphurous waters on the western shore of the Sea of Galilee just south of the ruins of the ancient Tiberias.]

**Chinnereth**—See chap. xi, 2, note.

**36. Ramah** must be kept distinct from Ramah in Asher. It is identified by Robinson with a large village still called Rameh, which is situated about six miles southwest of Safed on the declivity of a mountain, surrounded by olive groves and overlooking a fertile plain. **Hazor**—See chap. xi, 1, note.

**37. Kedesh**—See on chap. xii, 22. **Edrei**, not the city in Bashan of the same name, (chap. xiii, 31, note,) but another near Kadesh, whose name still lingers, perhaps, in Khureibeh, a few miles west of Lake Merom. **En-hazor** seems to be the modern Ain-Hazur, between Ramah and Hukkok, some ten miles northwest of the Sea of Galilee. One reason why so many places have the same name among the Hebrews is, that the name is descriptive of some characteristic, as high, low, abounding in fountains, etc. Where two places had the same natural features they were apt to receive the same name.

**38. Iron** is probably the modern Yaron, ten miles west of Lake Merom. **Migdal-el**—The modern name Mejdal is the same as the Hebrew Migdal, and the Greek Magdala of the New Testament, chiefly known as the native town of Mary Magdalene. Magdala is a miserable little Moslem village on the western shore of the Sea of Galilee. [But **Migdal-el** seems from the grouping of these cities to have been, not near the Sea of Galilee, but in the north or northwest part of the tribe. Its location cannot at present be decided. **Beth-shemesh** cannot be the same

O. T.

their villages. **39** This is the inheritance of the tribe of the children of Naphtali according to their families, the cities and their villages.

**40** And the seventh lot came out for the tribe of the children of Dan according to their families. **41** And the coast of their inheritance was Zorah,

*m Judges 1. 35.*

as that in verse 41 and chap. xv, 10. Some have thought it might be Medjesh-shems, a few miles northeast of Cesarea Philippi, and a little north of Lake Phiala.] **Nineteen**—Three names are wanting. See on chap. xv, 32.

#### DAN'S LOT, 40-48.

[The territory assigned to Dan was the smallest of all the tribe divisions. But it was not without advantages. Its border on the northeast and south joined respectively on Ephraim, Benjamin, and Judah, the three most powerful tribes of Israel. Its western border was the Mediterranean. The territory thus enclosed embraced the beautiful plain south of Joppa, the cornfield and garden of Southern Palestine. Dr. Robinson thus describes this district, as seen from the tower of Ramleh: "Towards the north and south, as far as the eye could reach, the beautiful plain was spread out like a carpet at our feet, variegated with tracts of brown, from which the crops had just been taken, and with fields still rich with the yellow of ripe corn, or green with the springing millet. Immediately below us the eye rested on the immense olive groves of Ramleh and Lydda, and the picturesque towers, and minarets, and domes, of these large villages. In the plain itself there were not many villages; but the tract of hills, and the mountain side beyond, especially in the northeast, appeared as if studded with them, and, as now seen in the setting sun, they seemed like white villas and hamlets among the dark hills, presenting an appearance of thriftiness and beauty which certainly would not stand a closer examination."

But the children of Dan were unable to hold this beautiful plain, for "the

and Eshtaol, and Ir-shemesh, **42** And Shaalabbin, and Aijalon, and Jethlah, **43** And Elon, and Thimnatha, and Ekron, **44** And Eltekeh, and Gibbethon, and Baalath, **45** And Jehud, and Bene-berak, and Gath-rimmon, **46** And Mejarkon, and Rakkon, with the border before Japho. **47** And

*3 Or, over against.—4 Or, Joppa, Acts 9. 36.*

Amorites forced them into the mountain, for they would not suffer them to come down to the valley," (Judg. i. 34.) and they were obliged to receive help from "the hand of the house of Joseph." Verse 35.

Some time after the allotment this tribe enlarged its possessions by the conquest of Laish in the north. Judg. xviii. In this covert but daring movement Dan fulfilled the prophecies of Jacob and of Moses. Gen. xlix, 17; Deut. xiii, 32. Of this tribe was the famous hero Samson, who judged Israel twenty years. By taking Micah's images, and with them establishing a tribe sanctuary at Dan, (Judges xviii, 20, 30,) they seem to have been the first to adopt and establish an illegal worship in Israel, and as the tribe of Dan is not mentioned in Rev. vii, 5-7, among those that were sealed, some of the fathers inclined to believe that from this tribe Antichrist should spring.]

**41. Zorah, and Eshtaol**—These cities were originally allotted to Judah, (see chap. xv, 33,) and so also were other cities of this list. But the original allotment being found too large for Judah, the southwestern portion was given to Simeon, (ver. 1-9,) and a part of the northwestern to Dan. **Ir-shemesh** is supposed to be the same as Beth-shemesh in chap. xv, 10.

**42-45. Aijalon**—See chap. x, 12. **Thimnathah**—Perhaps the same as Timnah, chap. xv, 10. **Ekron**—See chap. xiii, 3. The rest of these cities are now unknown.

[**46. Japho**—The ancient Joppa, modern Jaffa, the famous seaport town of Palestine, distinguishable alike in sacred and common history. Hither the Lebanon timber was brought in floats for building Solomon's temple, (2 Chron. ii, 16,) and also for the second

"the coast of the children of Dan went out *too little* for them: therefore the children of Dan went up to fight against Leshem, and took it, and smote it with the edge of the sword, and possessed it, and dwelt therein, and called Leshem, °Dan, after the name of Dan their father. 48 This is the inheritance of the tribe of the children of Dan according to their families, these cities with their villages.

49 When they had made an end of dividing the land for inheritance by their coasts, the children of Israel gave

*n* See Judges 18. — *o* Judges 18, 21. — *p* Ezek. 45, 7, 8.

temple under Zerubbabel. Ezra iii, 7. Here Jonah embarked when he sought to flee from the presence of Jehovah. Here Peter raised Tabitha, and here was the house of Simon the tanner, where Peter had his vision. See cut of modern town at Acts ix, 42.]

47. **The coast... went out too little**—Here the English version is at fault by inserting *too little*. Masius has given the sense correctly thus: "The Danites emigrated *beyond themselves*, that is, beyond the inheritance in which they were first placed by the divine lot, and set out in search of other possessions." This occurred after the death of Joshua, and is here narrated out of its chronological order, so as to complete the description of Dan's lot. **Therefore... went up to fight**—Rather, *and the children of Dan went up and fought*. **Leshem**, or Laish, is at the extreme north, near the foot of Mount Hermon. A minute account of this expedition and its results is found in Judges xviii, where see notes.

#### JOSHUA'S INHERITANCE, 49, 50.

An honourable distinction of Joshua from the whole people and from his tribe is made by conferring on him a separate portion, not by lot, but in accordance with his own choice. It was situated in the territory of Ephraim, the tribe to which he belonged.

50. **The word of the Lord**, as uttered perhaps through the High Priest, or probably to Moses, but which was not recorded in the Mosaic books. The unrecorded promise to

an inheritance to Joshua the son of Nun among them: 50 According to the word of the Lord they gave him the city which he asked, *even* 'Timnath-serah in mount Ephraim: and he built the city, and dwelt therein. 51 These are the inheritances, which Eleazar the priest, and Joshua the son of Nun, and the heads of the fathers of the tribes of the children of Israel, divided for an inheritance by lot 'in Shiloh before the Lord, at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation. So they made an end of dividing the country.

*q* Chap. 24, 30. — *r* 1 Chron. 7, 21. — *s* Num. 34, 17; chap. 14, 1. — *t* Chap. 18, 1, 10.

Caleb was a similar instance. **Timnath-serah**—That is, the portion that was over and above. [It is called Timnath-heres (*portion of the sun*) in Judges ii, 9, because, as the Jews explain, he made the sun stand still. It was in Mount Ephraim, on the north side of the hill of Gaash. See chap. xxiv, 30. This spot is without much doubt at the modern Tibneh, some twelve miles northwest of Beth-el. Here Dr. Eli Smith discovered the ruins of a considerable town. On the south of the town is a hill (probably Gaash) in which are a number of sepulchres which in size and richness will bear comparison with the tombs of the kings at Jerusalem. Here, doubtless, the aged commander passed his last days, and here he died and was buried. Chap. xxiv, 29, 30. "Jerome relates that Paula, when travelling in these parts, marvelled that the distributor of the possessions of the children of Israel should have chosen for himself a situation so rough and mountainous."—*Kito*.

51. **They made an end of dividing the country**—But after the division and allotment it remained to designate the cities of refuge and the Levitical cities. An account of this is given in the next two chapters.]

#### CHAPTER XX.

##### THE SIX CITIES OF REFUGE, 1-9.

The sentiment of justice impels uncultivated men to the immediate infliction of punishment upon those who give offence to that sentiment by a

## CHAPTER XX.

**THE** LORD also spake unto Joshua, saying, **2** Speak to the children of Israel, saying, "Appoint out for you cities of refuge, whereof I spake unto you by the hand of Moses: **3** That the slayer that killeth *any* person unawares *and* unwittingly may flee thither: and

*a* Exod. 21. 13; Num. 35. 6, 11, 14;

wrong act, especially the act of taking human life. But a man may accidentally and innocently slay his fellow-man. The safeguard of law is therefore needed that vengeance may not hastily wreak itself on the guiltless. In ordinary cases in highly civilized lands there is such a respect for law that the manslayer is screened from summary punishment, and is entrusted to the courts for trial. But where the veneration for law is not strong, (especially as was the case among the Hebrews, who had so recently been in the house of bondage,) where might and not right is the law, the slayer of a brother man would not be safe in the hands of his outraged and excited neighbours. Hence cities of refuge at convenient distances were appointed. In the wilderness, and up to this time in Canaan, the tabernacle of the Lord seems, from Exod. xxi, 14, to have answered for a place of refuge for the man guilty of homicide; but in the time of Moses commandment was given by God to appoint such cities of refuge in the Land of Canaan. See notes on Num. xxxv, 9-34.

### 3. Unawares and unwittingly—

The design of the city of refuge was not to screen criminals, but to afford an opportunity to all accused of so grave a charge to show the absence of a guilty intent. In order to do this the guilty must be temporarily received as well as the innocent. **Avenger of blood**—The next of kin, or the *Gosh*, as he is styled in the Hebrew, and still called in the East. In Gen. ix, 5, Jehovah says, "Your blood in return for the life-blood which you have shed will I require." He here expresses his estimate of the sacredness of human life. The avenger of blood is his agent for searching out and punishing murder.

they shall be your refuge from the avenger of blood. **4** And when he that doth flee unto one of those cities shall stand at the entering of <sup>b</sup>the gate of the city, and shall declare his cause in the ears of the elders of that city, they shall take him into the city unto them, and give him a place, that he may dwell

Deut. 19. 2, 9.—<sup>c</sup>Ruth 4. 1, 2.

In the absence of magistrates and tribunals, one man in each family was required to act as a sheriff for the redress of his kindred and the protection of the body politic. In ancient Greece the land was regarded as defiled and accursed of the gods so long as a murderer dwelt therein unpunished.

**4. Gate of the city**—The tribunal of justice, the forum, was at the city gate. The refugee was not kept out of the city till his innocence was proved, but he was permitted to enter, and to relate his cause, and to receive the protection of the city, for this is the meaning of the clause, **they shall take him into the city unto them**. He must at the earliest possible moment be recognized as a fugitive, or the purpose of his flight may be defeated. This recognition he is entitled to have till his case can be examined by the local authorities. The Rabbins relate how every possible facility was to be afforded to the refugee. "The roads to these cities were to be kept in good repair; no hillock was left, no river nor stream was allowed over which there was not a bridge; the road was to be at least thirty-two cubits broad, (three rods,) and every kind of obstruction was to be removed that might hurt the foot or hinder the speed of the fugitive. At every turning or branching of roads posts were erected bearing the words, REFUGE! REFUGE! to guide the fugitive in his flight; so benign and considerate was the provision made for the benefit of the accidental slayer of his fellow-man."—*Bush*. Infinitely greater pains has God taken to lead *guilty* souls to the refuge of the atoning blood of Jesus Christ. He has opened this refuge, built a highway to it from every human soul, sent his Spirit to

among them. **5** "And if the avenger of blood pursue after him, then they shall not deliver the slayer up into his hand; because he smote his neighbour unwittingly, and hated him not before-time. **6** And he shall dwell in that city, "until he stand before the congregation for judgment, and until the death of the high priest that shall be in those days: then shall the slayer return, and come unto his own city, and unto his own house, unto the city from whence he fled. **7** And they appointed Kedesh in Galilee in mount Naphtali, and Shechem in mount Ephraim, and Kir-

jath-arba which is Hebron in the mountain of Judah. **8** And on the other side Jordan by Jericho eastward, they assigned Bezer in the wilderness upon the plain out of the tribe of Reuben, and Ramoth in Gilead out of the tribe of Gad, and Golan in Bashan out of the tribe of Manasseh. **9** "These were the cities appointed for all the children of Israel, and for the stranger that sojourneth among them, that whosoever killeth any person at unawares might flee thither, and not die by the hand of the avenger of blood, "until he stood before the congregation.

c Num. 35. 12.—d Num. 35. 12, 25.—1 Heb. sanctified.—e Chap. 21. 32; 1 Chron. 6. 76.—f Chap. 21. 21; 2 Chron. 10. 1.—g Chap. 14. 15;

21. 11, 13.—h Luke 1. 39.—i Deut. 4. 43; chap. 21. 36; 1 Chron. 6. 78.—j Chap. 21. 38; 1 Kings 22. 3.—l Ch. 21. 27.—m Num. 35. 15.—n Ver. 6.

enlighten every eye, and his heralds to cry in every ear, "This is the way; walk ye therein." This way is not for the innocent but for the guilty.

**6. Until he stand before the congregation**—The local authorities shall summon him and the *Goel* to appear before them for a judicial inquest and verdict. The congregation or jury was to hear both sides, and to decide whether the deed proceeded from malice or was accidental. If he was condemned he was to be executed; but if he was acquitted he was not set at liberty, but was sent back to live in the refuge till the death of the High Priest. Here we see the superiority of this system of protection over the pagan asylum of the altar, in the temple of some god, which shielded the guilty and the innocent alike. **Until the death of the high priest**—This does not mean that the death of the High Priest takes place at the same time with the summons to trial. The only occasions on which an innocent manslayer may leave the refuge are, 1st, temporarily, for a trial where the manslaying occurred; and 2d, permanently, at the death of the High Priest. Why should he be released when the High Priest dies? Probably because he was anointed as the representative and mediator of the people, who alone was able to offer annual expiation for the whole people. His death, therefore, may be regarded as an atonement prefiguring the death of our heavenly High Priest, who through the eternal Spirit offered

himself without spot unto God. Heb. ix, 14, 15.

**7. Appointed**—Heb., *They sanctified*; set apart to a sacred use, so that all the fugitives were impressed with the thought that when within these cities they were surrounded by the munitions of Jehovah's especial mercy. None but Levitical cities were chosen. Since the object of the refuge was distinctly religious, to preserve the land from blood-guiltiness, it was not proper that a secular city should be chosen. They were very carefully distributed throughout the whole land. The two and a half tribes east of the Jordan had as many as the western tribes, because they were scattered over a territory nearly as large. **Kedesh**—See on chap. xii, 22. **Shechem**—See on chap. xvii, 7. **Hebron**—Chap. x, 3, note.

**8. By Jericho**—Literally, *Beyond Jordan, Jericho eastward*. The sense is, the side of Jordan opposite from Jericho. These eastern cities were appointed by Moses. See at Deut. iv, 41–43. On **Ramoth**, see chap. xiii, 26, note. The sites of the other two cities are now unknown.

**9. And for the stranger**—A foreshadowing of the provision for the salvation of the Gentiles through Christ. **And not die by the hand of the avenger of blood**.—There was one important condition which must be constantly fulfilled—the fugitive must not venture beyond the borders of his refuge (Num. xxxv, 27) until the death of the High Priest. Thus must the par-



## CHAPTER XXI.

**T**HEN came near the heads of the fathers of the Levites unto <sup>a</sup>Eleazar the priest, and unto Joshua the son of Nun, and unto the heads of the fathers of the tribes of the children of Israel; **2** And they spake unto them at <sup>b</sup>Shiloh in the land of Canaan, saying, "The

<sup>a</sup> Chap. 14. 1; 17. 4.

doned sinner by faith abide beneath the shelter of the atoning blood, or be irretrievably lost. Heb. vi, 6. These safeguards against interminable and bloody feuds are in striking contrast with the blood-revenge still existing in the East under Mohammedan law. "Two villages have disputed about a stray goat; there was first tremendous shouting, especially among the women, urging on their husbands and brothers to fight; then in a moment of excitement weapons were used, and blood was shed; and blood calls for blood. Thus every member of the family to the remotest degree is kept in constant dread. He stalks about, armed, at all hours and in all places—with his goats on the mountain-side, with his donkey on the road, with his plough in the field; in seed-time and harvest, summer and winter, heat and cold. Imagination makes the 'avenger of blood' follow him like a shadow, ever watchful for an unguarded moment to fall upon him. Many a family has this blood-revenge compelled to flee from house and home, and seek refuge among strangers; many a village it has left desolate, for none will live where the sentence of death hangs constantly over them. In the Koran this fearful law is commended: 'O true believers, the law of retaliation is ordained to you for the slain; the free shall die for the free.'"—Dr. Porter's *Syria and Palestine*."

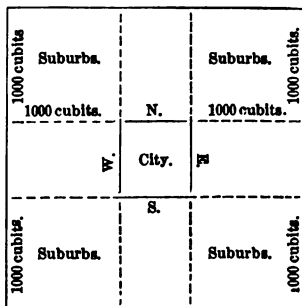
## CHAPTER XXI.

DESIGNATION OF THE LEVITICAL CITIES,  
1-42.

**1. Heads of the fathers**—The most venerable and influential of the three Levitical families. These applied to the same commissioners for the cities promised by Moses, (Num. xxxv, 1-5.) It is not enough that God makes spe-

cial promises and provisions. The very persons to whom these promises are made will fail to receive them unless they exert themselves to secure them. Prayer is the key to God's treasury.

**2. With the suburbs thereof**—The area of these suburbs is laid down in Num. xxxv, 4, 5, but so obscurely that great diversity of computation has arisen among expositors. The suburbs were to reach a thousand cubits from the wall of the city on each of the four sides, and yet the measure on each side of the city was to be two thousand cubits. This Keil explains, as in the following diagram by picturing the city and its suburbs in squares, with the city in the midst, and understanding the two thousand cubits as the length of each outer side of the suburbs, apart from the walls of the cities, which latter, of course, might vary in size. Or we may understand with Maimonides that the two thousand cubits were added to the one thousand as "fields of the suburbs," (Lev. xxv, 34,) and lay outside the suburbs proper.



**4. Kohathites**—The first of the families of the Levites among whom the

'the children of Aaron the priest, *which were* of the Levites, 'had by lot out of the tribe of Judah, and out of the tribe of Simeon, and out of the tribe of Benjamin, thirteen cities. 5 And 'the rest of the children of Kohath *had* by lot out of the families of the tribe of Ephraim, and out of the tribe of Dan, and out of the half tribe of Manasseh, ten cities. 6 And 'the children of Gershon *had* by lot out of the families of the tribe of Issachar, and out of the tribe of Asher, and out of the tribe of Naphtali, and out of the half tribe of Manasseh in Bashan, thirteen cities. 7 'The children of Merari by their families *had* out of the tribe of Reuben, and out of the tribe of Gad, and out of the tribe of Zebulun, twelve cities. 8 'And the children of Israel gave by lot unto the Levites these cities with their suburbs, 'as the LORD commanded by the hand of Moses. 9 And they gave out of the tribe of the children of Judah, and out of the tribe of the chil-

dren of Simeon, these cities which are *here* 'mentioned by name, 10 'Which the children of Aaron, *being* of the families of the Kohathites, *who were* of the children of Levi, had: for theirs was the first lot. 11 'And they gave them 'the city of Arba the father of 'Anak, *which city is* Hebron, 'in the hill *coun-*try of Judah, with the suburbs thereof round about it. 12 But 'the fields of the city, and the villages thereof, gave they to Caleb the son of Jephunneh for his possession. 13 Thus 'they gave to the children of Aaron the priest 'Hebron with her suburbs, *to be* a city of refuge for the slayer, 'and Libnah with her suburbs, 14 And 'Jattir with her suburbs, 'and Eshtemoa with her suburbs, 15 And 'Holon with her suburbs, 'and Debir with her suburbs, 16 And 'Ain with her suburbs, 'and Juttah with her suburbs, *and* 'Beth-shemesh with her suburbs; nine cities out of those two tribes. 17 And out of the tribe of

*d* Verses 8, 19.—*e* See chap. 24, 33.—*f* Verse 20, &c.—*g* Verse 27, &c.—*h* Verse 34, &c.—*i* Verse 3.—*k* Num. 35, 2.—*l* Heb. *called*.—*l* Verse 4.—*m* 1 Chron. 6, 55.—2 Or, *Kirjath-arba*, Gen. 23, 2.—*n* Chap. 15, 13, 14.—*o* Chap. 20, 7; Luke 1, 39.

*p* Chap. 14, 14; 1 Chron. 6, 56.—*q* 1 Chron. 6, 57, &c.—*r* Chap. 15, 54; 20, 7.—*s* Chap. 15, 42.—*t* Chap. 15, 48.—*u* Chap. 15, 50.—*v* 1 Chron. 6, 58, *Hilen*, chap. 15, 51.—*w* Chap. 15, 49.—*x* 1 Chron. 6, 59, *Ashan*, chap. 15, 42.—*y* Chap. 15, 55.—*z* Chap. 15, 10.

family of Aaron were exclusively appointed to the priesthood. These by virtue of their office had the precedence in the assignment of the lots, and received **thirteen cities** in contiguous territory; the rest of the Kohathites *ten cities*, (ver. 5,) in tribes also adjoining. There was a divine prescience displayed in so locating the priests that in the future great schism of the State under Rehoboam the seceding tribes found themselves destitute of the divinely-appointed priesthood.

6. **Gershon**—The second division.

7. **Merari**—The third division of the Levites. The three families take their names from the sons of Levi. See the genealogy at Exod. vi, 16–19; also Num. iii, 17–39, and 1 Chron. vi.

11. **Hebron**—See on chap. x, 3, and chap. xiv, 12. We here meet the difficulty of a double proprietorship. We have seen in chap. xiv, 13, that Joshua gave Hebron to Caleb as a reward for his fidelity, but now we find that the same city is bestowed upon the priests. Our solution of this difficulty is, that the Levites did not have exclusive ownership of these cities. From Num. iii, 39, we

learn that the census of the Levites was about twenty-two thousand males of a month old and upward. This would give less than five hundred males, adult and children, to each of the forty-eight cities. As Hebron and Shechem and several others were large and important, the inference is, that the Levites had ample inheritance in these cities sufficient to give a sacred character to them. We have an intimation of this in verse 12. For the Hebrews who tilled the fields of Caleb's sons must have resided in Hebron for protection. Again, in the law requiring the alienated house and pasture land of the Levite to revert to him in the year of jubilee, there is implied that others than Levites lived with them. Lev. xxv, 32–34.

13. **Libnah**—See on chap. x, 29. In the following list no comment is made on those cities that are now unknown.

14–17. **Jattir**—Chap. xv, 48. **Eshtemoah**—Chap. xv, 50. **Debir**—Chap. x, 38. **Juttah**—Chap. xv, 55. **Beth-shemesh**—Chap. xv, 10. **Gibeon**—Chap. ix, 3. **Geba**—Chap. xviii, 24.

Benjamin, \*Gibeon with her suburbs, \*Geba with her suburbs, 18 Anathoth with her suburbs, and \*Almon with her suburbs; four cities. 19 All the cities of the children of Aaron, the priests, *were* thirteen cities with their suburbs. 20 \*And the families of the children of Kohath, the Levites which remained of the children of Kohath, even they had the cities of their lot out of the tribe of Ephraim. 21 For they gave them \*Shechem with her suburbs in mount Ephraim, *to be* a city of refuge for the slayer; and Gezer with her suburbs, 22 And Kibzaim with her suburbs, and Beth-horon with her suburbs; four cities. 23 And out of the tribe of Dan, Eltekeh with her suburbs, Gibbethon with her suburbs, 24 Aijalon with her suburbs, Gath-rimmon with her suburbs; four cities. 25 And out of the half tribe of Manasseh, Tanach with her suburbs, and Gath-rimmon with her suburbs; two cities. 26 All the cities *were* ten with their suburbs for the families of the children of Kohath that remained. 27 \*And unto the children of Gershon, of the families of the Levites, out of the *other* half tribe of Manasseh *they gave* \*Golan in Bashan with her suburbs, *to be* a city of refuge for the slayer, and Beeshterah with her suburbs; two cities. 28 And out of the tribe of Issachar, Kishon with her suburbs, Dabareh with her suburbs, 29 Jarmuth with her suburbs, En-gannim with her suburbs; four cities. 30 And out of the

tribe of Asher, Mishal with her suburbs, Abdon with her suburbs, 31 Helkath with her suburbs, and Rehob with her suburbs; four cities. 32 And out of the tribe of Naphtali, \*Kedesh in Galilee with her suburbs, *to be* a city of refuge for the slayer; and Hammoth-dor with her suburbs, and Kartan with her suburbs; three cities. 33 All the cities of the Gershonites according to their families *were* thirteen cities with their suburbs. 34 \*And unto the families of the children of Merari, the rest of the Levites, out of the tribe of Zebulun, Jokneam with her suburbs, and Kartah with her suburbs, 35 Dimnah with her suburbs, Nahalal with her suburbs; four cities. 36 And out of the tribe of Reuben, \*Bezer with her suburbs, and Jahazah with her suburbs, 37 Kedemoth with her suburbs, and Mephaath with her suburbs; four cities. 38 And out of the tribe of Gad, \*Ramoth in Gilead with her suburbs, *to be* a city of refuge for the slayer; and Mahanaim with her suburbs, 39 Heshbon with her suburbs, Jazer with her suburbs; four cities in all. 40 So all the cities for the children of Merari by their families, which were remaining of the families of the Levites, *were by* their lot twelve cities. 41 \*All the cities of the Levites within the possession of the children of Israel *were* forty and eight cities with their suburbs. 42 These cities were every one with their suburbs round about them: thus *were* all these cities.

a Chap. 18. 25.—b Chap. 18. 24. *Gaba*.—c 1 Chron. 6. 80. *Alenath*.—d Verse 5: 1 Chron. 6. 86.—e Chap. 20. 7: Gen. 37. 13, 13; Acts 7. 16.

f Verse 6: 1 Chron. 6. 71.—g Chap. 20. 8.—h Chap. 20. 8.—i Verse 7: see 1 Chron. 6. 77.—k Chap. 20. 8.—l Chap. 20. 9.—m Num. 85. 7.

18. **Anathoth** was the place to which King Solomon banished Abiathar, (1 Kings ii, 26,) and the birthplace of Jeremiah. Jer. i, 1. It is represented by the modern village Anata, four miles northeast of Jerusalem. It is now a small village, but contains remains of the walls and foundations of the ancient city.

21–24. **Shechem**—Chap. xvii, 7. **Gezer**—Chap. x, 33. **Beth-horon**—Chap. x, 10. **Aijalon**—Chap. x, 12. **Tanach**—Chap. xii, 21.

27. **Beeshterah** seems to be a contraction of Beth-Ashterah—*house of Astoreth*—the residence of Og. See chap. ix, 10.

28–39. **Dabareh**—Chap. xix, 12. **En-gannim**—Chap. xix, 21. **Kedesh**

—Chap. xii, 22. **Jokneam**—Chap. xii, 22. **Ramoth**—Chap. xiii, 26. **Heshbon**—Chap. xiii, 17, 26. **Jazer**—Chap. xiii, 25.

42. To this verse the LXX add the following, partly taken from chap. xix, 49, 50, and partly legendary: "And Joshua finished dividing the land in their borders, and the children of Israel gave a portion to Joshua according to the commandment of the Lord; they gave him the city which he asked for, Timnath-serah gave they him in Mount Ephraim, and Joshua fortified the city and dwelt in it. And Joshua took the stone knives with which he circumcised the children of Israel who were born during the journey in the wilderness, and he deposited them in Timnath-serah."

**43** And the Lord gave unto Israel <sup>a</sup>all the land which he sware to give unto their fathers; and they possessed it, and dwelt therein. **44** <sup>a</sup>And the Lord gave them rest round about, according to all that he sware unto their fathers: and <sup>b</sup>there stood not a man of all their enemies before them; the Lord delivered all their enemies into their hand. **45** <sup>a</sup>There failed not aught of

any good thing which the Lord had spoken unto the house of Israel; all came to pass.

## CHAPTER XXII.

**T**HEN Joshua called the Reubenites, and the Gadites, and the half tribe of Manasseh, **2** And said unto them, Ye have kept <sup>a</sup>all that Moses the servant of the Lord commanded you, <sup>b</sup>and have

<sup>n</sup> Gen. 13. 15; 15. 18; 26. 3; 28. 4, 13.  
<sup>o</sup> Chap. 11. 23; 22. 4.

<sup>p</sup> Deut. 7. 24.—<sup>q</sup> Chap. 23. 14.—<sup>r</sup> Num. 32. 20;  
Deut. 3. 18.—<sup>s</sup> Chap. 1. 16, 17.

THE DIVINE PROMISES FULFILLED,  
43-45.

As the wicked are prone to forget the divine threatenings, so the people of God are inclined to neglect the divine promises. Hence the necessity of calling special attention to them, that their fulfilment may exert a salutary influence upon us.

**44. There stood not a man**—The many were humbled and rendered tributary, and all their enemies would have been expelled if the Hebrews had had faith in Jehovah, their unfailing ally. [Some rationalistic critics affirm that this passage is contradicted by other statements of the ancient history which affirm that Israel's enemies were not all subdued, and considerable portions of the land were never in possession of the Israelites. But they forget that the promise to the fathers was accompanied also with the express statement that the Canaanites should be gradually exterminated. See note on next verse. This passage affirms a thorough subjugation of all Canaan, and a division of it for a possession among the Israelites, but not, as some would assume, an extermination of all its original inhabitants. Even Ewald admits, as unquestionable, "that this first irruption into Canaan under Joshua was decisive for all future time, and that the Canaanites were never able in succeeding ages to rally permanently from the losses and disasters which they then underwent." In another place the same rationalistic critic affirms: "There can be no doubt that Joshua, during the first years of the entrance into Canaan, subdued the country on every side, and received the submission of all the Canaanites whose lives were spared. It is very possible

that in the first terror of surprise the Philistines, and even the men of Zidon and the rest of the Phenicians, may have paid homage, although these last could never again be subdued."]

**45. There failed not aught of any good**—So far as Jehovah was concerned, for he had expressly said, "I will not drive them out from before thee in one year, lest the land become desolate, and the beast of the field multiply against thee. By little and little I will drive them out from before thee, until thou be increased, and inherit the land." Exod. xxiii, 29, 30. Comp. Deut. vii, 22. Israel's subsequent failure to possess all the land was, as the history itself shows, largely owing to their cowardice. Tribal jealousies also had much to do with their failure.

## CHAPTER XXII.

THE TRANS-JORDANIC TRIBES DIS-  
MISSED, 1-9.

We have seen (chap. i, 12-15) that Joshua required these tribes to fulfil the condition on which they were permitted to receive their portions before the conquest of Canaan, namely, that they should assist in that conquest, (Num. xxxii, 20,) and we have noted the cheerfulness with which they left their families and possessions (chap. i, 16) and became the vanguard of the invading host, forty thousand strong. Chap. iv, 12, 13. Through all the long war of subjugation they have served faithfully, till at last the land is substantially conquered and actually allotted, and henceforth each tribe is to clear its own inheritance without the aid of the federal army, which is now disbanded with the high encomiums of their chief.

obeyed my voice in all that I commanded you: **3** Ye have not left your brethren these many days unto this day, but have kept the charge of the commandment of the LORD your God. **4** And now the LORD your God hath given rest unto your brethren, as he promised them: therefore now return ye, and get you unto your tents, and unto the land of your possession, which Moses the servant of the LORD gave you on the other side Jordan. **5** But take diligent heed to do the commandment and the law, which Moses the servant of the LORD charged you, to love the LORD your God, and to walk in all his ways, and to keep his commandments, and

to cleave unto him, and to serve him with all your heart and with all your soul. **6** So Joshua blessed them, and sent them away: and they went unto their tents. **7** Now to the *one* half of the tribe of Manasseh Moses had given possession in Bashan: but unto the *other* half thereof gave Joshua among their brethren on this side Jordan westward. And when Joshua sent them away also unto their tents, then he blessed them, **8** And he spake unto them, saying, Return with much riches unto your tents, and with very much cattle, with silver, and with gold, and with brass, and with iron, and with very much raiment: divide the spoil of your

*c* Num. 32. 33; Deut. 29. 8; chap. 13. 8.—*d* Deut. 6. 6, 17; 11. 22.—*e* Deut. 10. 12.—*f* Gen. 47. 7; Exod. 39. 43; chap. 14. 13; 2 Sam.

6. 18; Luke 24. 50.—*g* Chap. 17. 5.—*h* Deut. 8. 9; Prov. 3. 10.—*i* Num. 31. 27; 1 Sam. 30. 24.

**3. Ye have not left your brethren**—Ye have not permanently abandoned them during seven years of war. It is not to be supposed that in the long intervals between the military campaigns they had not been permitted to visit on furloughs their families only a few miles distant beyond the Jordan. Such frequent permissions to visit their homes had kept them from murmuring at the long delay in the division of Canaan. For the provision made for the protection of their homes, and the maintenance of their families during their absence, see chap. i, 14, note.

**4. Get you unto your tents**—The word *tents* here, as often elsewhere, (Judges vii, 8; 1 Sam. iv, 10; xiii, 2; 2 Sam. xviii, 17.) is used for *houses*, or *homes*. Its use probably arose from Israel's dwelling so long in tents.

**5. And the law**—The Torah. In note on chap. i, 8, we have shown that the Torah was already called a book. We have in this verse grounds for inferring that there was more than one copy. The Eastern tribes could not have been commanded to take diligent heed to obey the Torah if they were now to be excluded from its constant perusal. **With all your heart and with all your soul**—The words *heart* and *soul* indicate the affectional and emotional nature, and are used to intensify the exhortation to sincere and heartfelt obedience unto Jehovah. As if foreseeing the decay of national feel-

ing which the separation of the deep trench of the Jordan would tend to create, Joshua tenderly and earnestly presses upon the departing tribes the duty of a faithful study of the law and a scrupulous obedience to its requirements. He well knew that the Hebrew could be a patriot only as he was an Israelite indeed; a lover of his nation only as a lover of his nation's God. With a clear vision did Joshua see that both individual and national prosperity must arise from obedience to the moral law. The redundancy of the language evinces the intense earnestness of the great leader.

**7. Bashan**—See chap. ii, 10, note.

**8. Much riches**—Since the Canaanites were quite advanced in arts, manufactures, and agriculture, it is natural that they should have a large amount of the precious metals and costly articles embodying wealth. **Much raiment**—Fashions in dress never change in the East. Hence the people make permanent investments of their wealth in dresses. Hence the Saviour's exhortation, "Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where the moth doth corrupt," evidently refers to accumulations of garments. Says a traveller in Palestine, "Not unfrequently one sees among the inhabitants of a wretched little hamlet, consisting of the merest hovels, a number of persons dressed in handsome silks." **Divide the spoil**—On a previous occasion (Num. xxxi, 27)

enemies with your brethren. **9** And the children of Reuben and the children of Gad and the half tribe of Manasseh returned, and departed from the children of Israel out of Shiloh, which *is* in the land of Canaan, to go unto <sup>a</sup>the country of Gilead, to the land of their possession, whereof they were possessed, according to the word of the Lord by the hand of Moses.

**10** And when they came unto the borders of Jordan, that *are* in the land of Canaan, the children of Reuben and the children of Gad and the half tribe of Manasseh built there an altar by Jordan, a great altar to see to. **11** And the children of Israel <sup>b</sup>heard say, Be-

hold, the children of Reuben and the children of Gad and the half tribe of Manasseh have built an altar over against the land of Canaan, in the borders of Jordan, at the passage of the children of Israel. **12** And when the children of Israel heard *of it*, <sup>c</sup>the whole congregation of the children of Israel gathered themselves together at Shiloh, to go up to war against them. **13** And the children of Israel <sup>d</sup>sent unto the children of Reuben, and to the children of Gad, and to the half tribe of Manasseh, into the land of Gilead, <sup>e</sup>Phinehas the son of Eleazar the priest, **14** And with him ten princes, of each <sup>f</sup>chief house a prince throughout all the tribes

<sup>k</sup> Num. 32. 1, 26, 29. — <sup>l</sup> Deut. 13. 12, &c.; Judges 20. 12. — <sup>m</sup> Judges 30. 1. — <sup>n</sup> Deut. 13. 14; Judges

20. 12; Prov. 20. 19; Matt. 18. 15. — <sup>o</sup> Exod. 6. 25; Num. 25. 7. — <sup>p</sup> Heb. *house of the father*.

Moses commanded that those who did service at home should share equally with those who had perilled their lives in battle, for the obvious reason that guarding the household and raising supplies for the army are just as necessary and as patriotic as hurling javelins and storming hostile cities.

#### THE ALTAR OF WITNESS AT THE JORDAN, 10-34.

**10. By Jordan**—Most commentators believe that the altar was on the western bank of the Jordan, because the language of the narrative is, **when they came unto the borders of Jordan, that are in the land of Canaan.** But in the next verse we read that the altar was built "over against the land of Canaan." The purpose of the altar was to answer the taunting insinuation that they were aliens, by exhibiting within their own borders a facsimile of the altar at Shiloh as a proof of their Hebrew nationality and of their conformity to their brethren in religious worship. Josephus says, that the two and a half tribes "crossed the river and built an altar on the bank of the Jordan as a token of their affinity with those on the other side." This altar, constructed by so large a body of men, was probably a vast heap of earth and stones. **A great altar to see to**—Conspicuously located, and huge in its dimensions. That this mound has not been found by any traveller is not strange, when we consider the almost total ne-

glect of Eastern Palestine by all modern explorers; and, besides, this great altar may long ago have been destroyed.

**12. The children of Israel gathered themselves together**—The news produced the greatest consternation, and caused an uprising of all the tribes. A separate altar implied the setting up of a new religion, and foreshadowed a secession from the theocratic state. Such a movement, therefore, demanded the most careful investigation, according to the express provision of the law. Deut. xiii, 13, 14. So at a later time all Israel assembled at Mizpeh to investigate the offence of Benjamin. Judges xx. **To go up to war against them**—For the law ordained that if any city went over to idolatry it should be smitten with the edge of the sword, and utterly destroyed. Deut. xiii, 15, 16.

**13. Phinehas**—Probably his father, Eleazar, was too aged for this service. Phinehas, the grandson of Aaron, had signalized himself while quite a youth by his zeal and energy against licentiousness at Shittim. Num. xxv, 7. Subsequently he was chaplain of the expedition which destroyed the Midianites. Num. xxxi, 6. After his father's death he became the third high priest.

**14. Ten princes**—Who these princes were is so obscurely told in the rest of the verse that it is difficult to decide as to the precise meaning. The rest of the verse is, literally: *One prince, one prince to the house of a father to all*

of Israel; and <sup>e</sup> each one *was* a head of the house of their fathers among the thousands of Israel. <sup>f</sup> 15 And they came unto the children of Reuben, and to the children of Gad, and to the half tribe of Manasseh, unto the land of Gilead, and they spake with them, saying, <sup>g</sup> 16 Thus saith the whole congregation of the LORD, What trespass <sup>h</sup> is this that ye have committed against the God of Israel, to turn away this day from following the LORD, in that ye have builded you an altar, <sup>i</sup> that ye might rebel this day against the LORD? <sup>j</sup> 17 Is the iniquity <sup>k</sup> of Peor too little for us, from which we are not cleansed until this day, although there was a plague in the congregation of the LORD, <sup>l</sup> 18 But that ye must turn away this day from following

<sup>p</sup> Num. 1. 4.—<sup>q</sup> Lev. 17. 8, 9; Deut. 12. 13, 14; 1 Sam. 15. 23.—<sup>r</sup> Num. 25. 3, 4; Deut. 4. 3.

*the tribes of Israel, and a chief man of the house of their fathers were they to all the thousands of Israel.* It could not be that one was chosen from each chief house in all Israel, for then must more than ten have been chosen. Keil probably explains correctly when he says that this delegation, called in verse 30 *princes of the congregation*, "was composed partly of princes of tribes and partly of heads of families, some tribes being represented in one way and others in the other; and that the latter were sent in cases in which the heads of the tribes were either too old, or otherwise unfitted to take part in the deputation. This supposition is strongly confirmed by the fact that the tribe of Levi was not represented by the chief of the tribe, the high priest Eleazar, but by his son and presumptive successor, Phinehas, who was chosen instead."

16. **What trespass is this.**—The erection of the altar is justly regarded as *prima facie* proof of violating the unity of divine worship, inasmuch as sacrifices offered in any other place than at the door of the tabernacle were strictly forbidden. Lev. xvii. 7, 8.

17. **Is the iniquity of Peor too little.**—Phinehas had a vivid remembrance of that dreadful outbreak of crime whose curse his active zeal had turned away from the congregation by a bold thrust of his javelin. Num. xxv. 1-13. Hence the naturalness of this

the LORD? and it will be, *seeing* ye rebel to day against the LORD, that to morrow <sup>h</sup> he will be wroth with the whole congregation of Israel. <sup>i</sup> 19 Notwithstanding, if the land of your possession *be* unclean, *then* pass ye over unto the land of the possession of the LORD, <sup>j</sup> wherein the LORD's tabernacle dwelleth, and take possession among us: but rebel not against the LORD, nor rebel against us, in building you an altar besides the altar of the LORD our God. <sup>k</sup> 20 "Did not Achan the son of Zerah commit a trespass in the accursed thing, and wrath fell on all the congregation of Israel? and that man perished not alone in his iniquity. <sup>l</sup> 21 Then the children of Reuben and the children of Gad and the half tribe of Manasseh answered, and

<sup>m</sup> Num. 16. 22.—<sup>n</sup> Chap. 18. 1.—<sup>o</sup> Chap. 7. 1, 5; 1 Cor. 10. 6; Jude 5, 6.

historical allusion. **Not cleansed until this day.**—Though the divine wrath was turned away, the sad consequences of that crime were still visible. **Although there was a plague.**—Rather, *and the plague was in the congregation.*

18. **To-morrow he will be wroth.**—The moral universe is pervaded by laws as inflexible as those of the physical world, or, rather, more certain in their consequences; for the physical laws may be suspended for moral ends. **With the whole congregation.**—And not with you eastern tribes only. Such are our social and political relations that the crimes of a part are punished on the whole of the nation.

19. **If the land of your possession be unclean.**—Not consecrated by the presence of the tabernacle and altar. "If ye think that God has not received your land into the same favour as ours, because he seems to dwell with us, and it is for that reason that ye are about to establish a worship of your own, change your abode and come over to us."—*Masius.*

20. **Achan.**—Phinehas now argues that if the sin of an individual brought disasters upon the body politic, much more will that of the eastern tribes. **Perished not alone.**—But involved his family and all his possessions in the penal vengeance which came upon himself. See on chap. vii. 24.

said unto the heads of the thousands of Israel, **22** The Lord 'God of gods, the Lord God of gods, he 'knoweth, and Israel he shall know; if *it be* in rebellion, or if in transgression against the Lord, (save us not this day,) **23** That we have built us an altar to turn from following the Lord, or if to offer thereon burnt offering or meat offering, or if to offer peace offerings thereon, let the Lord himself 'require *it*; **24** And if we have not *rather* done it for fear of *this* thing, saying, 'In time to come your children might speak unto our children, saying, What have ye to do with the Lord God of Israel? **25** For the Lord hath made Jordan a border between us and you, ye children of Reuben and children of Gad; 'ye have no part in the Lord: so shall your children make our children cease from fearing the Lord. **26** Therefore we said, Let us now prepare to build us an altar, not for burnt offering, nor for sacrifice: **27** But *that it may be* 'a witness between us, and you, and our generations after us, that we might 'do the service of the Lord before him with our burnt offerings, and with our sacrifices, and with our peace offerings; that your children may not say to our children in time

to come, Ye have no part in the Lord. **28** Therefore said we, that it shall be, when they should *so* say to us or to our generations in time to come, that we may say *again*, 'Behold the pattern of the altar of the Lord, which our fathers made, not for burnt offerings, nor for sacrifices; but it *is* a witness between us and you. **29** God forbid that we should rebel against the Lord, and turn this day from following the Lord, 'to build an altar for burnt offerings, for meat offerings, or for sacrifices, besides the altar of the Lord our God that *is* before his tabernacle. **30** And when Phinehas the priest, and the princes of the congregation and heads of the thousands of Israel which *were* with him, heard the words that the children of Reuben and the children of Gad and the children of Manasseh spake, 'it pleased them. **31** And Phinehas the son of Eleazar the priest said unto the children of Reuben, and to the children of Gad, and to the children of Manasseh, This day we perceive that the Lord *is* 'among us, because ye have not committed this trespass against the Lord: 'now ye have delivered the children of Israel out of the hand of the Lord. **32** And Phinehas the son of Eleazar

<sup>c</sup> Deut. 10. 17.—<sup>20</sup> 1 Kings 8. 39; Job 10. 7; 23. 10; Psa. 44. 21; 139. 1, 2; Jer. 12. 3; 2 Cor. 11. 11, 31.—<sup>e</sup> Deut. 18. 19; 1 Sam. 20. 16.—<sup>2</sup> Heb. *To morrow*.—<sup>y</sup> 2 Sam. 20. 1; 1 Kings 12. 16; Ezra 4. 2, 3; Acts 8. 21.—<sup>s</sup> Gen. 31. 48; chap.

24. 27; verse 34.—<sup>a</sup> Deut. 12. 5, 6, 11, 12, 17, 18, 26, 27.—<sup>b</sup> Exod. 25. 40; 2 Kings 16. 10; Ezek. 43. 10, 11; Heb. 8. 5.—<sup>c</sup> Deut. 12. 13, 14; 2 Kings 18. 22.—<sup>3</sup> Heb. *it was good in their eyes*.—<sup>d</sup> Lev. 26. 11, 12; 2 Chron. 13. 2.—<sup>4</sup> Heb. *then*.

**22. The Lord God of gods—*Elohim Jehovah***—This is a most solemn oath. They who twice utter the three names of God declare that they revere him as the mighty, living Being, and are not in rebellion against him. **Save us not this day**—Or, help us not. This implies that they should be left to miserably perish. **Let the Lord himself require it**—That is, Let him punish it. Another strong adjuration is here uttered.

**24. For fear**—The Hebrew word indicates great and distressing solicitude. The motive of their action was just the opposite of that ascribed to them. It was their intense desire to preserve themselves and their children in the worship of Jehovah that had induced the erection of the memorial altar. **Our children**—The truly pious man will seek to place the safeguards of piety about the path of his offspring.

These eastern tribes had received by far the best portion of the Holy Land, yet they are not satisfied with worldly good. Their broad acres and vast herds are worthless without a portion in the God of Israel.

**27. That it may be a witness**—Having disavowed that their altar was intended for sacrificial uses, they now plainly declare that it was intended for a memorial that their children were entitled to appear as worshippers before that altar in Shiloh of which this was a facsimile.

**31. The Lord is among us**—The commission were more than satisfied with the explanation; they were delighted with the loyalty and fidelity of their misjudged brethren. This whole account is highly honourable to both the accusing party and the accused, inasmuch as it shows that both were animated with the high and holy pur-



the priest, and the princes, returned from the children of Reuben, and from the children of Gad, out of the land of Gilead, unto the land of Canaan, to the children of Israel, and brought them word again. **33** And the thing pleased the children of Israel; and the children of Israel blessed God, and did not intend to go up against them in battle, to destroy the land wherein the children of Reuben and Gad dwelt. **34** And the children of Reuben and the children of Gad called the altar *Ed*: for it shall be a witness between us that the Lord is God.

<sup>a</sup> Prov. 25. 13.—<sup>f</sup> 1 Chron. 29. 20; Neh. 8. 6; Dan. 2. 19; Luke 2. 28.—<sup>5</sup> That is, A witness. So chap. 24. 27.

pose of cleaving to the worship of the true God.

**33. Did not intend to go up—**More literally, *They did not talk of going up*. This is a Hebraism for saying that they abandoned the purpose of civil war, for which they had assembled at Shiloh.

**34. Ed . . . shall be—**These words are not in the original, nor need they be inserted in the translation. We may correctly render: *The children of Gad named the altar that it might be a witness among us that Jehovah is the God*. The lessons which this episode teaches are, first, That appearances do not always imply bad motives; second, That we should watch over each other and cautiously rebuke the first departure from God; third, That apostasy from God awakens in the truly pious great solicitude; and, finally, That a conscience void of offence is a great blessing.

## CHAPTER XXIII.

### JOSHUA'S ADDRESS TO ISRAEL, 1-16.

[“The closing records of the history of Joshua show us a solemn pause and crisis in the career of Israel. They had now attained that first success which is always a trial of human power and endurance, and which, in their case, was the test of their faithfulness to Jehovah. In Joshua they had a leader equal to the crisis. He lived long after God had given them rest from their enemies, and he was now going the way of all the earth. His last care was to set clearly before the people their true position, and to bind

## CHAPTER XXIII.

**AND** it came to pass, a long time after that the Lord <sup>a</sup> had given rest unto Israel from all their enemies round about, that Joshua <sup>b</sup> waxed old and <sup>c</sup> stricken in age. **2** And Joshua <sup>d</sup> called for all Israel, and for their elders, and for their heads, and for their judges, and for their officers, and said unto them, I am old and stricken in age: **3** And ye have seen all that the Lord your God hath done unto all these nations because of you; for the <sup>e</sup> Lord your God <sup>f</sup> is he that hath fought for

<sup>a</sup> Chap. 21. 44; 22. 4.—<sup>b</sup> Chap. 13. 1.—<sup>c</sup> 1 Heb. *come into days*.—<sup>d</sup> Deut. 31. 28; chap. 24. 1; 1 Chron. 23. 1.—<sup>e</sup> Exod. 14. 14; chap. 10. 14, 42.

them to Jehovah by another solemn covenant.”—*Smith's O. T. Hist.*]

**1. A long time—**About fourteen years after the conquest and seven years after the allotment of Canaan. in the one hundred and tenth year of his life, Joshua uttered this speech. **Stricken in age—**Literally, as in the margin, *come into days*; that is, far gone in years.

**2. And for their elders—**The *and* is not in the Hebrew. It should be *for the elders*, the representatives of Israel. This restriction is sometimes not expressed but implied. Hence Bishop Colenso's numerical impossibilities exist nowhere but in his own imagination. All Israel could not stand before the narrow front of the tabernacle, nor could they listen to the feeble words of an infirm old man in any other way than representatively. Probably this assembly was at Timnath-serah, the residence of Joshua; possibly at Shiloh. We have no data for determining the place. As death approaches, the national founder feels a special solicitude for his people. The farewell words of such men have great weight with succeeding generations. The Farewell Address of George Washington to the American people has exerted an incalculable influence upon the nation.

**3. All that the Lord . . . hath done—**Here is a marked magnifying of the Divine interposition in all the victories of Joshua. True piety always exclaims, “Not unto us, not unto us, but unto thy name be all the praise and glory.”

you. **4** Behold, "I have divided unto you by lot these nations that remain, to be an inheritance for your tribes, from Jordan, with all the nations that I have cut off, even unto the great sea <sup>2</sup> westward. **5** And the Lord your God, "he shall expel them from before you, and drive them from out of your sight; and ye shall possess their land," as the Lord your God hath promised unto you. **6** <sup>1</sup> Be ye therefore very courageous to keep and to do all that is written in the book of the law of Moses, <sup>1</sup> that ye turn not aside therefrom to the right hand or

to the left; **7** That ye <sup>1</sup> come not among these nations, these that remain among you; neither <sup>1</sup> make mention of the name of their gods, nor cause to swear *by them*, neither serve them, nor bow yourselves unto them: **8** <sup>2</sup> But <sup>m</sup> cleave unto the Lord your God, as ye have done unto this day. **9** <sup>4</sup> For the Lord hath driven out from before you great nations and strong: but *as for* you, <sup>o</sup> no man hath been able to stand before you unto this day. **10** <sup>p</sup> One man of you shall chase a thousand: for the Lord your God, he *it is* that fighteth for you,

<sup>e</sup> Chap. 13. 2, 6; 18. 10.—<sup>2</sup> Heb. *at the sunset*.  
<sup>f</sup> Exod. 23. 30; 33. 2; 34. 11; Deut. 11. 23;  
chap. 13. 6.—<sup>g</sup> Num. 33. 53.—<sup>h</sup> Chap. 1. 7.—  
<sup>i</sup> Deut. 5. 32; 28. 14.—<sup>k</sup> Exod. 23. 33; Deut. 7.  
2, 3; Prov. 4. 14; Eph. 5. 11.—<sup>l</sup> Exod. 23. 13;  
Psa. 16. 4; Jer. 5. 7; Zeph. 1. 5; see Num. 32. 38.

—<sup>3</sup> Or, *For if ye will cleave, &c.*—<sup>m</sup> Deut.  
10. 20; 11. 22; 18. 4; chapter 22. 5.—<sup>1</sup> Or,  
*Then the LORD will drive.*—<sup>n</sup> Deut.  
11. 23.—<sup>o</sup> Chapter 1. 5.—<sup>p</sup> Leviticus 26. 8;  
Deuteronomy 32. 30; Judges 3. 31; 15. 15; 2 Sam-  
uel 23. 8.

**4. These nations**—"The nations are mentioned instead of the land which they possessed, because they were given into the hands of the Israelites to be destroyed."—*Keil*. **I have cut off**—After ascribing the conquest to Jehovah, the truth of history requires mention of the human instrumentality. The frequent review of God's mercies is a powerful incentive to gratitude and fidelity to him. It is noticeable how this passage assumes that all the Canaanite nations are cut off and subdued, but not yet exterminated or expelled. This explains the discrepancy often alleged between chap. xi, 23, and chap. xiii, 1.

**6. Very courageous**—This is the same exhortation that God gave to Joshua at the death of Moses. See chap. i, 7, notes.

**7. Neither make mention**—This not only forbids the admiring mention of the names of the pagan gods, but, as we believe, it commands the literal abstinence from uttering their names, as defiling the tongue. As the name of Jehovah was in Jewish estimation too holy to be pronounced, so the names of the Canaanite gods were too vile. **Nor cause to swear by them**—Since swearing by them implied their existence, this also was forbidden. [He who swears and he who administers an oath in the name of a false god virtually recognize and worship the false deity. Thus may a Christian state prostitute itself to idolatry, superstition,

and even utter irreligion, by allowing in its courts of justice a careless, irreverent, or superstitious use of the oath. Better dispense with the civil oath entirely than prostitute the State to either idolatry, superstition, or atheism.] **Neither serve, by external worship, nor bow yourselves**, that is, enthroned them over yourselves as authorities to be revered in your hearts. Here is a fourfold prohibition of idolatry, which was rendered necessary by the uncultivated state of the Hebrews, by the strong influence of all the surrounding nations, and especially by that possessed by the idol-worshippers within their own borders whom they had failed to drive out.

**8. Cleave unto the Lord**—*Cling* unto him with a grip which no force can loosen. Fidelity to God always costs strenuous effort. "Strive to enter in at the strait gate." **As ye have done**—As a nation, with individual exceptions.

**9. The Lord hath driven out**—Or, as the margin, *then the Lord will drive*. In this way this sentence becomes the apodosis of the previous verse—*For if ye cleave... then the Lord will drive*. **No man hath been able to stand** whom ye have courageously confronted, trusting in God.

**10. One shall chase a thousand**—An enlargement of the promise in Lev. xxvi, 8, and nearly identical with Deut. xxxii, 30, signifying that a few shall vanquish a great multitude. See the

‘as he hath promised you. **11** ‘Take good heed therefore unto ‘yourselves, that ye love the LORD your God. **12** Else, if ye do in any wise ‘go back, and cleave unto the remnant of these nations, *even* these that remain among you, and shall ‘make marriages with them, and go in unto them, and they to you: **13** Know for a certainty that ‘the LORD your God will no more drive out *any* of these nations from before you; ‘but they shall be snares and traps unto you, and scourges in your sides, and thorns in your eyes, until ye perish from off this good land which the LORD your God hath given you. **14** And, behold, this day ‘I am going the way of all the earth: and ye know in all your hearts and in all your souls, that ‘not one thing hath failed of all the good things which the LORD your God spake concerning you; all are come to

pass unto you, *and* not one thing hath failed thereof. **15** ‘Therefore it shall come to pass, *that* as all good things are come upon you, which the LORD your God promised you; so shall the LORD bring upon you ‘all evil things, until he have destroyed you from off this good land which the LORD your God hath given you. **16** When ye have transgressed the covenant of the LORD your God, which he commanded you, and have gone and served other gods, and bowed yourselves to them; ‘then shall the anger of the LORD be kindled against you, and ye shall perish quickly from off the good land which he hath given unto you.

#### CHAPTER XXIV.

**A**ND Joshua gathered all the tribes of Israel to ‘Shechem, and ‘called for the elders of Israel, and for their

*g* Exod. 14. 14; 23. 27; Deut. 3. 22.—*r* Chap. 23. 5.—*s* Heb. *your souls*.—*a* Heb. 10. 38, 39; 2 Pet. 2. 20, 21.—*t* Deut. 7. 3.—*u* Judges 2. 3.—*v* Exod. 23. 33; Num. 33. 55; Deut. 7. 16;

1 Kings 11. 4.—*w* 1 Kings 2. 2; see Heb. 9. 27.—*x* Chap. 21. 43, 45; Luke 21. 33.—*y* Deut. 28. 63.—*z* Lev. 26. 18; Deut. 28. 15, 16, &c.—*n* 2 Kings 24. 20.—*a* Gen. 35. 4.—*b* Chap. 23. 2.

night attack of Gideon. Judges vii, 22. Also the acts of David’s worthies, one of whom lifted his spear against eight hundred and slew three hundred. 2 Sam. xxiii, 8, 18; 1 Chron. xi. 11.

**11. Take good heed**—This is the condition of the foregoing promise. “Such is the slothfulness of the flesh that it always needs to be stimulated by threats.”—*Culwin*. The depravity of men compels a resort to fear when an appeal to hope has been ineffectual.

**12. Make marriages**—This most intimate form of alliance was forbidden in Exod. xxxiv, 12–16, as a precaution against temptation. Thus Christians are forbidden to wed infidels or pagans. 2 Cor. vi, 14. The affections largely determine religious opinions and practice. The heart makes theology.

**13. Snares, traps, scourges, thorns**—This mixing of metaphors vividly portrays the trouble, sudden disaster, wasting captivity, and destruction which idolatry would bring upon their nation. **Until ye perish from off this good land**—The Jews are strangers to that land to-day, so wonderfully has God scattered them, and so marvelously has he preserved their nationality in order that they may be a monument of his truthfulness.

**14. This day I am going**—The expression **this day** is used here, as in Deut. ix, 1, to denote what is about to take place—shortly.

**15. As all good...so all evil things**—The threatenings are as sure as the promises; both alike are grounded on the divine veracity. The sophistry which would explain away the former must destroy the latter. “The pillars of heaven are no firmer than the foundations of hell.”—*Whedon*. These words of Joshua are of universal application. They belong to all peoples and to all generations. Before each individual of the human race there lies the path of obedience, ending in the promises, and the path of disobedience, ending in the threatenings of the Almighty. “Knowing therefore the terrors of the Lord, we persuade men.”

#### CHAPTER XXIV.

JOSHUA’S FAREWELL ADDRESS AT SHECHEM, 1–24.

**1. All the tribes**—By their representatives. See chap. xxiii, 2, note. We have no means of determining the date of this transaction. Some suppose that a considerable period had elapsed after the speech recorded in

heads, and for their judges, and for their officers; and they <sup>c</sup>presented themselves before God. **2** And Joshua said unto all the people, Thus saith the Lord God of Israel, <sup>a</sup>Your fathers dwelt on the other side of the flood in old time, *even* Terah, the father of Abraham, and the father of Nahor: and <sup>e</sup>they served other gods. **3** And <sup>f</sup>I took your father Abraham from the other side of the

<sup>c1</sup> Samuel 10. 19.—<sup>d</sup> Genesis 11. 26, 31.—<sup>e</sup> Genesis 31. 53.—<sup>f</sup> Genesis 12. 1; Acts 7. 2, 3.—<sup>g</sup> Genesis 21. 2, 3; Psalm 137. 3.—<sup>h</sup> Genesis

the last chapter, when Joshua, seeing his life was unexpectedly prolonged, resolved on another farewell to his people of a more solemn and formal character. Others hold that there was but one assembly and but one address, begun, perhaps, at Shiloh, and concluded at Shechem, to which place the assembly adjourned for the renewal of the covenant. The Septuagint version has the assembly *at Shiloh*; but there are good reasons for regarding the Hebrew as the correct version. At Shechem Abraham built his first altar in Canaan. Gen. xii, 7. Here Jacob had "sanctified" his family, and exhorted them to "put away the strange gods," (Gen. xxxv, 2-4;) and Joshua, following the command of Moses, had visited the same sanctuary to inscribe the law on a stone monument, and to exact an oath of allegiance to Jehovah with the impressive sanctions of the blessings and the curses. Chap. viii, 30-35. [**Presented themselves before God**—As the expression **before God**, or *before Jehovah*, frequently means before the Ark of the Covenant, many expositors have supposed that the Ark was brought from Shiloh to Shechem at this time. But Hengstenberg and Keil have abundantly shown that the words do not always imply the presence of the Ark. "If *before Jehovah* could only refer to the ceremonies at the sanctuary, Jehovah would be present *only* there, *shut up* in his holy place; an absurd idea, destructive of the divine omnipresence, and one which can never be found in the Holy Scriptures."—*Hengstenberg*. Rather does the expression mean that the assembly met *as* in the presence of God, whose holy name Joshua doubtless invoked. All pres-

flood, and led him throughout all the land of Canaan, and multiplied his seed, and <sup>g</sup>gave him Isaac. **4** And I gave unto Isaac <sup>a</sup>Jacob and Esau: and I gave unto <sup>b</sup>Esau mount Seir, to possess it; <sup>c</sup>but Jacob and his children went down into Egypt. **5** <sup>d</sup>I sent Moses also and Aaron, and <sup>e</sup>I plagued Egypt, according to that which I did among them: and afterward I brought you out. **6** And

25. 24-26.—<sup>f</sup> Genesis 36. 8; Deuteronomy 2. 5.—<sup>g</sup> Genesis 46. 1, 6; Acts 7. 15.—<sup>h</sup> Exodus 3. 10.—<sup>i</sup> Exodus chaps. 7-12.

ent realized that the eye of Jehovah was upon them.]

**2. On the other side of the flood**—Rather, *the river*; that is, the Euphrates. It was Ur in Chaldea, beyond the Euphrates, whence Abraham was called from an idolatrous family. **Terah**, with Abram his son, removed from Ur westerly to Haran, where he died aged two hundred and five years. Gen. xi, 29-32. That he was a maker of images is a mere legend. [**They served other gods**—"It is not said distinctly of Abraham that he served other gods, on which account we agree with Knobel, who says: Whether, according to our author, Abraham also was originally an idolater, is rather to be denied than affirmed; comp. Gen. xxxi, 53. But dangerous even for him were the idolatrous surroundings; wherefore God took him and caused him to wander through Canaan."—*Fuy*. But a love and reverence for the teraphim seemed rooted in the descendants of Terah. See note on verse 14.]

**3. And I took your father Abraham**—There was nothing coercive in this taking. Abraham's experience was like that of modern Christians who follow the Holy Spirit: "He drew me, and I followed on." With this understanding we may adopt Calvin's comment: "It is not said that he sought God of his own accord, but that he was taken by him and led to another place."

**4. Mount Seir** is a rugged ridge extending along the east side of the Valley of Arabah, from the Dead Sea to the Elanitic Gulf. It was afterwards called Edom. Compare marginal references.

**5. Afterward I brought you out**—The nation is contemplated as hav-

I "brought your fathers out of Egypt: and 'ye came unto the sea; 'and the Egyptians pursued after your fathers with chariots and horsemen unto the Red Sea. 7 And when they 'cried unto the Lord, 'he put darkness between you and the Egyptians, 'and brought the sea upon them, and covered them; and 'your eyes have seen what I have done in Egypt: and ye dwelt in the wilderness "a long season. 8 And I brought you into the land of the Amorites, which dwelt on the other side Jordan; 'and they fought with you: and I gave them into your hand, that ye might possess their land; and I destroyed them from before you. 9 Then "Balak the son of Zippor, king of Moab, arose and warred against Israel, and 'sent and called Balaam the son of Beor to curse you: 10 'But I would not hearken unto Balaam; 'therefore he

n Exod. 12. 37. 51.—o Exod. 14. 2.—p Exod. 14. 9.—q Exod. 14. 10.—r Exod. 14. 30.—s Exod. 14. 27. 28.—t Deut. 4. 34: 29. 2.—u Chap. 5. 6.—v Num. 21. 21, 33; Deut. 2. 33; 3. 1.—w See Judges 11. 23.—x Num. 22. 5; Deut. 23. 4.—y Deut. 23. 5.—z Num. 23. 11, 20; 24. 10.—a Chap. 8. 14, 17; 4. 10-12.

ing a continuous life, so that the word **you** does not refer to the Hebrews then alive, as the term *fathers* in the next verse sufficiently indicates.

#### 7. **Ye dwelt in the wilderness—**

This was true of the adults of the nation, many of whom were born there. Joshua gives no hint of the painful cause of their long sojourn in the wilderness.

8. **Amorites—**Chap. ii, 10, note. **The other side Jordan,** here means, east of the Jordan.

9. **Balak,** king of the Moabites, wished to injure and destroy Israel, but there is no account of an actual attack by him. Num. xxiii, xxiv; Judges xi, 25.

10. **I delivered you out of his hand—**Balak's hand. He designed to harm by Balaam's curses; but God, in a manner wholly miraculous, and not in harmony with his usual dealings with free agents, interposed, and changed his imprecations to benedictions. This constrained act did not keep Balaam from suffering a violent death while acting with the Midianites against Israel. Num. xxxi, 8.

11. **The men of Jericho—**Heb., *lords or property-holders.* **Fought—**

blessed you still: so I delivered you out of his hand. 11 And 'ye went over Jordan, and came unto Jericho: and 'the men of Jericho fought against you, the Amorites, and the Perizzites, and the Canaanites, and the Hittites, and the Girgashites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites; and I delivered them into your hand. 12 And 'I sent the hornet before you, which drave them out from before you, *even* the two kings of the Amorites; *but* 'not with thy sword, nor with thy bow. 13 And I have given you a land for which ye did not labour, and 'cities which ye built not, and ye dwell in them; of the vineyards and oliveyards which ye planted not do ye eat. 14 'Now therefore fear the Lord, and serve him in 'sincerity and in truth; and 'put away the gods which your fathers served on the other side of the flood, and 'in Egypt; and

b Chap. 6. 1; 10. 1; 11. 1.—c Exod. 23. 28; Deut. 7. 20.—d Psa. 44. 3, 6.—e Deut. 6. 10, 11; chap. 11. 13.—f Deut. 10. 12; 1 Sam. 12. 24.—g Gen. 17. 1; 20. 5; Deut. 18. 13; Psa. 119. 1; 2 Corinthians 1. 12; Ephesians 6. 24.—h Verses 2, 23; Leviticus 17. 7; Ezekiel 20. 18.—i Ezekiel 20. 7, 8; 23. 8.

No active warfare is intended, but a standing on the defensive, with closed gates.

#### 12. **And I sent the hornet before you—**

The figurative interpretation of the hornet makes it a vivid metaphor for enemies armed with fearful weapons, or for pungent and stinging terrors. But we are inclined to the literal interpretation, which was evidently held by the author of the *Wisdom of Solomon*, (chap. xii, 8, that a species of wasp, which swarms in warm climates, became an intolerable plague, and drove many of the Canaanites from their land. The ancient historians Pliny, Justin, and Ælian recount instances in which whole tribes have been driven away by frogs, mice, wasps, and other small animals. **Not with thy sword—**Not with weapons only, but with divine help. The purpose of this review of providential interpositions in behalf of the Hebrews is to awaken emotions of gratitude, and to secure perfect holiness and obedience to the divine law. This duty the dying chieftain now proceeds to enforce.

[14. **Put away the gods which your fathers served—**Many expositors hold that these words do not nec-

serve ye the LORD. 15 And if it seem evil unto you to serve the LORD, <sup>a</sup>choose you this day whom ye will serve; whether <sup>b</sup>the gods which your fathers served that *were* on the other side of the flood, or <sup>c</sup>the gods of the Amorites, in whose land ye dwell: <sup>d</sup>but as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD. 16 And the people answered and said, God forbid that we should forsake the LORD, to serve other gods; 17 For the LORD our God, <sup>e</sup>he *is* that brought us

up and our fathers out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage, and which did those great signs in our sight, and preserved us in all the way wherein we went, and among all the people through whom we passed: 18 And the LORD drave out from before us all the people, even the Amorites which dwelt in the land: *therefore* <sup>f</sup>will we also serve the LORD; for he *is* our God. 19 And Joshua said unto the people, <sup>g</sup>Ye cannot serve the LORD: for he *is* a

<sup>a</sup> See Ruth 1, 15; 1 Kings 18, 21; Ezek. 20, 39; John 6, 67. — <sup>b</sup> Verse 14. — <sup>c</sup> Exod. 23, 24, 32, 33; 34, 15; Deut. 13, 7; 29, 18; Judges 6, 10.

<sup>n</sup> Gen. 18, 19. — <sup>o</sup> Exod. 19, 4; Deut. 32, 11, 12; Isa. 46, 4; 63, 7, 14; Amos 2, 9, 10. — <sup>p</sup> Exod. 10, 2; 15, 2; Psal. 116, 16. — <sup>q</sup> Matt. 6, 24.

essarily imply the actual possession of idols by the people, but rather a tendency to idolatry, which was ever too painfully prominent in Israel until after the Babylonish exile. The spirit of the exhortation is, according to this view, well conveyed by Bush: "Keep away, renounce, repudiate, have nothing to do with, idolatry of any sort; being equivalent to a charge to preserve themselves pure from a contagion to which they were peculiarly liable." Subsequent history shows how they failed. But it is scarcely supposable, that if Joshua meant to warn them merely against tendencies to idolatry he would have used the words here employed, and those still stronger ones, in verse 23, *Put away the strange gods which are among you*—the very words used by Jacob when his house hold gave up their strange gods, and he buried them at Shechem. Gen. xxxv, 2. Better, then, to understand that many of the Hebrews had still in their houses teraphim—the gods which the ancient fathers worshipped beyond the Euphrates. Laban had them in his family, (Gen. xxx, 19,) and Rachel carried them off, and they were probably the strange gods buried at Shechem. Gen. xxxv, 2-4. We again meet with them in the days of the Judges, (Judges xvii, 5, 18, 20,) and in the time of David, and even in his house, (1 Sam. xix, 13;) and also in the time of Josiah, who tried to put them away. 2 Kings xxiii, 24. It is therefore by no means improbable that among many families in Israel these teraphim were zealously kept, and

Joshua knowing the fact and the danger of it, called this assembly and especially urged this matter, in order to abolish, if possible, this evil.

Though the fathers beyond the Euphrates seem to have worshipped or **served** these teraphim as gods, there is no sure evidence that they were ever worshipped as gods in Israel. But they were images more or less associated with a false worship, and therefore dangerous to the religion of the Hebrews. **In Egypt**—The fathers had carried these teraphim in their families to Egypt, and during all their captivity they had not lost sight of them. Comp. Ezek. xx, 7, 8.]

15. **Choose you this day**— "Joshua releases them from obligation, that, like free men, and of their own accord, they may honestly decide what god they will serve. Liberty of choice is granted to them in order that they might not afterwards plead that they were compelled."—*Keil*. Joshua assumes an important truth—man cannot be godless; if he repudiates the true God, he will fall under the baleful influence of some false religion. He cannot divest himself of his religious nature. Jehovah will not share with any idol the worship of his people; every god must be dethroned before he will reign in their hearts.

19. **Ye cannot serve the Lord**—Joshua utters these discouraging words, based on the waywardness of the people's hearts, to draw out from them the expression of strong purpose to serve Jehovah. Thereby he elicits their energetic **We will**, in verse 21, and

holy God; he is <sup>a</sup>a jealous God; <sup>b</sup>he will not forgive your transgressions nor your sins. **20** <sup>c</sup>If ye forsake the Lord, and serve strange gods, <sup>d</sup>then he will turn and do you hurt, and consume you, after that he hath done you good. **21** And the people said unto Joshua, Nay; but we will serve the Lord. **22** And Joshua said unto the people, Ye <sup>e</sup>are witnesses against yourselves that <sup>f</sup>ye have chosen you the Lord, to serve him. And they said, *We are witnesses.* **23** Now therefore <sup>g</sup>put away, *said he*, the strange gods which <sup>h</sup>are among you, and incline your heart unto the Lord

<sup>r</sup> Lev. 19. 2; 1 Sam. 6. 20; Psa. 99. 5, 9; Isa. 5. 16. — <sup>s</sup> Ex. 20. 5. — <sup>t</sup> Ex. 23. 21. — <sup>u</sup> 1 Chron. 28. 9; 2 Chron. 15. 2; Ezra 8. 22; Isa. 1. 28; 65. 11, 12; Jer. 17. 13. — <sup>v</sup> Chap. 23. 15; Isa. 63. 10; Acts 7. 42. — <sup>w</sup> Psa. 119. 173. — <sup>x</sup> Verse 14; Gen. 35. 2; Judges 10. 19; 1 Sam. 7. 3.

their self-pledging witness in verse 22. **He is a jealous God**—He demands, like a husband, the undivided affection and service of the people who have avowed their fidelity to him. The word **jealous**, as applied to God, involves evident anthropomorphism. **He will not forgive**—This seems to represent God as implacable, in direct contradiction to that wonderful revelation of his attributes made to Moses in Exod. xxxiv, 7, as “forgiving iniquity, and transgression, and sin.” But the same revelation declares that he will by no means clear the guilty. The explanation is, that while God is forgiving to the truly penitent through the blood of sprinkling, he vigorously punishes all incorrigible sinners.

**20. Then he will turn**—He will alter his attitude toward you. Strictly speaking, God is unchangeable. He is always toward the wicked a consuming fire. When a man changes from righteous to wicked he runs into this consuming fire.

**23. The strange gods**—*The teraphim*. See note on verse 14. **Incline your heart**—By the free act of your will in the use of the power by God’s grace conferred on all.

THE GREAT STONE OF WITNESS, 25–28.

**25. A statute and an ordinance**—This was the renewal of the law given on Sinai, imposing no new obligations.

God of Israel. **24** And the people said unto Joshua, The Lord our God will we serve, and his voice will we obey.

**25** So Joshua <sup>a</sup>made a covenant with the people that day, and set them a statute and an ordinance <sup>b</sup>in Shechem. **26** And Joshua <sup>c</sup>wrote these words in the book of the law of God, and took <sup>d</sup>a great stone, and <sup>e</sup>set it up there <sup>f</sup>under an oak, that <sup>g</sup>was by the sanctuary of the Lord. **27** And Joshua said unto all the people, Behold, this stone shall be <sup>h</sup>a witness unto us; for <sup>i</sup>it hath heard all the words of the Lord which he spake unto us: it shall be

<sup>y</sup> See Exodus 15. 25; 3 Kings 11. 17. — <sup>z</sup> Verse 26. — <sup>a</sup> Deuteronomy 31. 24. — <sup>b</sup> See Judges 9. 6. — <sup>c</sup> See Genesis 28. 18; chapter 4. 8. — <sup>d</sup> Gen. 31. 19, 21, 26; chapter 22. 27, 28, 34. — <sup>e</sup> See Genesis 31. 48, 52; Deuteronomy 32. 1.

**26. Joshua wrote these words**—A description of all that occurred at Shechem in this solemn renewal of the covenant. This was done in order that a written document might be preserved as a witness against the people should they ever transgress the divine law. This chapter contains, probably, the substance of that ancient document. **A great stone**—Which long stood a monumental witness of this solemn transaction. See Judges ix, 6. note. **Sanctuary of the Lord**—The *holy place* first consecrated by Abraham in Canaan. Gen. xii, 7. Here he builded an altar and worshipped, by the tree, which was perhaps still standing in the time of Joshua. [Some understand the **sanctuary of the Lord** to mean, here, the tabernacle and ark, which had been brought from Shiloh for this occasion. Others think it refers to the spot where the ark had formerly stood. But the word rendered **sanctuary** may mean any *holy place*, and is not always used of the place where the ark was kept. In Amos vii, 13, it is applied to the place of corrupt worship at Bethel.]

**27. For it hath heard all the words**—By a striking figure the stone is spoken of as hearing. In the same sense, as a witness it would testify against their transgressions whenever their eyes should rest upon it or their thoughts revert to it. How interesting the thought that upon this very

therefore a witness unto you, lest ye deny your God. **28** So <sup>a</sup>Joshua let the people depart, every man unto his inheritance.

**29** <sup>b</sup>And it came to pass after these things, that Joshua the son of Nun, the servant of the LORD, died, *being* a hundred and ten years old. **30** And they buried him in the border of his inheritance in <sup>c</sup>Timnath-serah, which *is* in mount Ephraim, on the north side of the hill of Gaash.

**31** And <sup>d</sup>Israel served the LORD all the days of Joshua, and all the days of

<sup>a</sup>Judg. 2. 6.—<sup>b</sup>Judg. 2. 8.—<sup>c</sup>Chap. 19. 50; Judg. 2. 9.—<sup>d</sup>Judg. 2. 7.—<sup>e</sup>1 Heb. *prolonged their days after Joshua.*

spot, centuries afterwards, stood THE STONE, the CORNER STONE, THE TRUE AND FAITHFUL WITNESS. Says Augustine on this passage, "By this stone he certainly signified HIM who was the rock of offence to the unbelieving Jews, and was made the Head of the corner."

JOSHUA'S DEATH AND BURIAL, 29, 30.

[**29. Joshua . . . died**—Probably soon after the events just related above. It is noticeable that no mention is made of Israel's weeping for Joshua, as they did for Moses. Comp. Deut. xxxiv, 8. In chapter i, 1, Moses is called *the servant of the Lord*; here that title is given to Joshua. He who was then only *Moses' minister*, attained at length the office of his master, and became, like him, *the servant of the Lord*. **A hundred and ten years old**—Just the age of Joseph when he died. Gen. i, 26.]

**30. Timnath-serah**—See note on chap. xix, 50. The LXX here add the following legend of the stone knives: "They deposited with him there, in the tomb in which they buried him, the stone knives with which he circumcised the children of Israel in Gilgal, when he had led them out of Egypt according as the Lord commanded. And there they are unto the present day." See also on chap. xxi, 42.

CONCLUDING STATEMENTS, 31–33.

[**31. All the days of the elders that overlived Joshua**—So the holy life and example of a great and good

the elders that <sup>a</sup>overlived Joshua, and which had <sup>b</sup>known all the works of the Lord, that he had done for Israel. **32** And <sup>c</sup>the bones of Joseph, which the children of Israel brought up out of Egypt, buried they in Shechem, in a parcel of ground <sup>d</sup>which Jacob bought of the sons of Hamor the father of Shechem for a hundred <sup>e</sup>pieces of silver; and it became the inheritance of the children of Joseph. **33** And Eleazar the son of Aaron died; and they buried him in a hill *that pertained to* <sup>f</sup>Phinehas his son, which was given him in mount Ephraim.

<sup>a</sup>See Deut. 11. 2; 31. 13.—<sup>b</sup>Gen. 50. 25; Exod. 13. 19.—<sup>c</sup>Gen. 33. 19.—<sup>d</sup>Or, *lambe*.—<sup>e</sup>Exod. 6. 25; Judges 20. 28.

man exerts an influence after he is gone. Though dead he yet speaks, and the surviving generation feels his power.]

**32. The bones of Joseph . . . buried they**—Since the Hebrew has no pluperfect for the accurate expression of time, this may justly be rendered *they had buried*, in Shechem previous to the death of Joshua, either at the first solemn convocation at that place, (viii, 30–35,) or at the second, the occasion of Joshua's valedictory to the nation. The fact is mentioned here because of its association with the spot of Joshua's last address to Israel. This burial was in obedience to the charge given by Joseph in Gen. i, 25, whose faith grasped the land of promise for his last resting place. Heb. xi, 22. [The traditional site of Joseph's tomb is marked by a little chapel at the southeastern base of Mount Ebal, and a few rods from Jacob's well. "There is nothing remarkable in the appearance of this little whited sepulchre," says Tristram, "yet there seems little reason to question the identity of the spot. It has been preserved from molestation from age to age by the common reverence in which the patriarch is held by Jew, Samaritan, Christian, and Moslem alike, while the fact of his name being the common property of all has prevented any one of them from appropriating and disfiguring by a temple the primitive simplicity of his resting place.

**33. Eleazar . . . died**—Probably about the same time, (as Josephus says,) and his death and burial are



mentioned here because of their association both in time and place with those of Joshua. **In a hill**—Rather, *in Gibeah of Phinehas*. Josephus says, "His monument and sepulchre are in the city of Gabatha." Dr. Robiusion inclined to locate it at the modern Jibea, about half way between Jerusalem and Shechem. This would be not far from the place of Joshua's death and burial. The presentation of the place

to Phinehas was a token of Israel's high regard for him and his father.

Beautifully says Wordsworth here: "Eleazar and Joshua together make a type of the union of the priesthood and government in Christ. The types die, because they are types; but the **DRIVINE ANTITYPE** liveth forever; to whom be all praise, and glory, and dominion, world without end."



JOSEPH'S TOMB.

# INTRODUCTION TO THE BOOK OF JUDGES.

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IN the Introduction to his Commentary on Judges, in Lange's Bible-work, Cassel remarks that this book is, in a special sense, the first historical book of Israel. Its facts are not made to cluster round a single individual, as is the case in the Book of Joshua and the last four books of Moses. Genesis, though an historical book, is not properly a history of Israel; but rather, as its name denotes, a record of the beginnings of all nations and of all things. In the Book of Judges we see the Israelitish people rising into the position and character of a great State, with a dawning consciousness of their distinctive nationality. We see them not yet become historical among the nations of the earth, but in process of development. Though, under Joshua, they have gained a solid foothold in Canaan, there yet remains much land to be possessed, and many strong enemies to encounter. And several hundred years are to pass before that end is gained, and then not without repeated disasters and oppression. That end, in fact, is not gained until the people are brought under the authority of a strong central government, realizing their individuality, unity, and personality as a nation. Clearly apprehending that the want of such national organic unity was the source of the civil and social disorders of this formative period, the sacred historian again and again repeats, as an explanation of his dark record, "In those days there was no king in Israel; every man did that which was right in his own eyes." That is, every man was largely his own master, lawgiver, and executive. There was no magistrate that wielded power in all the land, and whom all the tribes obeyed. Consequently tribe-jealousies, plunder, fearful retaliations, and great neglect of the laws which had been given as a sacred trust to the fathers, extensively prevailed.

But we are not to suppose that the age of the Judges was a period of universal anarchy or barbarism in Israel, and that there existed no courts of justice. The noble ideals furnished by the institutes of Moses were indeed not realized; but the simple and life-like narrative of the council of elders called by Boaz at the gate of Bethlehem (Ruth iv, 1-12) is a sufficient indication that matters of ordinary litigation were not neglected. And there were long periods of peace and internal prosperity. "The land had rest forty years," (iii. 11,) "fourscore years," (iii, 30, etc.,) are statements which indicate domestic tranquillity; and the Book of Ruth reveals to us a picture of

the more pleasant and beautiful side of this period. But there were also times of anarchy, and reigns of terror, and acts of barbarism, which strike the attention of every reader. There were times, too, when the highways were not travelled, and the Israelites sought refuge and security in caves and dens of the hills.

There were not wanting great lights of moral beauty and power in those dark ages. Deborah, and Boaz, and Samuel, present each a noble and estimable type of character and worth, and each, so far as we know, stands without a blot or stain. But we do not look to that age for our highest models of moral excellence, nor are we to bring the characters of the judges to the test of New Testament purity. "Other portions of Scripture," says Stanley, "may be more profitable 'for doctrine, for correction, for reproof, for instruction in righteousness;' but for merely human interest, for the lively touches of ancient manners, for the succession of romantic incidents, for the consciousness that we are living face to face with the persons described, for the tragical pathos of events and characters, there is nothing like the history of the Judges, from Othniel to Eli. No portion of the Hebrew Scriptures brings us so near to the times described. It would seem, if one may venture to say so, as if the Book of Judges had been left in the sacred books with the express view of enforcing upon us the necessity (which we are sometimes anxious to evade) of recognizing the human, national, let us even add barbarian, element which plays its part in the sacred history. In other portions of the Hebrew annals the divine character of the revelation is so constantly before us, or the character of the human agents reaches so nearly to the divine, that we may, if we choose, almost forget that we are reading of men of like passions with ourselves. But in the history of the Judges the whole tenor of the book, especially of its concluding chapters, renders this forgetfulness impossible. Like the rugged rock which, to this day, breaks the platform of the Temple area at Jerusalem, and reminds us of the bare, natural features of the mountain that must have protruded themselves into the midst of the magnificence of Solomon, so the Book of Judges recalls our thoughts from the ideal which we imagine of past and of sacred ages, and reminds us by a rude shock that, even in the heart of the chosen people, even in the next generation after Joshua, there were irregularities, imperfections, excrescences, which it is the glory of the sacred historian to have recorded faithfully, and which it will be our wisdom no less faithfully to study."

But this history of the Judges is not without its divine element. While there may be other portions of Scripture more profitable than this, there may be, also, portions less profitable. This book gives us

a vivid insight into the Divine Providence of history. In tracing the rise and growth of the Israelitish nation, the sacred penman gives us substantially the outline of the history of every great nation on the face of the earth. There has been no nation but some time had its clan or colony beginnings, its territorial settlement, its first comparatively rude and lawless ages, and its ultimate conscious attainment of authoritative and responsible nationality. In the early history of most nations we find a tendency to segregation; local and clannish feelings stifle or keep back the growth of the nobler sense of national unity and strength. This book shows us how sectional jealousies, together with moral perversity and apostasy from God, hindered the Hebrew people for more than three hundred years from realizing a true national unity. We must not think that God's hand guided Israel, but not other nations. Greece and Rome had—America, England, and the rest have—a divine history and purpose as truly as had Israel. God's hand has interposed in the history of all; but Israel's pre-eminence and advantage were specially that "to them were committed the oracles of God," (Rom. iii, 2,) and *sacred* history reveals to us, more clearly than other history, how "the powers that be are ordained of God." No man or set of men ever purposely made a nation, or ever will or can; for nations, as truly as the elect sons of God, are "born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God." And not only is every State of providential origin and growth, but, having attained a national self-consciousness and power, it becomes one of God's mighty agents in governing the world. The miraculous element in the history of Israel no more made the nation a theocracy, than did the divine purpose of making it a mighty agent in the discipline of universal humanity. And this same purpose every nation, according to its several ability, must serve.

He makes a grave mistake who supposes that the government of Israel by Judges was a temporary, provisional arrangement, adopted by the people, or that these officers derived their powers from the people. They were providentially raised up, from time to time, as exigencies demanded, (see chap. ii, 16-19,) but the law made no direct provision for such a class of officers. It spoke of judges, and of a national court of appeals, (Deut. xvii, 8, 9; xix, 17,) but these were to be associated with the priests and Levites at that central seat of government and of worship which the Lord should choose. It thus made sufficient provision for a strong, central government, and doubtless contemplated a national executive. It even made provision for a king, should the people desire one, (Deut. xvii, 14-20,) but both the law and the subsequent history of Israel show that the Lord preferred for his people another form of government. The seventy elders who

assisted Moses, (Exod. xxiv, 1, 9; Num. xi, 16,) and who had, perhaps, their successors in Joshua's time and afterwards, would seem to have been the responsible parties, and, after Joshua's death, should, like the apostles after the departure of the Lord, have appropriated existing offices and forms, and given them national stability and power, thus organizing for the people a supreme national council, with one chosen executive whom the Lord himself might choose. It is very noticeable that while Jehovah gave abundant revelations on other things, he gave none directing any specific form of national government for his people. So, too, Christ revealed to his disciples no special form of Church government for their subsequent use. These were matters to be left to human wisdom and prudence, guided by prayer. But here the elders of Israel came short. Jehovah designated, both by prophecy (Gen. xlix, 8) and Urim, (Judges i, 1, 2,) that Judah should lead the tribes; but the nation failed to seek in Judah a national executive, and Judah failed also to understand the Divine call; nor were immediate efforts made to ascertain the central seat of government which the Lord would choose. Accordingly, sectional jealousies soon sprang up, and the nation did not fulfil the divine commission to drive out the Canaanites; and so defeat, and disaster, and oppression came, and the people repeatedly fell into idolatry and fearful crimes. The Tabernacle was much neglected, and there were many high places where sacrifices were offered. The priests and Levites, failing to meet the full requirements of the law, and recognizing no central seat of worship, were sometimes found wandering idly through the land, and ready to sell themselves to a semi-idolater for food and clothes. Chap. xvii. No wonder that national calamities came, and God sold them into the hands of their enemies.

In the absence of a united government, and in the midst of perils, Jehovah, not willing to cast his people utterly away, raised up these extraordinary JUDGES—an order of rulers so unique in history. Some have compared them with the Athenian *Archons*, the Roman *Dictators*, and the Carthaginian *Suffetes*, but in only a few points are they alike. As a class or succession of rulers they stand alone in the history of the world. They formed no part of the regular machinery of the Hebrew government as contemplated in the Law of Moses, but were extraordinary ministers raised up of God in times of national peril and oppression to deliver Israel. Their work was not properly the administration of civil jurisprudence, but it often involved the giving of advice and counsel, somewhat after the manner of the prophets of a later age. Thus Deborah judged Israel, (chap. iv, 4, 5,) but it was chiefly by being a prophetess and delivering divine communications to the people who resorted unto her as unto an oracle. The Judges were, in fact, the seers or

prophets of the time, though their more prominent work was to lead the people to battle and defeat the foes of Israel. Samuel appears more like a civil judge than any other, for he had a "circuit" (1 Sam. vii, 16) around which he went yearly and "judged Israel." But, unlike any other judge, he was brought up from early childhood in the sanctuary, "was established a prophet of the Lord," and blessed the sacrifices of the people in high places.

It does not appear that any one of the Judges had jurisdiction over all the tribes. The expression "all Israel" is one of varying significance, and proves nothing in the case. Shamgar seems to have had no jurisdiction at all, but was raised up to execute one signal deed of vengeance. Gideon, after the defeat of the Midianites, seems to have had no rule or authority beyond the Abi-ezrites of Ophrah. Abimelech's reign at Shechem was only a sectional and abortive attempt at kingly power. Samson had personally little or nothing to do with Israel outside the tribe of Dan. Jephthah's authority extended only over the eastern tribes, and his election by the elders of Gilead at Mizpeh is no proof that all the other Judges of Israel were also elected by the voice of the people. At no time during all this period could the tribes of Israel be properly called twelve *united* States, for they were at best a loose confederacy.

### The Authorship and Date

of the Book of Judges cannot be positively determined. A part of it was evidently composed before the time of David, for the Jebusites still occupied Jerusalem along with the children of Benjamin, (chap. i, 21,) which was not the case after David made that city his capital. But the oft-recurring remark, that "in those days there was no king in Israel," shows that the author lived as late, at least, as the reign of Saul. Plausible, therefore, is the Rabbinical statement, that the book was written by Samuel after Saul had become king of Israel, and had "delivered them out of the hands of them that spoiled them." 1 Sam. xiv, 47, 48. Keil thinks that this opinion "may be so far correct that, if it was not written by Samuel himself towards the close of his life, it was written at his instigation by a younger prophet of his school." But the book is easily divisible into two sections, the latter of which (chaps. xvii-xxi) bears marks of a different authorship, and has the form of an appendix. It is only in this latter section that the words "In those days there was no king in Israel" occur, and while the facts recorded belong to an earlier period than many of those recorded in the other section, it is not without fair reasons that many critics assign the composition to a different author and a later age. This appendix has as much internal evidence of being a distinct work as has the Book

of Ruth, and we incline to the opinion that these two sections are to be referred to different authors, or, at all events, to an author who wrote the latter section a long time after he had finished the former.

Like other Old Testament books, this history was evidently compiled from various sources; and, like all the other historical books, it probably received slight additions and modifications from later editors. The words of the angel at Bochim, (ii, 1-5,) Deborah's song, (chap. v,) Jotham's parable, (ix, 7-20,) and perhaps other parts, the author found ready at his hand, and he simply transferred them to his own pages.

### Chronology.

The period covered by this book is usually estimated at about 300 years. The book itself furnishes dates which altogether make up a period of 390 years, as follows:

| Events.                  | Years. | Chap. | Ver. | Events.                  | Years. | Chap. | Ver. |
|--------------------------|--------|-------|------|--------------------------|--------|-------|------|
| Chushan's oppression.... | 8      | iii   | 8    | Tola .....               | 23     | x     | 2    |
| Othniel's rule.....      | 40     | iii   | 11   | Jair.....                | 22     | x     | 8    |
| Moabite oppression....   | 18     | iii   | 14   | Ammonite oppression...   | 18     | x     | 8    |
| Ehud's rule, and period  |        |       |      | Jephthah's rule.....     | 6      | xii   | 7    |
| of rest.....             | 80     | iii   | 30   | Ibzan .....              | 7      | xii   | 9    |
| Jabin's oppression.....  | 20     | iv    | 3    | Elon .....               | 10     | xii   | 11   |
| Deborah and Barak.....   | 40     | v     | 31   | Abdon.....               | 8      | xii   | 14   |
| Midianite oppression.... | 7      | vi    | 1    | Philistine oppression... | 40     | xiii  | 1    |
| Gideon's rule.....       | 40     | viii  | 28   |                          |        |       |      |
| Abimelech's reign.....   | 3      | ix    | 22   | Total.....               | 390    |       |      |

But these figures furnish no absolutely certain basis from which to reckon the length of the entire period. Some of these Judges may have been contemporary, and there may have been other judges and other oppressions of which we have no record, for surely no one will claim that this book is a complete and exhaustive history of the times between Joshua and Samuel. Jael (chap. v, 6) and Bedan (1 Sam. xii, 11) seem to have been Judges of whom no historical record has been preserved; and chap. iii, 31, compared with v, 6, intimates a dark Philistine oppression that troubled Israel long before the days of Samson. In view of all this, we think there is lack of sufficient data from which to construct a system of chronology that is not open to dispute. Paul says, (Acts xiii, 20,) "He gave them judges about the space of 450 years, until Samuel the prophet," and in 1 Kings vi, 1, we read that Solomon began to build the temple 480 years after the Exodus. Josephus makes the period 448 years. Here, then, are discrepancies which we do not attempt to reconcile or explain. We are not sure that these statements are irreconcilable, but we are not satisfied that any one of the current schemes of chronology thoroughly solves the problem. The opposing figures of the different Christian

writers, and of the different chronologists, may stagger a mathematician like Bishop Colenso, but need not, we think, disturb the faith of any devout Christian in the genuineness and authority of the Holy Scriptures.

### Plan and Contents.

The Book of Judges is properly divided into three parts: (1.) The INTRODUCTION, extending from chap. i, to iii, 6, which gives a general account of the condition of the Israelites after the death of Joshua, and their relation to the remaining Canaanitish nations. (2.) The second division takes in the main body of the book, and is properly called by Bachmann, in his very able work on Judges, the PRINCIPAL HISTORICAL PART. It extends from chap. iii, 7, to chap. xvi, 31. (3) Then follows, an APPENDIX, chaps. xvii-xxi, which was probably added by a later hand.

#### Part First—Introduction. Chaps. i-iii, 6.

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| PHILISTINE AND AMMONITE OPPRESSION.....          | x, 6-9          |
| ISRAEL'S REPENTANCE AND HUMILIATION.....         | x, 10-16        |
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| MICAH AND THE LEVITE .....             | Chap. xvii, 1-13 |
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# THE BOOK OF JUDGES.

## CHAPTER I.

**N**OW after the death of Joshua it came to pass, that the children of

α Num. 27. 21 ;

## PART FIRST.

### INTRODUCTION.

CHAPTERS I-III, 6.

## CHAPTER I.

### THE LEADERSHIP, 1, 2.

1. **After the death of Joshua**—Probably not long after. Till Joshua died the affairs of the nation were closely associated with one great master mind, upon which came the chief responsibility of government. Moses and Joshua were to Israel like the chief generals of a great army, and the great body of the people had little sense of a national responsibility. But as soon as these great leaders are gone there comes a dawning sense of national unity and responsibility, and now not one man, but the whole people, **the children of Israel**, ask counsel of Jehovah. **The children of Israel** are here to be understood as the tribes west of the Jordan, represented by their elders. **Asked the Lord**—By means of the urim and thummim. See note on Josh. i, 1. The people and the elders had not forgotten the last counsels of Joshua. Josh. xxiii, xxiv. **Who shall go up**—Joshua died leaving no chosen successor. As he had himself been called of God to succeed Moses, (Josh. i, 2,) so he trusted God to select his successor in office. The divine commission did not resound in the ear nor stir the heart of any man. Hence the nation resorts to prayer to God in this season of suspense. The expression **go up** is to be taken in a military sense, not as implying an actual ascent, but an aggressive warfare: who shall take the lead in battle with our

Israel \*asked the Lord, saying, Who shall go up for us against the Canaanites first, to fight against them? 2 And the

chap. 20. 18.

Canaanitish foes? The enemy is conceived as occupying higher ground than the aggressors, though sometimes the march to battle may not have been a literal *going up*. **Against the Canaanites**—These enemies were not all exterminated in Joshua's day, and when the great commander was dead the elders of Israel began to feel anxiety about the national safety. They feared their enemies might seize the moment when Israel was without a leader to recover their former possessions. **First**—Or, *at the beginning*. The thought is, Who shall make the beginning of aggressive warfare? This form of words seems to imply that a personal leader was not sought, but rather what the Greeks called the *hegemony*, the precedence among the tribes: which tribe shall make a beginning?

Bishop Hervey, in the "Speaker's" or "Bible Commentary," maintains that the events of this chapter and the first five verses of chapter ii must have occurred before Joshua's death, and he suggests that the reading in this first verse should be, *Now after the death of Moses*. But this whole argument rests mainly upon two assumptions, both of which may be rejected as unnecessary. He assumes, (1) That a war with the Canaanites for the possession of tribe territory is incompatible with the conquest of Canaan and the settlement of the tribes under Joshua's leadership, and (2) That the narrative commencing at chap. ii, 6, is a direct continuation of the verses preceding it. On this latter assump-

**LORD** said, <sup>b</sup> Judah shall go up; behold, I have delivered the land into his hand.

**3** And Judah said unto Simeon his brother, Come up with me into my lot, that we may fight against the Canaan-

<sup>b</sup> Gen. 49. 8; Num. 2. 3; 7. 12; Psa. 78. 68, 70.  
<sup>c</sup> Verse 17.

tion see note at ii, 6. The former has been sufficiently refuted in our notes on Josh. xi, 23; xxi, 44. Joshua, indeed, subdued the Canaanites on all sides, and the tribes received their portions during his lifetime, but the Canaanites were by no means all exterminated, and after the death of Israel's great chieftain they would naturally rally to recover, as far as possible, their lost possessions; and subsequent history shows how long-continued were their conflicts with the Canaanitish nations that remained in the land.

The exact chronology of various events recorded in these opening chapters is very uncertain, and in view of the Hebrew historians' well-known lack of precision in such matters, and the absence of sufficient data to construct a definite chronology of these events, it is altogether needless to suppose or assume that they occurred before Joshua's death. The passage in verses 10-15 is manifestly episodic, interrupting the direct narrative of the chapter, and therefore proves nothing in the case.

**2. Judah**—The tribe; the individual had long been dead. Dent. i, 35. This designation of Judah to the pre-eminence was in substance a repetition of the prophetic blessing of dying Jacob: "Thou art he whom thy brethren shall praise; thy hand shall be upon the neck of thine enemies; thy father's children shall bow down before thee." Gen. xlix, 8. But although God thus clearly designated Judah for the leadership, the tribe failed to understand that from among its thousands a personal leader and national executive should be sought, and measures at once be taken to organize a strong central government, and realize as soon as possible the ideal presented in the book of the Law. Here was Judah's divine call, but the tribe neglected it, entered into a league with Simeon, and

ites; and <sup>e</sup> I likewise will go with thee into thy lot. So Simeon went with him.

**4** And Judah went up; and the <sup>d</sup> Lord delivered the Canaanites and the Periz-

<sup>d</sup> Exodus 23. 28, 29; Deuteronomy 9. 3;  
Joshua 10. 8, 10.

through all the period of the Judges kept sinking into comparative insignificance. In Samson's time this tribe seems to have been the most cowardly in Israel, and utterly afraid to resist the Philistine conquerors. Compare chap. xv, 11, note. Not until David attained the throne did Judah recover from the effects of the failure to improve fully this divine call. **I have delivered**—It was the divine purpose that the ultimate and complete conquest of the Promised Land should be wrought by Judah's sceptre, but it was not done till the days of David. **The land**—Not only the lot of Judah, but the whole land of Canaan.

#### LEAGUE OF JUDAH AND SIMEON, 3.

**3. Simeon**—This tribe was on the southern border of Judah, and occupied several cities within the bounds of that tribe. See on Josh. xix, 1. They were natural allies, not only from their proximity, but because they were both the offspring of Leah. **My lot...thy lot**—The portion of each was still infested with enemies. They unite to conquer them. This league of Judah and Simeon was clannish and sectional. Though it resulted in many victories, it would have been better had it been a league of all the tribes. The cowardly inactivity of the rest of the tribes, described in verses 27-36, was doubtless largely owing to this sectional league. They were not included, and so lost sympathy with the work of conquest, and no central national government was formed. Hence the disorders and disasters that ensued. The league should have been not of Judah and Simeon, but of Judah and all the tribes, with Judah as leader.

#### DEFEAT OF ADONI-BEZEK, 4-7.

**4. Judah went up**—That is, in the military sense, as in verse 1. Judah

zites into their hand: and they slew of them in Bezek ten thousand men. **5** And they found Adoni-bezek in Bezek: and they fought against him, and they slew the Canaanites and the Perizzites. **6** But Adoni-bezek fled; and they pursued after him, and caught him, and

*e1 Sam. 11, 8.—1 Heb. the thumbs of their hands and of their feet.*

proceeded to the war. **The Lord delivered**—The devout Hebrew was remarkable for acknowledging the Divine hand in all his victories. The civilisation which laughs at all faith in the supernatural, and makes the strongest battalions the arbiters of battles, is very defective. **The Canaanites and the Perizzites**—On these nations see note on Josh. iii, 10. There seems to have been a gathering of these foes under Adoni-bezek for the purpose of conquering and oppressing Israel, and to crush the rising rebellion Judah led an army promptly against the gathering host, and fought the decisive battle in Bezek. This place is mentioned only once again, at 1 Sam. xi, 8, where the context shows it to have been near the Jordau valley, and within a day's journey of Jabesh-gilead. Its site has not been identified, but there is no good reason for maintaining that this Bezek must have been within the tribe of Judah. It may have been expedient for Judah to march beyond his borders, and attack the enemy on their own grounds. **Ten thousand men**—Ancient battles were more destructive of human life, because there were generally no prisoners taken, or, if taken, their sufferings in slavery were worse than death on the field.

**5. Found**—Discovered and apprehended unexpectedly. **Adoni-bezek**—The name means, *lord of Bezek*. He seems to have commanded these Canaanite and Perizzite forces in this war.

**6. Cut off his thumbs and . . . great toes**—This barbarous mutilation, unusual with the Jews, was designed to incapacitate for military service. The victim of this cruelty could neither march nor fight. In this instance the Israelites exercised this cruelty according to that barbaric style of justice called the

cut off his thumbs and his great toes. **7** And Adoni-bezek said, Threescore and ten kings, having<sup>1</sup> their thumbs and their great toes cut off, <sup>2</sup>gathered *their meat* under my table: 'as I have done, so God hath requited me. And they brought him to Jerusalem, and there he died.

*2 Or, gleaned.—<sup>1</sup> Lev. 24, 19; 1 Sam. 15, 33; James 2, 13.*

*lex talionis*. In modern warfare it is usual to release prisoners "on parole," that is, on their word of honour not to fight again; but among some barbarians such mutilation or disabling was the only security against their fighting again. And modern civilized states, when called to war with certain barbarous or half-civilized tribes, have sometimes been obliged to resort to some terrible form of the law of retaliation. See note on Josh. x, 26.

**7. Threescore and ten kings**—The chief of every petty village was styled a *king*. This accounts for the number of maimed wretches who scrambled or cravenly begged for the crumbs beneath this brutal conqueror's table. We need not understand that all these seventy kings were under his table at one time, but during his reign. "Conceive," says Kitto, "what must have been the state of the country and people among whom such a scene could exist. What wars had been waged, what cruel ravages committed! Those are certainly very much in the wrong who picture to themselves the Canaanites as 'a happy family,' disturbed in their peaceful homes by the Hebrew barbarians from the wilderness!" **God hath requited me**—The guilty conscience, goaded to confession by signal retribution, quickly finds for its woe a moral cause. So the guilty sons of Jacob remembered their sin against Joseph when they found themselves involved in distress in Egypt. Gen. xlii, 21. So Herod was ready to see in the wonder-working Jesus the murdered John Baptist risen from the dead. Matt. xiv, 2. **They brought him to Jerusalem**—That is, his own people brought him thither, for Jerusalem was yet in the hands of the Canaanites. The Israelites could

O. T.

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

9 <sup>b</sup>And afterward the children of Judah went down to fight against the Canaanites, that dwelt in the mountain, and in the south, and in the <sup>c</sup>valley.

10 And Judah went against the Canaanites that dwelt in Hebron: now the name of Hebron before *was* <sup>d</sup>Kirjath-arba: and they slew Sheshai, and

<sup>a</sup> See Josh. 15. 63. — <sup>b</sup> Josh. 10. 36; 11. 21; 15. 13. 3 Or, *low country*. — <sup>c</sup> Josh. 14. 15; 15. 13, 14.

have had no worthy object in carrying off with them the mutilated king, and the next sentence, commencing with the subject **the children of Israel**, indicates that the verb *brought*, in this verse has a different subject. Accordingly, the next verse shows how Judah followed up his victory, and proceeded to attack Jerusalem, whither the defeated Canaanites had fled.

#### CAPTURE AND BURNING OF JERUSALEM, 8.

8. **Had fought**—This pluperfect rendering of the verb has grown out of the notion that the Israelites brought Adoni-bezek to Jerusalem, and therefore the city must have been already in their possession. But much better is it to follow the more natural rendering of the Hebrew, and understand that this stronghold of the Jebusites was still held by its old possessors, (Josh. xv. 63,) and that when these Canaanites and Perizzites were smitten at Bezek, they fled to this strong city, which had escaped even the all-conquering sword of Joshua. The rendering should therefore be, *Then fought the children of Judah against Jerusalem, and took it, and smote it with the edge of the sword, and sent it in the fire*; that is, committed it to the flames. After the forces of Judah passed on to the south, Jerusalem seems to have fallen again into the hands of the Jebusites, and then Benjamin was unable to expel them. Verse 11. The complete conquest was subsequently made by David. See notes on Joshua xv. 63; 2 Sam. v. 6. **Set the city on fire**—Not to purify symbolically, as some suppose, but to

Ahiman, and Talmai. 11 <sup>e</sup>And from thence he went against the inhabitants of Debir: and the name of Debir before *was* Kirjath-sepher: 12 <sup>f</sup>And Caleb said, He that smiteth Kirjath-sepher, and taketh it, to him will I give Achsah my daughter to wife. 13 And Othniel the son of Kenaz, <sup>g</sup>Caleb's younger brother, took it: and he gave him Achsah his daughter to wife. 14 <sup>h</sup>And it came to pass, when she came to him, that she moved him to ask of her father

<sup>e</sup> Josh. 15. 15. — <sup>f</sup> Josh. 15. 16, 17. — <sup>g</sup> Chap. 3. 9. — <sup>h</sup> Josh. 15. 18, 19.

destroy, as in the case of other cities that were burned. Compare chap. xx. 48. It is not said, however, that the city was entirely consumed, and, perhaps, the higher city, or fortress of the Jebusites, was not taken at all.

#### CONQUESTS IN THE TERRITORY OF JUDAH, 9.

9. **Afterward**—After the burning of Jerusalem. **Went down**—Proceeded southward. *As went up* (verse 4) indicates a starting off to battle, so **went down** indicates a continuation of the war. **The mountain . . . the south . . . the valley**—The three principal geographical divisions of the territory of Judah. See note on Josh. xv. 19. Here the thread of the narrative is broken off to introduce the episode about Caleb and Othniel, and the notice of the Kenites.

#### CONQUEST OF HEBRON, AND EXPLOIT AND REWARD OF OTHNIEL, 10-15.

This passage is nearly identical with Josh. xv. 14-19. It may have been copied from the Book of Joshua, or from some older work. See the notes on the passage in Joshua. It is characteristic of the Hebrew historians to interweave such episodes as this and the following one about the Kenites into a narrative which touches persons or places with which they were associated.

The date of this conquest of Hebron and Debir is uncertain, but from Josh. xiv. 6-15, and xv. 13-19, it appears that it occurred during the lifetime of Joshua. Caleb was eighty-five years old at the time of the Conquest, or at

a field: and she lighted from off *her* ass; and Caleb said unto her, What wilt thou? 15 And she said unto him, Give me a blessing: for thou hast given me a south land; give me also springs of water. And Caleb gave her the uppersprings and the nether springs.

16 And the children of the Kenite,

o Gen. 33. 11. — p Chap. 4. 11, 17; 1 Sam. 15. 6; 1 Chron. 2. 55; Jer. 35. 2.

its close, and some little time may have passed before he conquered Debir, but not probably many years. But whatever the date, the episodic character of this section, (verses 10–16,) and the resumption of the narrative of Judah and Simeon's exploits at verse 17, show the futility of arguing from this passage that all the rest of the events of the chapter must have happened before the death of Joshua.

#### THE KENITES, 16.

16. **Children of the Kenite**—These were a nomadic tribe camping in Midian in the days of Moses' flight from Egypt. They were of Amalekite, or primitive Arabian, stock, and by virtue of their relation by marriage to **Moses**, this tribe became an ally, or a *protégé* of the Hebrews, dwelling first in the vicinity of Jericho, **the city of palm trees**, and subsequently following the victorious arms of their protectors to the extreme south of Judah's lot, to the edge of the Idumean desert. Here they dwelt undisturbed, taking no part in the wars of those days, and indifferent to political changes, until Saul warned them to separate from the Amalekites, whom God had directed him to destroy. 1 Sam. xv. 6. The Rechabites, a tribe of staunch temperance men, descended from them. 1 Chron. ii. 55. **Arad**—A Canaanite royal city in southern Palestine, twenty miles south of Hebron. Dr. Robinson identifies it with Tell-Arad, a barren eminence rising above the surrounding country. The inhabitants of this city drove back the Israelites when they tried to enter Canaan from Kadesh-barnea. Num. xxi. 1. They were subdued by Joshua forty years afterwards. Josh. xii. 14. **Dwelt among the people**—That is, the people

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

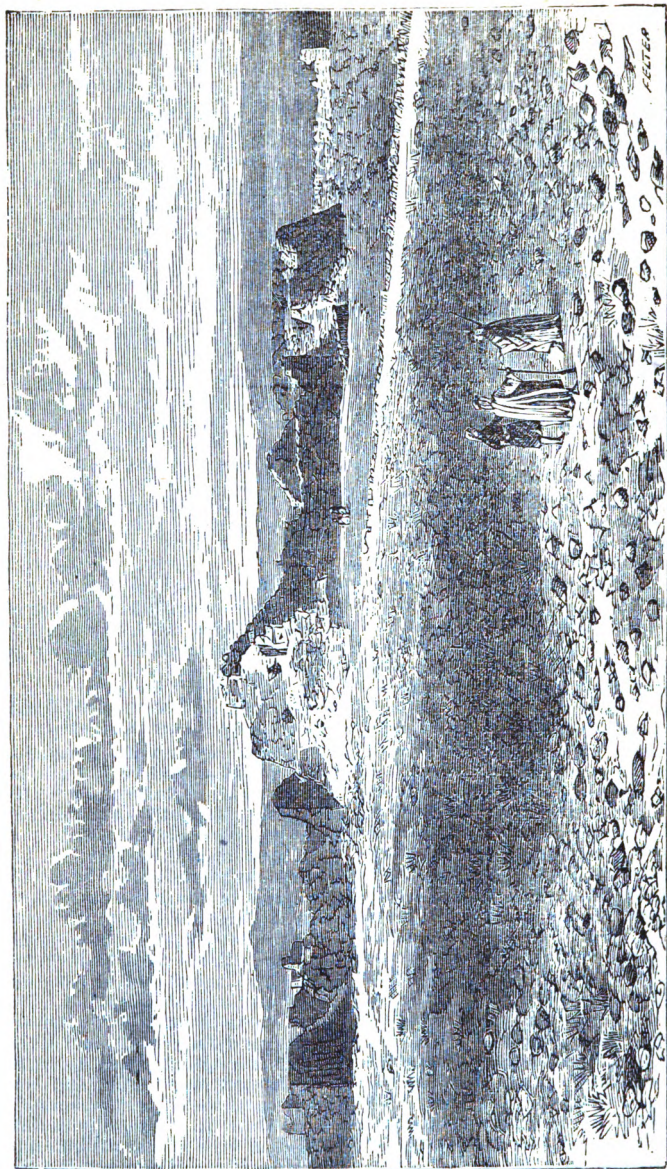
17 And Judah went with Simeon his brother, and they slew the Canaanites that inhabited Zephath, and utterly

q Deut. 34. 3. — r Num. 21. 1. — s Num. 1. 32. t Verse 3.

of the tribe of Judah; though Heber, the Kenite, was found in Naphtali, chap. iv. 17, having chosen to separate from his brethren and settle in the north of Palestine. It was proper that those who had befriended the Israelites in their weakness, when wandering through hostile lands, should enjoy their protection in the days of their triumph. "The sons of the Kenite adhered to Israel, not as Kenites, but as descendants of Jethro, the father-in-law of Moses. It is the constant aim of the historian of the conquest of Canaan by Israel to show that every promise was fulfilled, and that no one who at any time showed kindness failed of his promised reward. A reward had been promised to the sons of the Kenite, (Num. x. 31,) and the fulfilment of the promise now takes place."—*Cassel*.

#### CONQUEST OF ZEPHATH AND THREE CITIES OF PHILISTIA, 17–19.

17. **Judah went with Simeon**—The narrative of their exploits is resumed after the episode about Caleb and Othniel. **Zephath**—A Canaanitish city in the far south of Palestine, assigned first to Judah (Josh. xv. 30) and afterwards to Simeon, xix. 4. Its inhabitants harassed Israel in their journey through the desert, and Israel vowed to place all their cities under ban. Num. xxi. 1–3. Joshua destroyed its king, but seems not to have destroyed the city. Josh. xii. 14. So, too, he smote the king of Jerusalem, (xii. 10,) but did not capture and subjugate his stronghold among the hills. Now, after Joshua's death, Judah and Simeon unite their forces and utterly destroy the city, and thereby execute the ancient vow of Israel against it. Hence the name **Hormah**, *the place*



SITE OF ZEPHATH.

destroyed it. And the name of the city was called "Hormah. 18 Also Judah took "Gaza with the coast thereof, and Ashkelon with the coast thereof, and Ekron with the coast thereof. 19 And

Num. 21. 3; Josh. 19. 4.—<sup>o</sup> Josh. 11. 22  
to Verse 2; 2 Kings 18. 7.

*devoted to destruction.* The previous use of this name in the Bible is to be understood proleptically. The city still exists in ruins under the scarcely altered name Sebaita, some twenty-five miles southwest of Beer-sh-ba, and three and one half miles south of the fort El Mesrifeh, which commands the only pass by which the plain of the ancient city can be approached. The ruins are extensive and imposing, about five hundred yards long and from two hundred to three hundred yards wide. Notwithstanding the fallen *debris* and rubbish, the streets are still plainly to be traced. In February, 1870, Prof. Palmer of the Palestine Exploration Party visited and carefully examined the site and all its surroundings. He remarks: "The name Sebaita is etymologically identical with the Zephath of the Bible. Zephath signifies a watch tower, and it is a noteworthy fact that the fortress El Meshrifeh, discovered by us in the same neighbourhood, exactly corresponds to this, both in its position and in the meaning of its name. I would make one more suggestion respecting this site: Zephath has always been considered as identical with Hormah; but may we not understand the word Zephath in its proper signification, and consider **the city**, after all, as separate from the tower or fortress that was attacked and **destroyed**? The city which was protected by so commanding a fort might well be spoken of as the City of the Watch Tower; and, as so important a position would certainly not be neglected by later inhabitants of the land, I think it not improbable that in El Meshrifeh we see the site of Zephath itself, and in Sebaita that of the city of the Zephath to which the Israelites, after their victory, gave the name of Hormah."

18. **Gaza**—See note on Josh. x, 41.

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

4 Or, *he possessed the mountain.*  
o Josh. 17. 16, 18.

For **Ashkelon** and **Ekron** see on Josh. xiii, 3. Since these cities lay in the great Philistine plain, some have thought this verse contradicts the verse following, in which it is said that Judah was unable to drive out the inhabitants of the valley. Accordingly the Septuagint reads: "Judah *did not inherit* Gaza and her borders, nor Ashkelon and her borders, nor Ekron and her borders, nor Azotus and her suburbs." But this emendation is unnecessary, for to *take* these cities and their coasts by storm (לָכַד) is not inconsistent with a failure to drive out all the inhabitants of the valley, and take permanent possession of their coasts.

19. **And he drove out the inhabitants of the mountain**—Heb., *he seized or possessed the mountain*. In ordinary cases of foreign invasion the mountains are the fortresses which are last to surrender. But the Israelites, having confidence only in mountain warfare, concentrated their energies upon these fastnesses and secured their possession. **But could not drive out**—Literally, *for not to drive out the inhabitants of the valley*; that is, they were not to be driven out, or, as one might say, there was no driving them out. The word rendered **valley** is עֵמֶק, *emek*, and does not necessarily refer at all to the Philistine plain, which is called the *Shephelah*, verse 9. *Emek* denotes any valley, basin, or depression between mountains, and may here refer to plains situated among the mountains of Judah or elsewhere. **Because they had chariots of iron**—This we are doubtless to take as the *occasion*, not the *necessitating cause*, of Judah's ultimate failure to conquer all his foes. Iron chariots could not withstand the forces of Joshua (Josh. xi, 4-9) nor of Barak, (chap. iv, 15,) when the people of Jehovah fought with faith in his power, and Judah might



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

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

**22** And the house of Joseph, they

*v* Num. 14. 24; Deut. 1. 36; Josh. 14. 9, 13; 15. 13, 14. — *s* See Josh. 15. 63; 18. 28.

likewise have conquered; but we understand that, after many triumphs, when Judah was brought to face these **chariots of iron**—instruments of warfare strange and terrible—he hesitated, wavered, gave way to fear, and thus lost faith in God, and then there was no driving out his enemy.

#### EXPLOITS OF CALEB, AND COWARDICE OF BENJAMIN, 20, 21.

**20. Hebron**—For the allotment of this city to Caleb, see Josh. xv, 13, 14, notes. The account is repeated here as a contrast to the pusillanimity of Benjamin, who, in permitting the Jebusites to hold Jerusalem, failed to accomplish a much less difficult task than the expulsion of the terrible Anakim from Hebron. Its repetition in this connexion may also contain the thought that it was only after Judah had conquered and taken possession of his territory that Caleb could quietly enjoy his possession of Hebron.

**21. And the children of Benjamin**—Better, perhaps, to give this an adversative rendering, *But the children*, etc.—which brings out the contrast between Caleb's heroism and trust in God, and Benjamin's cowardly distrust and disobedience. **Jerusalem** was on the boundary between Judah and Benjamin, a portion belonging to each. After its conquest by Judah the **Jebusites** soon regained possession, and seem to have made a sort of league with the **children of Benjamin** by which they were allowed to **dwell with** or by the side of them without molestation. Compare Josh. xv, 63, and note on verse 8. **Unto this day**—The day of this historian must have been before David's expulsion of the Jebusites.

also went up against Beth-el: and the Lord was with them. **23** And the house of Joseph sent to descry Beth-el: now the name of the city before was Luz: **24** And the spies saw a man come forth out of the city, and they said unto him, Show us, we pray thee, the entrance into the city, and we will show thee mercy. **25** And when he

*a* Verse 19.—*b* Josh. 2. 1; 7. 2; chap. 18. 2 *c* Gen. 28. 19.—*d* Josh. 2. 12, 14; 1 Sam. 30. 18.

#### CONQUEST OF BETH-EL, 22-26.

**22. House of Joseph**—The combined forces of Ephraim and western Manasseh. This seems evident, not only from the words, but also from the fact that Manasseh and Ephraim are mentioned separately, in verses 27 and 29, in reference to other matters. **Beth-el** belonged to the tribe of Benjamin, (Josh. xviii, 22,) but was so near the border of Ephraim that the security and peace of all the neighbouring tribes required the expulsion of the Canaanites from it. So important was it to accomplish this conquest that the whole **house of Joseph** unite in the war.

**23. Sent to descry**—Or, they *reconnoitred*. They set a secret watch against Beth-el, to obtain such information as would enable them most easily to capture the city. **Luz**—Cassel distinguishes between Beth-el and Luz as follows: "As Jebus and Jerusalem are always identified, so it is everywhere remarked of Beth-el that it was formerly Luz; and as Jebus indicated particularly the fortress, Jerusalem the city—although the latter name also embraced both—so a similar relation must be assumed to have existed between Beth-el and Luz. The latter was evidently a fortress high and strong, whose city descended along the mountain slope."

**24. The entrance into the city**—Not the ordinary gates, for to find these they needed no information; but that entrance which is least guarded, and by which it is easiest to take the whole city by surprise. **And we will show thee mercy**—This indicates that the Hebrews were not absolutely commanded to kill all the Canaanites; but there was an implied condition of stubborn

showed them the entrance into the city, they smote the city with the edge of the sword; but they let go the man and all his family. **26** And the man went into the land of the Hittites, and built a city, and called the name thereof Luz: which is the name thereof unto this day.

**27** Neither did Manasseh drive out the inhabitants of Beth-shean and her

towns, nor Taanach and her towns, nor the inhabitants of Dor and her towns, nor the inhabitants of Ibleam and her towns, nor the inhabitants of Megiddo and her towns: but the Canaanites would dwell in that land. **28** And it came to pass, when Israel was strong, that they put the Canaanites to tribute, and did not utterly drive them out.

e Josh. 17. 11, 12, 13.

refusal to surrender, and to acknowledge the supremacy of the Israelites.

**25. When he showed them**—This unpatriotic act is not to be stigmatized as a betrayal of his country, since he did it under duress. The agitation of mind produced by a sudden threat of immediate death disqualifies an ordinary man for responsible action. A very cool and heroic man would have refused a compliance with this request, and would have suffered the consequences. But heroism, though an elevated virtue, cannot be strictly enjoined as a duty. Hence its absence cannot be regarded as a crime.

**26. The man went into the land of the Hittites**—The Hebrew historian had special interest in the fortunes of those who, like this man and Rahab, advanced the interests of Israel. **The land of the Hittites** is an obscure expression. It seems, in some passages, to refer to the whole interior of Palestine. Josh. i, 4. Eusebius and Jerome refer it to the island of Cyprus. Cassel thinks it here refers "to the familiarly known Chittim, north of Israel," and he accordingly seeks for the **Luz** which this man built in the northern coasts of Phenicia, and suggests its identity with the ruins of Kulb Lousy, which Thomson discovered far in the north of Palestine. But the subject is too much involved in obscurity for a positive settlement.

**COWARDLY INACTIVITY OF THE REST OF THE TRIBES, 27-36.**

**27. Manasseh**—For the boundaries, see Josh. xvii, 7-11; also note on the same for a description of **Beth-shean** and **Ibleam**. **Taanach** and **Megiddo**—See Josh. xii, 21. **Dor** is described in note on Josh. xi, 2. It is

f Josh. 21. 25.

worthy of note that these cities were all outside of the proper limits of Manasseh. Josh. xvii, 11. This may be the reason why they were left unconquered. It may have been impossible to secure the military co-operation of Issachar and Asher, within whose bounds they were. **But the Canaanites would dwell**—Rather, *And the Canaanites consented to dwell, or were determined to dwell*, in that land. They were unwilling to leave the fine country in which they dwelt, and were disposed to make any effort or sacrifice to abide in their ancient homes.

**28. When Israel was strong**—The lack of strength was the excuse for their cowardice and disobedience to a positive command, notwithstanding they had the assurance of aid from God. Perhaps, too, their previous weakness was owing to their fear of the war chariots. See note on verse 19. Nearly all these towns were on the great plain of Esdraelon; and bordering, as they did, the track of oriental commerce with the great cities of Phenicia, they were probably well fortified. But, in course of time, it seems that Israel became strong enough to bring them into subjection. **They put the Canaanites to tribute**—The love of money is now added to their love of ease and disobedience. When they became strong they were no more disposed to obey the voice of God than they were before. By long familiarity with their pagan foes had ceased to be abominable in their eyes, while the command to exterminate them had become in their estimation more and more unreasonable and barbarous. Yet they soon learned, to their sorrow, that they had planted the seeds of social and national ruin by refusing to apply

**29** Neither did Ephraim drive out the Canaanites that dwelt in Gezer; but the Canaanites dwelt in Gezer among them. **30** Neither did Zebulun drive out the inhabitants of Kitron, nor the inhabitants of Nahalol; but the Canaanites dwelt among them, and became tributaries. **31** Neither did Asher drive out the inhabitants of Accho, nor the inhabitants of Zidon, nor of Ahlab, nor of Achzib, nor of Helbah, nor of Aphik, nor of Rehob: **32** But the Asherites dwelt among the Canaanites, the inhabitants of the land: for they did not drive them out. **33** Neither did Naphtali drive out the inhabitants of

*o* Josh. 16. 10; 1 Kings 9. 16.—*h* Josh. 19. 15.  
—*i* Josh. 19. 24-30.—*k* Psalm 106. 34, 35.—*l* Josh. 19. 39.—*m* Verse 32.

to themselves the divinely appointed safeguard of their well-being—the radical extermination of their enemies.

**29. Gezer**—See Josh. x, 33, note.

**30. Kitron** and **Nahalol** are both of unknown situation.

**31. Accho** is a flourishing seaport on a bay of the same name, just north of Mount Carmel. It was named Ptolemais, in honour of one of the Ptolemies. Its modern name is Acre. It contains a mixed population of five thousand. On **Zidon**, or great Sidon, see Josh. xi, 8. "The district of Sidon," says Wilkins, "had apparently been included in the earliest scheme of conquest. But it had not fallen to the lot of either of the two most powerful and warlike tribes—Judah and Ephraim; it was destined for the feeble and less energetic Asher, Zebulun, Issachar, and Naphtali. The impetuous rush of the hardy warriors of the desert, thirsting for the blessings of the Promised Land, had spent itself in early efforts, and the northern tribes were well contented with the marvellous fertility of the plain of Esdraelon, which probably furnished abundant supplies for their scanty numbers. The Phenicians would, on the other hand, have the strongest inducements to live on terms of amity with their new neighbours. The great lines of traffic with Egypt, Arabia, Babylon, and Assyria, were in the hands of the invaders, and any hostilities with them must necessarily have caused a ruinous suspension of com-

Beth-shemesh, nor the inhabitants of Beth-anath; but he dwelt among the Canaanites, the inhabitants of the land: nevertheless, the inhabitants of Beth-shemesh and of Beth-anath became tributaries unto them. **34** And the Amorites forced the children of Dan into the mountain: for they would not suffer them to come down to the valley: **35** But the Amorites would dwell in mount Heres in Aijalon, and in Shaalbm: yet the hand of the house of Joseph prevailed, so that they became tributaries. **36** And the coast of the Amorites was from the going up to Akkrabbim, from the rock, and upward.

*n* Verse 30.—*o* Josh. 19. 47.—*p* Josh. 19. 43.  
—*q* Heb. *was heavy*.—*r* Num. 34. 4; Josh. 15. 3.—*s* Or, *Maaleh-akkrabbim*.

merce."—*Phenicia and Israel.* **Ahlab** is named in this place only. In Joshua xix, 29, this name is wanting; but the word *Cheleb*, translated *coast*, is, in the opinion of Fuerst, the name of the town here written Ahlab. Its site is unknown, as is also **Helbah**. **Achzib**—Josh. xix, 29, note. **Aphik** is written Aphek in Josh. xiii, 4, where see note. **Rehob** is not identified.

**33. Beth-shemesh** (*house of the sun*) and **Beth-anath** (*house of echo*) are unknown.

**34. Amorites**—Josh. ii, 10, note. **Forced the children of Dan into the mountain**—Dan's portion was chiefly that part of the Shephelah, or maritime plain, which lay to the west of Benjamin and northwest of Judah. Hence he was forced out of the main part of his inheritance. The tribe made up for this by conquests in the north, near Mount Hermon. Chap. xviii, and Josh. xix, 47.

**35. Mount Heres** (*sun mountain*) is supposed to be another name for Ir-shemesh, (*the sun town*), identified in Ain Shems. Perhaps it was some eminence or range of hills in the vicinity of Ain Shems. See Josh. xv, 10. **Aijalon**—See on Josh. x, 12. **Shaalbm**—No trace of any name resembling this is found in the vicinity of Yalo or Ain Shems. **House of Joseph**—See note on verse 22.

**36. Akkrabbim**—Probably the range of cliffs which form the southern boundary of the Valley of Salt, or the lower

## CHAPTER II.

**AND** an <sup>1</sup>angel of the Lord came up from Gilgal <sup>2</sup>to Bochim, and said,

1 Or, *messenger*.—a Verse 5.

end of the Ghor, south of the Dead Sea. See on Josh. xv, 3, where it is called Maaleh-acrabim. **From the rock, and upward**—By the rock many understand Petra, the Edomite capital, which is called *Sela* (שֵׁלָא, *the rock*)

in 2 Kings xiv, 7; but this would make palpable confusion in the context, and involve the impossible conclusion that the Amorites had possession of the metropolis of Edom and the regions beyond. Better, therefore, to understand some well-known rock or prominent cliff in the southern border of Palestine. Keil supposes that it was the rock at Kadesh, from which the Israelites were miraculously supplied with water. Num. xx, 11. **Upward** would then naturally mean *northward* from this well-known rock. The wide dominion of the Amorites is mentioned to account for their ability to resist the forces of Israel.

A panoramic view is given in this chapter of the political condition of the Hebrews at the beginning of this book. A general spirit of discouragement had come upon them, disposing them to acquiesce in the present situation, and to compromise with the unsubdued foes with whom they were intermingled. The natural result of this state of the facts would have been the turning of the Hebrews to paganism, and the loss of their nationality. For, unlike Christianity, Judaism possessed no aggressiveness. It was not designed as a missionary agency to go forth and make Jews of the pagan nations. It was eminently conservative in its spirit, and could flourish only by segregation, and separation from the assimilating power of heathen society. Hence the wisdom of the command, seemingly so radical and severe, to exterminate the Canaanite root and branch. The state of the nation calls for a renewed proclamation of this command. This will be found in the next chapter.

I made you to go up out of Egypt, and have brought you unto the land which I swore unto your fathers; and <sup>1</sup>I said,

b Genesis 17. 7.

## CHAPTER II.

## THE NATION REBUKED, 1-5.

1. **Angel of the Lord**—This was not an inspired human messenger, because, (1) The name of such was usually *prophet*, or *man of God*; (2) The expression, *angel of Jehovah*, is never, in ordinary historical narrative, descriptive of a mere human being; (3) He speaks with a superhuman authority, and lays claim to the acts of Jehovah himself. He assumes to be the same Angel who led the Israelites from Egypt and went before them in the desert journey. Compare Exod. xxiii, 20-25. We have here, therefore, an undoubted theophany. The occasion, the critical condition of the chosen nation, was worthy of such a manifestation of God. Godlike are his words. **Gilgal**—The first place of encampment in the Jordan valley, where this same angel appeared to Joshua and announced himself as captain of Jehovah's host. Josh. v, 14, note. There the angel announced the capture of Jericho, and prepared Joshua for the work of conquest. Now he comes again—comes to rebuke the nation for their disobedience, and warn them of the certain punishment that shall follow their lack of faith. The words, **came up from Gilgal**, indicate that, in the mind of the sacred writer, this Angel was conceived of as having long lingered at the sacred spot of the old camp where he last revealed himself, and now comes from that spot to speak again to Israel. So in chap. v, 4, Jehovah is conceived of as marching out of Mount Seir and the fields of Edom, in the fearful thunder-storm that ruined the army of Sisera. See notes there. So in chap. vi, 11, the Angel of the Lord "came and sat under an oak." So, too, in Gen. xviii, 16, 22, 33, the three angels, one of whom was called Jehovah, passed from Mamre to Sodom. **Bochim**—The *weepers*; so called from the great weeping that occurred here

I will never break my covenant with you; **2** And ye shall make no league with the inhabitants of this land; ye shall throw down their altars: but ye have not obeyed my voice; why have ye done this? **3** Wherefore I also said, I will not drive them out from before you; but they shall be *as thorns* in

c Deut. 7. 2.—d Deut. 12. 3.—e Verse 20; Psal. 106. 34.—f Josh. 23. 13.

when the people had heard the reproving words of the angel. Compare verses 4 and 5. It is impossible to identify this place, though it seems to have been in the vicinity of Shiloh, where the tabernacle then was, since all Israel were wont to assemble there. Pierst suggests that it is identical with Allon-bacuth, *the oak of weeping*, beneath which Deborah was buried. Gen. xxxv. 8. **I made you to go up out of Egypt**—No human being, not even Moses, could have used this language; nor could any angel, save the Angel of the Covenant, Jehovah of the Old Testament, (Isa. lxiii. 9,) and Jesus of the New. Mal. iii. 1. **Which I swear**—Promised in connexion with the solemn covenant with Abraham, (Gen. xii. 7; xvii. 7, 8,) and in substance repeated to Jacob and Moses. **I will never break**—Jehovah will assuredly meet his part of the covenant, so that if there is any failure in its perfect fulfilment it must be the fault of Israel, not of God.

**2. Make no league**—This command was given through Moses. See Deut. vii. 2. **Throw down their altars**—Compare Deut. xii. 2, 3. **Why have ye done this?**—This is an unanswerable question. To give a good reason for sin is to justify it. Sin is always unreasonable. Hence in the day of judgment every sinner will stand speechless.

**3. Wherefore I also said**—By the lips of Moses (Num. xxxiii. 55) and of Joshua (xxiii. 12, 13) the declaration was made that if they clave unto the remnant of the nations, and had social and commercial intercourse with them, God would not drive out these nations. They had received a fair warning. **As thorns**—These words are not found in the Hebrew of this

your sides, and *their gods shall be a snare unto you.* **4** And it came to pass, when the angel of the Lord spake these words unto all the children of Israel, that the people lifted up their voice, and wept. **5** And they called the name of that place *Bochim*: and they sacrificed there unto the Lord.

g Chap. 3. 6.—h Exod. 23. 33; 34. 12; Deut. 7. 16; Psal. 106. 36.—2 That is, *Weepers*.

passage, but are here supplied by our translators from Num. xxxiii. 55, and Josh. xxiii. 13. Literally this text reads, *They shall be to you to sides*; but it is to be regarded as an abbreviation of the proverb, *They shall be for thorns to your sides*. "The figure is taken from rural life. Israel has acted like a slothful gardener. He has not thoroughly destroyed the thorns and thistles of his fields. The consequence will be that sowing and planting and other field labours will soon be rendered painful by the presence of spiteful thorns. The influence of habitual intercourse will make the Canaanites stinging weeds and snares for Israel."—Cassel.

**4. Spake these words unto all the children of Israel**—This is the only instance on record where the angel of the Lord addressed an assembly; and even if these words were spoken only to the heads and representatives of the people, such representatives would still have constituted an assembly. But this fact is insufficient to set aside the above mentioned reasons for believing that this was the Angel of Jehovah, and not merely a prophet. We see no reason why the covenant Angel might not have revealed himself, at times, to an assembly as well as to individuals. **Lifted up their voice, and wept**—Man is so constituted in his moral nature that conviction of sin arises when the sinner has a clear view of what he is in contrast with what he ought to be. These two views the Lord held up before all the people, till they could endure the sight no longer. Six hundred thousand sinners in tears of penitence! No wonder that Bochim, a monumental name, was given to the place of such national penitence.

**5. They sacrificed there**—Seek-

6 And when Joshua had let the people go, the children of Israel went every man unto his inheritance to possess the land. 7 And the people served the Lord all the days of Joshua, and all the days of the elders that outlived Joshua, who had seen all the great works of the Lord, that he did for Israel. 8 And Joshua the son of Nun, the servant of the Lord, died, being a hundred and

*i Josh. 22. 6; 24. 28.—k Josh. 24. 31.—l Heb. prolonged days after Joshua.—m Josh. 24. 29.—n Josh. 24. 30.*

ing by propitiatory offerings to turn away the wrath of God, and obtain mercy and forgiveness of their sins. Where the Lord appeared there was a place sufficiently holy for the offering of sacrifices.

#### GENERAL DESCRIPTION OF THE TIMES OF THE JUDGES, 6-23.

This section, containing a general account of the period of the Judges, is naturally introduced by a connexion with the account of Joshua's last labours and death, as recorded in Josh. xxiv. 28-31. This introductory passage serves to show that while Joshua lived, and for some time after, the nation deserved no such rebuke as the Angel gave at Bochim, and hence this passage cannot be a direct continuation, chronologically, of the narrative which precedes, for here it is expressly declared that the people served the Lord all the days of Joshua and of the elders that survived him. The reader must bear in mind that this book is not so much a history in the chronological order of events, as a series of historical paintings for the illustration of a few great principles of the Divine administration. The fidelity of Israel during the days of Joshua and the elders is here presented as a notable contrast to their apostasy from God in the days immediately ensuing. The record of this apostasy is necessary to prove the fulfilment of Jehovah's words in the third verse. The enormity of their disobedience is enhanced by the consideration that it took place in the Promised Land, into which they had been introduced by the miraculous interposition of Jehovah.

ten years old. 9 And they buried him in the border of his inheritance in Timnath-heres, in the mount of Ephraim, on the north side of the hill Gaash. 10 And also all that generation were gathered unto their fathers: and there arose another generation after them, which knew not the Lord, nor yet the works which he had done for Israel. 11 And the children of Israel did evil

*n Josh. 19. 50; 24. 30. Timnath-heres.—o Exod. 5. 2; 1 Sam. 2. 12; 1 Chron. 28. 9; Jer. 9. 3; 22. 16.—Gal. 4. 8; 2 Thess. 1. 8; Titus 1. 16.*

7. The elders that outlived Joshua are here referred to as original witnesses of the miracles attendant upon the conquest of Canaan. Their presence and testimony kept the Hebrew nation from degeneracy and backsliding, as the presence of the apostles, eye-witnesses of Christ's majesty, preserved the Christian Church from corruption and heresy. For notes on Joshua's death and burial, see Josh. xxiv. 30.

10. Another generation... which knew not the Lord—That is, had no experience of his miracles, no proper respect for his law, nor love for his person and service. The new generation, by their indifference and indisposition to the effort requisite to sift testimony and apply its full force to their minds, wherein was their peculiar probation, fell into a culpable unbelief. The transition from that low faith grounded on the senses, to that higher faith grounded on testimony, is always a critical period.

11. Did evil—Practical infidelity follows swiftly upon the heels of speculative infidelity. Decay of morals inevitably follows decay of faith. A curious proof of this fact is imbedded in almost every language in those words whose primary signification implies unbelief, and whose secondary meaning is expressive of practical wickedness. For example, *miscreant* first signified a *misbeliever*, then a *vile wretch*; the word *unprincipled* first had reference to *speculative religious opinions*, then passed over into its more common signification of *profligate and vicious*. Served Baalim—Baal is a Hebrew common noun signifying master, or owner.

in the sight of the Lord, and served Baalim: 12 And they forsook the Lord God of their fathers, which brought them out of the land of Egypt, and followed other gods, of the gods of the

p Deut. 31. 16.—q Deut. 6. 14.  
r Exod. 20. 5.

With the article it becomes a proper name of the supreme male divinity of the Phenician and Canaanitish nations, having the peculiarity of being used in the plural, **Baalim**, signifying different modifications of the same god. This was not the first time that Israel was seduced to this worship—see Num. xxv, 3-5—nor was it the last, for this form of pagan *cultus* continued in Israel up to the time of Samuel, at whose rebuke it was renounced. 1 Sam. vii, 4. It broke out again like a deadly contagion, and became the religion



ANCIENT MEDALS WITH THE HEAD OF BAAL.

of the court and people under Ahab. It had the advantage of being a gorgeous ceremonial, dazzling the senses of the ignorant masses. It captivated many of the Hebrews during the reign of the Kings.

13. **Ashtoreth**—This is the plural form of Ashtoreth, the Venus of Syria, whose rites were more filthy and abominable than even those of the Grecian Venus, whose temple, with its thousand female votaries, polluted Corinth, and on a smaller scale defiled every Grecian city. Ashtoreth was the female, as Baal was the male, divinity of the Zidonians. Her worship was very ancient and widespread. Another name was *Asherah*, rendered *groves* in our English version; though this name seems rather to have designated the idol images of the goddess than

people that were round about them, and bowed themselves unto them, and provoked the Lord to anger. 13 And they forsook the Lord, and served Baal and Ashtarothe. 14 And the anger of the

s Chap. 3. 7; 10. 6; Psa. 106. 36.  
t Chap. 3. 8; Psa. 106. 40-42.

the goddess herself See chap. iii, 7, note.

As God originally created man male and female, so Canaanitish mythology seems to have embodied these conceptions in its system of worship



MEDAL OF THE FEMALE BAAL.



MEDAL OF ASHTORETH.

The masculine life-giving force of nature was worshipped under the names of Baal, Lord; Chemosh, governor; Hadad, the only one; Moloch, king; or simply El, god; the feminine receptive faculty was adored as Ashtoreth, Baalith, or Atargath. Thus the chief deities consisted of an apotheosis of the generative forces and laws of nature; an adoration of the objects in which those forces were seen, and where they appeared most active. Such an origin was, it may easily be seen, the source of the grossest sensuality. Debauchery was consecrated

LORD was hot against Israel, and he 'delivered them into the hands of spoilers that spoiled them, and 'he sold them into the hands of their enemies round about, so that they 'could not any longer stand before their enemies. 15 Whithersoever they went out, the hand of the LORD was 'against them for

*u* 2 Kings 17. 20.—*v* Chap. 3. 8; 4. 2; Psa. 44. 12; Isa. 50. 1.—*w* Lev. 26. 37; Josh. 7. 12, 13.  
—*x* Jer. 18. 8; Micah 2. 3.

by religion. Thus, too, Baal was *lord of the sun and god of fire*; and as the sun calls into being and growth things evil as well as good, he was also called *god of flies*, (Baal-zebub.) And many a State gave a local name of its own to the deity. Hence Baal-gad, Baal-peor, Baal-hermon.

Side by side with these varying conceptions of Baal were corresponding ones of his consort Ashtoreth. Where he is sun-god, she is goddess of the moon; where he is Priapus, she is Venus; where he is Zeus, she is his royal partner Hera. And from these multiform representations of the two chief deities they came to be spoken of often in the plural, and instead of Baal and Ashtoreth we have Baalim and Ashtaroth.

14. **The anger of the Lord was hot**—Anger and love are feelings of the Divine as well as of the human mind, but not irregular and misdirected, as they so often appear in men. They are not evil in themselves, and can only become so by becoming uncontrolled or directed towards wrong objects. Infinite Wisdom never errs in either of these ways, and God's essential antagonism against sin and sinners is one of the perfections of his holy nature. And such righteous indignation the Scriptures properly call *anger*. Our God is a consuming fire to all the workers of iniquity, and his holy wrath burns with greater or less intensity according to the sinfulness of the sinner. See note on Rom. i. 18. **Spoilers**—Predatory hordes, ruthless robbers, and hostile armies, who plundered their possessions and made merchandise of their persons. **And he sold them**—This term *sell* is used in a broad sense for renouncing owner-

evil, as the LORD had said, and 'as the LORD had sworn unto them: and they were greatly distressed. 16 Nevertheless 'the LORD raised up judges, which 'delivered them out of the hand of those that spoiled them. 17 And yet they would not hearken unto their judges, but they 'went a whoring after other

*y* Lev. 26; Deut. 28.—*z* Chap. 3. 9, 10, 15; 1 Sam. 12. 11; Acts 13. 20.—4 Heb. *saved*.—*a* Exod. 34. 15, 16; Lev. 17. 7.

ship, and delivering over into the hands of an enemy. The punishment involved in being sold was a payment to the divine justice. They failed to render due service to their only true Lord, and he, their rightful owner, sold them into a miserable slavery. Thus he vindicated the righteousness of his government, and for lack of service enforced a penalty.

15. **Whithersoever they went out**—Whether in the avocations of peace or to the field of war. Sad indeed is the condition of that nation with which the Almighty wages a constant war. **The hand of the Lord was against them for evil**—Providence worked against them, so that all manner of misfortunes befell them. Now they were scourged by famine, now by war and oppression.

16. **The Lord raised up judges**—The advent of national deliverers at various periods is like a burst of sunshine now and then during a day of clouds and storms. The great military leaders who, by their courage and abilities came into the ascendancy, arose not by chance; they were the especial gift of God. The term *judges*, which occurs here for the first time, does not signify a mere judicial officer, whose functions are limited to the exposition and application of the law. It is used in a broad sense for a succession of executive officers who, by the inspiration of the Spirit of God, combined with great natural qualities, assumed the supreme control, unified the energies of a loose confederation of States, and aroused them to throw off the yoke of foreign oppression. See Introduction.

17. **And yet they would not hearken unto their judges**—It is natural that they who have redeemed a nation should be its first rulers.



gods, and bowed themselves unto them: they turned <sup>b</sup>quickly out of the way which their fathers walked in, obeying the commandments of the LORD; *but* they did not so. **18** And when the LORD raised them up judges, then <sup>c</sup>the LORD was with the judge, and delivered them out of the hand of their enemies all the days of the judge: <sup>d</sup>for it repented the LORD because of their groanings by reason of them that oppressed them and vexed them. **19** And it came to pass, <sup>e</sup>when the judge was dead, *that* they returned, and <sup>f</sup>corrupted *themselves* more than than their fathers, in following

<sup>b</sup> Exod. 32. 8; Deut. 9. 12, 16; Gal. 1. 6. — <sup>c</sup> Josh. 1. 5. — <sup>d</sup> Gen. 6. 6; Deut. 32. 36; Psa. 106. 44, 45. — <sup>e</sup> Chap. 3. 12; 4. 1; 8. 33. — <sup>f</sup> Or, *were corrupted*.

Against the commands of these, the ungrateful people ran headlong into those idolatries for which they had just been suffering punishment. **Went a whoring after other gods**—The covenant of God is regarded as sacred as the marriage tie. To break that covenant, and worship another god, corresponds to an act of infidelity on the part of a wife. Hence idolatry is spiritual adultery. **They turned quickly out of the way**—The leaven of idolatry, with its moral abominations, was brought into contact with the people at so many points that the whole commonwealth was quickly pervaded with the dreadful abomination. Worship is a powerful assimilation. Men become like their gods.

**18. It repented the Lord**—Render, *Jehovah was grieved by their waitings on account of their oppressors and persecutors*. Grief, anger, and love are emotions frequently, in the Scriptures, attributed to the divine nature. Chap. x. 16; Psa. vii. 2; Hos. xi. 8; John iii. 16; Eph. iv. 30; Heb. iii. 10. Being absolutely perfect and pure in God, these emotions cannot, of course, be associated in the divine nature with any of the errors or evils with which they are often associated in the operations of the human soul. And when this Hebrew word (נחם) bears the sense of *repented*, (as our translators have rendered it here, but which it more clearly bears in Gen. vi. 6, and Jonah iii. 10.) it must never be understood as involving changeableness or incon-

other gods to serve them, and to bow down unto them; <sup>g</sup>they ceased not from their own doings, nor from their stubborn way. **20** <sup>h</sup>And the anger of the LORD was hot against Israel; and he said, Because that this people hath <sup>i</sup>transgressed my covenant which I commanded their fathers, and have not hearkened unto my voice; **21** <sup>j</sup>I also will not henceforth drive out any from before them of the nations which Joshua left when he died: **22** <sup>k</sup>That through them I may <sup>l</sup>prove Israel, whether they will keep the way of the LORD to walk therein, as their fathers did keep *it*, or not.

<sup>rupt.</sup> — <sup>g</sup> Heb. *they let nothing fall of their.* — <sup>f</sup> Verse 14. — <sup>g</sup> Josh. 23. 16. — <sup>h</sup> Josh. 23. 13. — <sup>i</sup> Chap. 3. 1, 4. — <sup>k</sup> Deut. 8. 2, 16; 13. 3.

sistency in God. "God is not a man, that he should lie; neither the son of man, that he should repent." Num. xxiii. 19. Yet when men change, God may change his method of dealing with them. God is angry with the wicked every day. But when a man passes over from the class of the wicked to that of the righteous, he comes into the range of the Divine complacency. The man has changed, not God. Yet the change may, humanly speaking, be ascribed to God.

**19. When the judge was dead**—A God-fearing ruler can, by his example and authority, arrest the moral degeneracy of a nation. The removal of such a ruler, whether by death or otherwise, is often the disastrous turning-point in a nation's history. **More than their fathers**—A disobedient and corrupt nation, when the fear of God has been completely thrown off, gravitates towards ruin with an ever-accelerating velocity.

**20. Anger...hot**—Compare verse 14, note. **He said**—Repeatedly, by Joshua (Josh. xxiii, 13) and the angel at Bochim. Verse 3.

**22. That through them I may prove Israel**—The presence of wicked men in society constitutes a part of the trial of the good. The Hebrews, by sparing their idolatrous enemies, multiplied and intensified their own temptations to sin. Jehovah used the heathen tribes that were left in the land to chastise the Israelites when the latter went out of the way. Of these causes

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

**N**OW these are the nations which

7 Or, suffered.—a Chap. 2, 21, 22.—b Exod-  
us 16, 4; Deuteronomy 8, 2, 16; 2 Chronicles

tisements and the deliverances wrought upon Israel's repentance, the Book of Judges is largely the history.

**23. Therefore**—In Deut. vii, 22, another reason is assigned for leaving the Canaanites in the land, namely, "lest the beasts of the field increase upon thee." But that passage contemplates the destruction of the idolaters, "little by little," through an uncompromising aggression upon them, while in this the Israelites are rebuked and punished for giving up the contest as hopeless, and for making covenants with those whom God had doomed to a gradual extermination.

### CHAPTER III.

#### LIST OF THE NATIONS LEFT, 1-6.

**1. Which the Lord left**—In Hebrew usage, God is often said to do what men alone are responsible for; as in the case of Pharaoh hardening his heart, which God is said to have done, though the hardening really resulted from his own perversity. God works through appointed agencies; but when his agencies fail to co-operate in the attainment of any end, he is said to fail. In this sense he left the Canaanites. Another peculiarity of the Hebrew idiom is the representation of *results* as if they were *purposes*. The grand purpose of Jehovah was the complete extermination of these pagan tribes, that there might be free scope for the development of the Hebrew commonwealth. Since this purpose was defeated by the defection of his human allies, Jehovah controls the consequences of their disobedience so that as little evil and as much good as possible shall result. In this case the intended good results were: 1st. The trial and proof of Israel.\* 2d. The beasts of prey are kept from overrunning the land.

the LORD left, to prove Israel by them, *even as many of Israel as had not known all the wars of Canaan*; **2** Only that the generations of the children of Israel might know to teach them war, at the least such as before knew nothing

32, 31; Job 23, 10; Psalm 81, 7; Proverbs 17, 3; Jeremiah 6, 27; 1 Peter 1, 7.

Deut. vii, 22. 3d. The cultivation of the art of war by habituating the people to the constant use of arms for their protection against foes near at hand, so that they might be prepared to defend themselves against a foreign foe. **Even as many... as had not known all the wars of Canaan**—The generation which arose after the death of Joshua had little or no experience in the wars for the conquest of Canaan. "This younger generation," says Cassel, "enjoyed the fruits of the conquest, but did not estimate aright the greatness of the dangers endured by the fathers, and therefore did not sufficiently value the help of God. It was no light thing to triumph over the warlike nations. They did not know what a war with Canaan signified."

**2. Only that**—This verse defines more fully the purpose of God in leaving the heathen nations to prove Israel. The mind of the writer reverts to the word *left*, in the previous verse, and the grammatical connexion is, *left, only that the generations... might know*. That is, they were left for the further discipline of Israel, that Israel might experience and realize what could be learned in no other way. **To teach them war**—This clause also depends on *left* in the previous verse. The nations were left to teach Israel the art of war by obliging them to fight for their possessions, and thus acquire a knowledge of military tactics and skill which would be greatly needed in the times approaching. Thus, too, this younger generation might learn what it had cost to get possession of Canaan, and thereby appreciate the heroism of the fathers. **At the least such as**—Rather, *only because*, giving the reason for teaching them war. Render: *Only because they did not before know them*. That is, previously

thereof; **3** *Namely*, 'five lords of the Philistines, and all the Canaanites, and the Sidonians, and the Hivites that dwelt in mount Lebanon, from mount Baal-hermon unto the entering in of Hamath. **4** 'And they were to prove Israel by them, to know whether they would hearken unto the commandments of the LORD, which he commanded their

c Josh. 13. 3.—d Chap. 2. 23.—e Psa. 106. 35.

they did not properly understand and appreciate the wars of Canaan. The sacrifices and mighty deeds of the fathers could only be learned by passing through similar conflicts with the same old foes.

**3. Five lords of the Philistines**—Namely, the kings or chiefs of the five great cities, Gaza, Ashdod, Eshkalon, Gath, and Ekron. See notes on Josh. xiii, 2-6, with which passage this is substantially identical. **The Canaanites**, as distinguished here from the **Sidonians**, are probably to be understood of the tribes or natives south of Phenicia, and near the plain of Esdraelon. Hazor was probably the seat of their principal kingdom. Chap. iv, 2. **The Hivites that dwelt in Mount Lebanon**—The range of Lebanon in the north seems to have been the chief seat of the Hivites after the time of Joshua, and they had many cities there in the time of David. 2 Sam. xxiv, 7. **Baal-hermon** is supposed by some to be another name for *Baal-gad*, mentioned Josh. xi, 17 and xiii, 5; but it seems most natural to understand **Mount Baal-hermon** to be the well known Mount Hermon, the modern Jebel esh-Sheikh. Here, probably, was a notable sanctuary of Baal, which gave its name to the whole mountain. **Hamath**—See note on Josh. xiii, 5.

**4. To prove Israel**—This is the topic and key-note of the following history, and is accordingly emphasized by a fuller repetition from verses 1 and 2.

**5. Canaanites, Hittites**—For notes on this list of nations, see at Josh. iii, 10.

**6. And they took their daughters**—So that marriages and mixing of blood threatened to render Israel homogeneous in blood and paganism with the doomed nations.

fathers by the hand of Moses. **5** 'And the children of Israel dwelt among the Canaanites, Hittites, and Amorites, and Perizzites, and Hivites, and Jebusites: **6** And 'they took their daughters to be their wives, and gave their daughters to their sons, and served their gods.

**7** 'And the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the LORD, and forgot the

f Exod. 34. 16; Deut. 7. 3.—g Chap. 2. 11.

## PART SECOND.

### PRINCIPAL HISTORICAL PART.

#### CHAPTERS III, 7-XVI, 31/

#### CHAPTER III.

CHUSHAN'S OPPRESSION, AND THE DELIVERANCE BY OTHNIEL, 7-11.

**7. The children of Israel did evil**—Matrimony strongly influences character. A pagan wife will paganize her husband, especially if that husband be so far backslidden as to trample down so plain a prohibition of such a marriage as is recorded in the book of the law. Deut. vii, 3. It did not require a supernatural prescience, but only a knowledge of the human heart, to make the prediction contained in Deut. vii, 4: "For they will turn away thy sons from following me, that they may serve other gods." "In such unequal matches," says Henry, "there is more reason to fear that the bad will corrupt the good, than to hope that the good will reform the bad." Hence to all Christians there is an apostolic prohibition, "Be not unequally yoked together with unbelievers," 2 Cor. vi, 14. **And forgot... God**—By long neglect of his service, and absence from his sanctuary and the appointed means of knowledge. **The groves**—Hebrew, *the Asheroth*. Our translators have followed the Septuagint in rendering this word, **groves**. The Vulgate—*Ash-taroath*—comes nearer to the Hebrew, which signifies the *image-pillars of Asherah*, the Sidonian Astarte, the oriental Venus. From the fact that these images were the stumps of trees, several versions have translated the word *Asheroth*, *trees* or *groves*. Bertheau identifies *Asheroth* with *Ash-toreth*, but supposes that the latter is rather the

LORD their God, and served Baalim and the groves. 8 Therefore the anger of the LORD was hot against Israel, and he sold them into the hand of Chushan-rishathaim king of Mesopotamia: and the children of Israel served Chushan-rishathaim eight years. 9 And when the children of Israel cried unto the LORD, the LORD raised up a deliverer

to the children of Israel, who delivered them, even Othniel the son of Kenaz, Caleb's younger brother. 10 And the Spirit of the LORD came upon him, and he judged Israel, and went out to war: and the LORD delivered Chushan-rishathaim king of Mesopotamia into his hand; and his hand prevailed against Chushan-rishathaim.

A Chap. 2. 13.—4 Exod. 24. 13; Deut. 16. 21; chap. 6. 25.—k Chap. 2. 14.—l Hab. 3. 7.—1 Heb. *Aram-nuharaim*.—m Verse 15; chap. 4. 8; 6. 7; 10. 10; 1 Sam. 12. 10; Neh. 9. 27; Psa.

22. 5; 106. 4; 107. 13, 19.—n Chap. 2. 16.—2 Heb. *saviour*.—o Chap. 1. 13.—p Num. 27. 18; chap. 6. 34; 11. 29; 13. 25; 14. 6, 19; 1 Sam. 11. 6; 2 Chr. 15. 1.—3 Heb. *was*.—4 Heb. *Aram*.

name of the goddess, while the former refers more specially to the idols erected to her honour. See on chap. ii, 13, and 1 Kings xiv, 15.

8. **Anger . . . sold**—See on chap. ii, 14. **Chushan-rishathaim**—The last word is a Hebrew dual signifying of double wickedness—Chushan, the moral monster. Of this Eastern king we have no other Scripture notice. "It is quite a gratuitous supposition of Bunsen's that he was 'a Mesopotamian satrap'—'the Assyrian satrap of Mesopotamia.' Scripture calls him king, and besides, the cuneiform monuments make it perfectly clear that Assyria did not extend her dominion to Mesopotamia till the middle of the twelfth century B. C. If the Assyrian and Babylonian kingdoms of the early period be rightly apprehended, there is no more difficulty in supposing a powerful Aramæan state in western Mesopotamia, than in imagining the country divided up, as we must otherwise regard it, among a number of petty principalities. Chushan-rishathaim reigned, probably, before the Assyrian independence was established."—*Rawlinson's Hist. Evidences*, p. 300. **Mesopotamia**, signifying between the rivers, was that part of Syria which lies between the Euphrates and the Tigris. It is for the most part a vast plain seven hundred miles long and from twenty to two hundred and fifty broad. It is first mentioned in the Bible as the land where Nahor and his family settled after quitting Ur of the Chaldees. Gen. xxiv, 10. **Served**—Not as slaves: the servitude was not personal, but political, and consisted in the loss of national independence, and the pay-

ment of onerous tributes to this tyrant. This remark applies to the state of servitude to which the Hebrews often were reduced in the days of the Judges.

9. **When the children of Israel cried unto the Lord**—Here is a sudden revival of memory. Adversity banishes that forgetfulness of God which prosperity has produced. **The Lord raised up a deliverer**—There is an adage among the Jews that "when the tale of bricks is increased, Moses comes forth." Every nation has had its national saviour, who has stepped to the front of its decimated armies, and lifted up its drooping banner, and inspired it with his own indomitable courage and sublime faith. Not only true piety but true philosophy must regard such men at such times as the gift of the God of nations. **Othniel**—See on Josh. xv, 17. The fact that Othniel, whether he were brother or nephew of Caleb, was the first judge of Israel, shows that Chushan's oppression came not long after the death of Joshua.

10. **The Spirit of the Lord came upon him**—This expression occurs six times in this book, and is by no means equivalent to the New Testament "gift of the Holy Ghost;" nor can it be used as certain proof of great spiritual purity or eminent piety in him to whom it is referred. It designates the sudden divine impulse that quickened the heroes of this age to marvellous feats of valour, and was chiefly of a physical and psychical character. It denotes the supernatural influence that thrilled all the heroic passions of the soul, and always led to deeds of bravery and power. Thus it is used

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

**12** And the children of Israel did evil again in the sight of the LORD: and the LORD strengthened Eglon the king

q Chap. 2. 19. —r 1 Sam. 12. 9.

of the supernatural impulse that led Gideon to blow the trumpet and assemble the people for war, (vi, 34;) that inspired Jephthah to lead his army against Ammon, (xi, 29;) that moved Samson to his early feats of strength, (xiii, 25,) and to rend the young lion of Timnath, (xiv, 6,) and to slay the thirty men of Ashkelon, (xiv, 19.) In Othniel's case it seems to denote the divine guidance by which he both judged and fought. His high natural qualities, love of justice, love of country, courage, and military skill, were crowned with an unwavering faith in God, breathed into his soul by the Holy Spirit. There can be no great warrior and national saviour without a large infusion of the religious element into his nature. **He judged Israel**—He was born to command. His generation of Hebrews yielded him instinctive and unquestioning obedience. The spirit which he infused into them, and the trust which he reposed in God, together with the unanimity of the nation in rallying to his standard, were sufficient *credenda* of his divine vocation to the leadership of Israel. He judged not in the narrow, technical sense, but he administered the military and civil government of the theocracy.

**11. Forty years**—This long period of peace and independence was necessary to the development of the nation. **Othniel... died**—How remarkable the fact that a nation may be held back for nearly a half century from rebellion against God by the influence of a faithful ruler. It is not necessary to suppose that Othniel lived during all the forty years of rest. His influence may have held the people in check long after he was dead, and ever after those years of rest were associated with his name. Few individuals or nations, however, can endure undisturbed prosperity without damage to their moral character.

of Moab against Israel, because they had done evil in the sight of the LORD. **13** And he gathered unto him the children of Ammon and Amalek, and went and smote Israel, and possessed the

s Chap. 5. 14.—t Chap. 1. 6.

MOABITISH OPPRESSION, AND THE DELIVERANCE BY EHUD, 12-30.

**12. The Lord strengthened Eglon**—Or, as some explain, *encouraged Eglon*. He inspired him with zeal and consciousness of ability to vanquish Israel. Jehovah did this, not because Eglon was the righteous king of a righteous nation, but because he wished to use him as an instrument for the punishment of Israel. All that is known of Eglon and his rule over Israel is recorded in this passage of Holy Scripture. The archives of Moab have been destroyed for thousands of years; the word of the Lord endureth for ever. **Moab**—This nation occupied the territory east of the Dead Sea and south of the Arnon river.

**13. And he gathered**—Not the Lord, but Eglon gathered unto himself, (see Sept.,) and **went and smote, and possessed. Ammon** was an incestuous child of Lot by his younger, as Moab was by his elder, daughter. These two nations were intimately related through their entire biblical history. The Ammonites cannot be very exactly located. They seem to have been migratory and predatory, like the modern Bedouins, and hence ready to join the Moabites in a war with Israel. See on Josh. xii, 2. **Amalek**—A nomadic tribe occupying the peninsula of Sinai and the wilderness stretching away to the hill country of Southern Palestine. They dwindled into a band of robbers, and were destroyed by David at Ziklag. 1 Sam. xxx, 16-19. See more on chap. vi, 3; Gen. xiv, 7; Exod. xvii, 8. **The city of palm trees**—Jericho was so called because of the groves of palms in its vicinity. See on Josh. ii, 1. According to Josephus, the course of Eglon's conquest was first to gain dominion over the eastern tribes, a portion of whose land had been wrested

city of palm trees. **14** So the children of Israel <sup>served</sup> Eglon the king of Moab eighteen years. **15** But when the children of Israel <sup>cried</sup> unto the LORD, the LORD raised them up a deliverer; Ehud the son of Gera, <sup>a</sup> Benjamite, a man <sup>left-handed</sup>: and by him the children of Israel sent a present unto Eglon the king of Moab. **16** But Ehud made him a dagger which had two edges, of a cubit length; and he

<sup>u</sup> Deut. 28, 48.—<sup>v</sup> Ver. 9: Psa. 78, 34.—<sup>5</sup> Or, the son of Gemini.—<sup>6</sup> Heb. *shut of his right*

from his ancestors, then to make a sudden incursion into Western Palestine, establishing his headquarters at Jericho, the key of the whole country. Here, according to Josephus, he built a royal palace, and at this place he was assassinated by Ehud.

**14. Served Eglon.**—That is, were tributary. Verse 8, note. **Eighteen years.**—We cannot estimate the length of the period of Israel's idolatry from the duration of their punishment. Men are often imprisoned for life for crimes committed in a minute.

**15. Cried unto the Lord.**—History repeats itself, because like causes produce like effects. A second oppression calls forth a second cry. **Left-handed.**—Heb. *lamed* (margin, *shut*) in the right hand. The Septuagint reads, *ἀμφοτεροδέξιον*, which is well translated in the Vulgate by, *who used either hand for a right hand*. "The phrase," says Hervey, "must originally have described an accidental defect; but when we read of seven hundred chosen men of Benjamin all left-handed, (chap. xx, 16; 1 Chron. xii, 2,) and skilful slingers, it is obvious that this was no accidental defect, but an acquired art." The name Benjamin, *son of my right hand*, seems to have been a misnomer in the case of his numerous left-handed progeny. **A present unto Eglon.**—Either the annual tribute, brought with formality and parade, or a gratuity, to soften the severity of Eglon.

**16. Of a cubit length.**—The Hebrew *gomed*, here rendered *cubit*, means a *span*, (Septuagint,) or a *hand's length*, (Vulgate.) It occurs nowhere else in Scripture. Luther translates it *an elle*—

did gird it under his raiment upon his right thigh. **17** And he brought the present unto Eglon king of Moab: and Eglon *was* <sup>a</sup> a very fat man. **18** And when he had made an end to offer the present, he sent away the people that bare the present. **19** But he himself turned again <sup>from the</sup> quarries that were by Gilgal, and said, I have a secret errand unto thee, O king: who said, Keep silence. And all that stood

*hand*, chap. 20, 16.—<sup>w</sup> Jer. 5, 28.—<sup>x</sup> Josh. 4, 20.—<sup>7</sup> Or, *graven images*.

twenty-three inches, a dagger too long to be hidden on the thigh. **Upon his right thigh.**—Where it would not be looked for by the king, and yet where it could be most easily unsheathed with the left hand.

**18. The people that bare the present.**—Eastern style required quite a pompous retinue to bring a gift to a distinguished person. See 2 Kings v, 15.

**19. He himself turned again.**—At the ceremony of offering the present to Eglon "Ehud had no opportunity to attempt anything, for he neither came near the king nor saw him alone; nor yet was he willing, among so many bystanders, to involve his companions in the consequences of a possible failure. On the contrary, he accompanied them back to the border, in order to be sure that he was alone when making the dangerous attempt."—*Cassel*. **The quarries.**—Our version follows the Chaldee in this rendering of the Hebrew word *פסילים*, *pesilim*, and Keil adopts this interpretation. But the word elsewhere always means *graven images*, or *idols*, and so the Septuagint and Vulgate here translate it. These *pesilim* were graven images set up by Gilgal, probably by the Moabites, to commemorate their conquests in that part of Palestine. It would especially vex and trouble the better part of Israel to have the site of their ancient camp profaned by idolatrous images. Some suggest that the sight of these images nerved Ehud for his daring work. **A secret errand.**—Ehud affects to be Eglon's friend, and seems to the king to have gone to such pains to favour him with a secret that his

by him went out from him. **20** And Ehud came unto him; and he was sitting in "a summer parlour, which he had for himself alone: and Ehud said, I have a message from God unto thee. And he arose out of *his* seat. **21** And Ehud put forth his left hand, and took the dagger from his right thigh, and thrust it into his belly: **22** And the haft also went in after the blade; and the fat closed upon the blade, so that he could not draw the dagger out of his belly; and the dirt came out. **23** Then Ehud

went forth through the porch, and shut the doors of the parlour upon him, and locked them. **24** When he was gone out, his servants came; and when they saw that, behold, the doors of the parlour *were* locked, they said, Surely he <sup>10</sup>covereth his feet in his summer chamber. **25** And they tarried till they were ashamed: and, behold, he opened not the doors of the parlour: therefore they took a key, and opened *them*: and, behold, their lord *was* fallen down dead on the earth. **26** And Ehud escaped

<sup>8</sup> Heb. *a parlour of cooling*, see Amos 3. 15.  
<sup>9</sup> Num. 25. 7. 8; Zech. 13. 3.

<sup>9</sup> Or, *it came out at the fundament*.—<sup>10</sup> Or, *doeth his easement*, 1 Sam. 24. 3.

deadly purpose is not suspected. **Keep silence**—דָּחַ, *hist! hush!* To the king's attendants it implied that they should leave the room.

**20. Summer parlour**—Literally, a loft for cooling; an *alijah*, or upper chamber, which served both for retirement and coolness. "The alijah," says Thomson, "is the most desirable part of the establishment, and is best fitted up, and is still given to guests who are to be treated with honour." See note on 2 Kings iv, 10; 1 Kings xvii, 19. **For himself alone**—For his own private comfort and refreshment. Eglon's private room opened into a hall, and the hall had a porch. See on verse 22.

**A message from God**—Literally, *a word of God*; a bitter irony to designate the deadly dagger. Every act and word of Ehud seems to have disarmed the king of all suspicion of danger. **He arose**—Out of reverence for God, whose ambassador he supposed stood before him. The upright posture of his victim was more favourable to the purpose of Ehud.

**22. The dirt came out**—The meaning of the word translated *dirt* is quite uncertain. The English version errs in making פֶּרֶשְׁדוֹנָה, *parshedonah*, rendered *the dirt*, the subject of the verb *came out*; for, as Gesenius says, "the *He paragoric* implies rather the place to which a thing comes out." It seems, therefore, better to understand this obscure word as denoting either the place on Eglon's body where the blade of Ehud's dagger came out, or else an

apartment of Eglon's palace into which Ehud came out. This latter is, perhaps, preferable. Three apartments seem to be mentioned: the private *parlour*, (verse 20,) the hall, and the *porch*, (verse 23.) Having buried his dagger in Eglon's body, Ehud went out through the hall and porch, and so escaped. Bachmann thinks the *parshedonah* was a *flat roof*, upon which Ehud came out from the chamber where he assassinated Eglon, and that it is further defined by the word *porch*, in the next verse, which, in his view, means not an ordinary porch, but the platform of the roof, enclosed by lattice work.

**23. Locked them**—The lock was, probably, a simple slide of wood or iron, which might have been fastened by one going out, by pulling a string, so as to throw it into a catch or socket; but which could be unfastened from the outside only by a key. Verse 25.



EGYPTIAN KEY.

**24. He covereth his feet**—A euphemism for attention to a call of nature. See note on 1 Sam. xxiv, 3.

**25. Took a key**—See on verse 23. **Dead on the earth**—That is, on the floor of his chamber. Perhaps the fatal thrust of Ehud's dagger had not produced instant death, but had so far disabled the king that he could not raise an alarm. He was found dead.

**26. Seirath** is unknown. Its name indicates that it was a wooded district of Mount Ephraim.

while they tarried, and passed beyond the quarries, and escaped unto Seirath. **27** And it came to pass, when he was come, that <sup>a</sup>he blew a trumpet in the <sup>a</sup>mountain of Ephraim, and the children of Israel went down with him from the mount, and he before them. **28** And he said unto them, Follow after me:

c Chap. 5. 14; 6. 84; 1 Sam. 13. 3.—a Josh. 17. 15; chap. 7. 24; 17. 1; 19. 1.

**27. Blew a trumpet**—The alarm-signal to call a people rapidly together. Compare chap. vi. 34; 1 Sam. xiii. 3; 2 Sam. xx. 1; 1 Kings i. 34. Thus Joel, (ii. 1,) "Blow ye the trumpet in Zion, and sound an alarm in my holy mountain." **Mountain of Ephraim**—See on chap. xvii. 1, and Josh. xvii. 15. Ehud does not first rally his own tribe to his standard, because Benjamin had at this time been almost annihilated by the other tribes. Chapters xix-xxi.

**28. Took the fords of Jordan toward Moab**—That is, the fords by which the Moabites stationed at Jericho must pass to escape to their own land, on the east of the Jordan. Eglon occupied Jericho, and had built a palace there, (see note on verse 13.) and had ~~ten~~ thousand men (verse 29) with him. It was of the first importance for the Israelites to get possession of these fords, and thus cut off the retreat of the Moabite army to the eastern side of the Jordan.

**29. About ten thousand men**—The slaughter of these picked troops did not, probably, occur in one day, but in the course of this short, sharp, and decisive campaign. It was not customary to take prisoners in the battles of those days. **All lusty**—Fat, stout, robust men. The Moabite warriors seem to have been, like their king, (verse 17,) large, corpulent men.

As this is the last mention of Ehud, it is proper here to inquire into the moral character of that act which made him prominent in the delivery of Israel. It is both superfluous and unwarrantable to say, as some do, that Ehud's deed was done under a special impulse or inspiration from the Almighty. There is nothing in the nar-

for <sup>b</sup>the Lord hath delivered your enemies the Moabites into your hand. And they went down after him, and took <sup>c</sup>the fords of Jordan toward Moab, and suffered not a man to pass over. **29** And they slew of Moab at that time about ten thousand men, all <sup>d</sup>lusty, and all men of valour; and there escaped

b Chap. 7. 9, 15; 1 Sam. 17. 47.—c Josh. 2. 7; chap. 12. 5.—d Heb. *fat*.

ative to justify such an opinion. It is not even said that the Spirit of the Lord came upon Ehud; nor does it follow that because God raised him up to deliver Israel, Divine Wisdom directed and approved all the measures he used in order to effect that object. Least of all is it supposable that Ehud's acts in this case, whether in themselves censurable or not, are a precedent and worthy example for all times and all circumstances.

But let it once be noted that Eglon and the Moabites were now accursed of God, and ripe for judgment, and that Ehud both knew this fact and also that he himself was the divinely chosen minister of vengeance, and there is no need of criticising the morality of his deed, or of justifying it by a supposed special impulse of the Spirit. Verses 15 and 28 contain sufficient evidence to show that Ehud understood his divine commission as deliverer of Israel, and that the Moabitish oppression was about to be broken. Beyond this we do not suppose God gave him any special revelations or commands, but left him to the choice of such measures and plans of conquest as his own judgment and skill might devise. Viewed in this light, the murder of Eglon was as justifiable as the slaughter of the ten thousand Moabites. Verse 29. Ehud's deed was but the first stroke of Divine judgment that fell on the idolatrous kingdom, and may be compared to the slaughter of Agag by the hand of Samuel. 1 Sam. xv. 33. Samuel's act was an after stroke of judgment, done to complete the curse of Amalek: Ehud's was the first stroke, and so had more of the character of a stratagem of war. The acts of



not a man. **30** So Moab was subdued that day under the hand of Israel. And 'the land had rest fourscore years.

**31** And after him was 'Shamgar the son of Anath, which slew of the Philistines six hundred men 'with an oxgoad: 'and he also delivered Israel.

*d* Verse 11.—*e* Chap. 5. 6, 8; 1 Sam. 13. 19, 22.  
*f* 1 Sam. 17. 47, 50.—*g* Chap. 2. 16.

violence, barbarity, treachery, and deception common in war can never be justified on subjective grounds. So far as they are a part of war itself, they are not to be judged singly and apart from the moral issues involved in the war. Their apology or justification, if any is asked for, is to be found in that which justified the war itself. Compare the note on Jael's deed at the close of chap. iv.

#### EXPLOITS OF SHAMGAR, 31.

**31. Shamgar**—His tribe is not known, but it is probable that he belonged to a tribe bordering on the Philistines—Judah, Simeon, or Dan. The particulars of this Philistine oppression are unknown, but the fact here recorded shows that these enemies of the sea-coast had troubled Israel before the days of Samson. **Which slew**—We are not to suppose that he slew, or *smote*, all these six hundred on one occasion, or one day; nor is it necessary to maintain that he performed the feat without any assistance. **Oxgoad**—*מלמד*—The Septuagint and Vulgate render this word *ploughshare*. The oxgoad was about eight feet long and six inches in circumference, at one end pointed with iron, and at the other having an iron paddle for removing dirt from the plough. Why Shamgar had no better weapon we do not know, unless it be because the Philistines had conquered a part of Israel and disarmed them. Compare chap. v, 8, and 1 Sam. xiii, 19. Perhaps he was attacked in the field while ploughing, and made a brave defence with the utensil in his hand.

#### CHAPTER IV.

**AND** 'the children of Israel again did evil in the sight of the LORD, when Ehud was dead. **2** And the LORD 'sold them into the hand of Jabin king of Canaan, that reigned in 'Hazor; the captain of whose host *was* 'Sisera, which

*a* Chap. 2. 19.—*b* Chap. 2. 14.—*c* Josh. 11. 1, 10; 19. 36.—*d* 1 Sam. 12. 9; Psa. 82. 9.

#### CHAPTER IV.

JABIN'S OPPRESSION, AND THE DELIVERANCE BY DEBORAH AND BARAK, 1–24.

The historical narrative contained in this chapter, and the triumphal song that follows, inform us of the most fearful oppression and the most remarkable triumph of the age of the Judges.

**1. Again did evil...when Ehud was dead**—A clear intimation that as long as Ehud lived his influence kept the people from idolatry, as well as that his strong arm had delivered them from the power of their enemies.

**2. Sold them**—See note on chap. ii, 14. **Jabin king of Canaan**—This powerful monarch was probably a descendant of the Jabin who headed the confederacy of the northern Canaanites against Joshua, but who was signally defeated by that great conqueror. Josh. xi, 1–15. He had taken advantage of Israel's many oppressions, and gradually strengthened his power in the north, and enlarged his kingdom, until he could send into the field a vast army with nearly a thousand iron chariots. Verse 3. Having reduced all Israel to the most servile subjection, he was virtually ruler of the whole land, and called **king of Canaan**. The name **Jabin** was probably a royal title of the kings that reigned in **Hazor**. On this capital, see note at Josh. xi, 1. **Captain...Sisera**—Jabin, like Abimelech, (Gen. xxi, 22,) had a **captain**, or general, to command his army. Most of the kings of that time commanded their armies in person. Doubtless Sisera's great military skill and sagacity had won him this honour. The famous Rabbi Akiba is said to have descended from this Canaanite general. **Harosheth**—"About eight miles from Megiddo, at the entrance of the pass to

dwelt in 'Harosheth of the Gentiles. **3** And the children of Israel cried unto the Lord: for he had nine hundred 'chariots of iron; and twenty years 'he mightily oppressed the children of Israel. **4** And Deborah, a prophetess, the wife of Lapidoth, she judged Israel

e Verses 13, 15. — f Chap. 1, 19. — g Chap. 5, 8; Psal. 106, 42.

Esdraelon from the plain of Acre, is an enormous double mound called Harotlieh. It is still covered with the remains of old walls and buildings. It was probably called **Harosheth of the Gentiles**, or *nations*, because it belonged to those Gentiles of Acre and the neighbouring plains which we know, from Judges i, 31, the Hebrews could not subdue."—*Thomson*.

**3. Israel cried**—Compare chap. iii, 9, 15, note. **Nine hundred chariots**—The Jabin with whom Joshua fought had also many chariots. For cut of ancient war chariot, see at Josh. xi, 4.

**4. Deborah, a prophetess**—One of the most celebrated women and most remarkable characters of the Old Testament. The title **prophetess** indicates her possession of a divine gift which exalted her above the dignity of a military commander, and made her an oracle to whom the people came for counsel. Rebecca's nurse had borne her name, (Gen. xxxv, 8,) and Moses' sister Miriam had possessed the spirit of prophecy (Exod. xv, 20) ages before this date, but never before had a woman appeared who combined in herself such wisdom, authority, and power as this "mother in Israel." The manly energy and spirit of the nation had almost expired, when a woman appeared to be the saviour. Joan of Arc may be cited as a somewhat singular parallel to Deborah in modern history. No great and noble act which she has power to do is out of woman's sphere.

**Wife of Lapidoth**—The versions and most interpreters take *Lapidoth* as a proper name, and understand it of Deborah's husband, and this is the most natural and simple explanation. Others translate the word as the plural of *lucid*, a lamp and render, a woman of lights or of splendours, thus poetically

at that time. **5** 'And she dwelt under the palm tree of Deborah, between Ramah and Beth-el in mount Ephraim: and the children of Israel came up to her for judgment. **6** And she sent and called 'Barak the son of Abinoam out of Kedesh-naphtali, and said unto him,

h Gen. 35, 8. — i Heb. 11, 32. k Josh. 19, 37.

designating the brilliancy and force of her genius and power. Cassel renders, *woman of a fiery spirit*, and explains that she was a divinely-lighted torch to kindle the languid hearts of Israel. Some rabbins have thought that she was so called from having had charge of the lamps in the tabernacle. **She judged Israel**—By giving counsel and pronouncing decisions on cases that were submitted to her.

**5. Dwelt under the palm tree**—This was her official seat or throne. "She sat under a large palm, public and free, accessible to all; not like the German Velleda, who, according to Tacitus, sat in a tower, and to whom no one was admitted, in order to increase the veneration in which she was held. The palm was the common symbol of Canaan; it adorned the coins of both the Phenicians and the Jews."—*Cassel*. From its being the well known place where this prophetess judged, and being popularly called after her, it was still known to the historian as **the palm tree of Deborah**. **Between Ramah and Beth-el**—These cities fell within the territory of Ephraim, and were about six miles apart. The great mountain range in which they lay early acquired the name of **Mount Ephraim**, from its being largely allotted to that tribe. Josh. xvi. **Came up to her for judgment**—They came unto the prophetess as unto a divine oracle, seeking to know the divine will and judgment in cases of difficulty or danger.

**6. She sent and called Barak**—The prophetess has a higher divine calling and authority than the commander of the army, and, like Elisha in the war with Mesha, a later king of Moab, gives directions which the officers of the army must obey. The name **Barak** means *lightning*—appro

Hath not the LORD God of Israel commanded, *saying*, Go and draw toward mount Tabor, and take with thee ten thousand men of the children of Naphtali and of the children of Zebulun? 7 And I will draw unto thee, to the river Kishon, Sisera the captain of Jabin's army, with his chariots and his multitude; and I will deliver him into

Exod. 14. 4.—m Chap. 5. 21; 1 Kings 18. 40;

prize name for the hero of the flashing sword. **Kedesh-naphtali**—So called from being in the tribe territory of Naphtali. Josh. xix, 37. It was a city of refuge, and the sacred city of the northern tribes. Josh. xx, 7. **Hath not the Lord... commanded**—The interrogative form of expressing a most emphatic affirmation. **Draw toward**—Proceed in small companies, one after another, so as not to attract notice, or excite too sudden alarm. **Mount Tabor** is in several respects the most remarkable mountain of Palestine. It rises from the northeastern part of the great Plain of Esdraelon, and, according to Newman, its graceful form varies with the standpoint of the beholder. Viewed from the heights of Carmel, it resembles a truncated cone; as seen from the northern hills of Galilee, it reminds one of the pyramids of Egypt; from the mountains of Samaria it appears like the segment of a great circle; and from the hills just south, it is not unlike a terraced mound or woodland park. Its summit commands a magnificent view of the great Plain of Jezreel below, which from the time of Deborah and Barak has been the battlefield of the nations. The occupation of Tabor gave Barak an advantage over Sisera's forces, which were at Harosheth, near the mouth of the Kishon valley, and must approach to meet him in the plain below. **Ten thousand men**—An even number, to indicate approximately the force required. It was not to be too large, so as to be unwieldy; nor too small, so as to lack the force and enthusiasm of a considerable host. **Of... Naphtali and... Zebulun**—These tribes, who had chiefly felt the bitter oppression of Jabin, braved most, and probably suffered

thine hand. 8 And Barak said unto her, "If thou wilt go with me, then I will go: but if thou wilt not go with me, *then* I will not go." 9 And she said, I will surely go with thee: notwithstanding the journey that thou takest shall not be for thine honour; for the Lord shall sell Sisera into the hand of a woman. And Deborah arose, and

Psa. 88. 9, 10.—n Exod. 4. 10, 14.—o Chap. 2. 14.

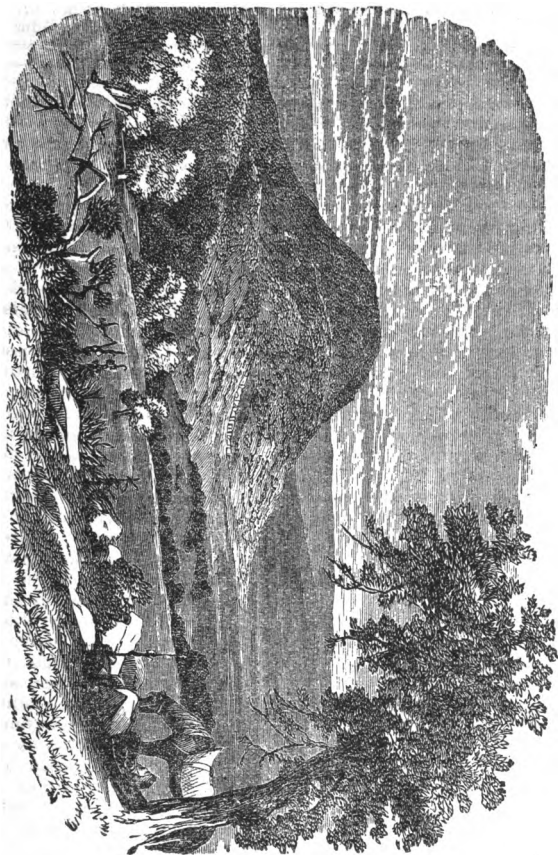
most, in this war. Comp. note on chap. v, 18. These tribes, too, were nearest to the field of battle, and most readily summoned by Barak, whose home was in Naphtali.

7. **I will draw unto thee... Sisera**—She speaks in the name of Jehovah, who has power to influence human hearts, and turn them whithersoever he will. **River Kishon**—See on chap. v, 21. **With his chariots**—Rather, *and his chariots*. Jehovah disposed the events and controlled the issues of this war so as to bring victory to his people. In drawing Sisera's hosts and chariots towards Barak, and along the Kishon, Jehovah prepared the way for their utter ruin by means of the driving tempest and the swelling flood. Compare chap. v, 4, 5, 20–22.

8. **If thou wilt not go with me, then I will not go**—The great general at once recognizes that Jehovah speaks in Deborah, and that as messenger of God she is not only his own superior, but her presence the pledge of his success. Pausanias says, that in the Messinian war "The soldiers fought bravely because their seers were present."

9. **Not be for thine honour**—The honour would go to Jehovah as the author, and to a woman as the instrument. No one, indeed, could say, "No thanks to Barak," for he bravely led the hosts to battle; but how immensely greater his honour had he gone without the prophetess, trusting solely in the word and power of his God! **Sell Sisera into the hand of a woman**—The victory will be ascribed to Deborah rather than to Barak, and Sisera will fall by a woman's hand, even by the hand of Jael, the wife of Heber. Verse 21. Thus Barak suffered loss of honour in that Deborah,

Mount Tabor.



went with Barak to Kedesh. **10** And Barak called <sup>p</sup> Zebulun and Naphtali to Kedesh; and he went up with ten thousand men <sup>a</sup> at his feet: and Deborah went up with him. **11** Now Heber <sup>a</sup> the Kenite, *which was* of the children of <sup>a</sup> Hobab the father in law of Moses, had severed himself from the Kenites, and pitched his tent unto the plain of Zaanaim, <sup>a</sup> which is by Kedesh. **12** And they showed Sisera that Barak the son of Abinoam was gone up to mount Tabor. **13** And Sisera <sup>a</sup> gathered together all his chariots, *even* nine hundred char-

lots of iron, and all the people that *were* with him, from Harosheth of the Gentiles unto the river of Kishon. **14** And Deborah said unto Barak, Up; for this *is* the day in which the Lord hath delivered Sisera into thine hand: "is not the Lord gone out before thee? So Barak went down from mount Tabor, and ten thousand men after him. **15** And <sup>a</sup> the Lord discomfited Sisera, and all *his* chariots, and all *his* host, with the edge of the sword before Barak; so that Sisera lighted down off *his* chariot, and fled away on his feet. **16** But Barak

<sup>p</sup> Chapter 5. 18.—<sup>a</sup> Exodus 11. 8; 1 Kings 20. 10.—<sup>r</sup> Chapter 1. 16.—<sup>a</sup> Numbers 10. 29. <sup>t</sup> Verse 6.—<sup>l</sup> Hebrew, *gathered by cry*, or,

*proclamation*.—<sup>u</sup> Deuteronomy 9. 3; 2 Samuel 5. 24; Psalm 68. 7; Isaiah 52. 12.—<sup>c</sup> Psalm 83. 9, 10; see Joshua 10. 10.

in a general sense, and Jael more particularly, robbed him of this crown. This prophecy, that Sisera was to fall by a woman's hand, was probably noised abroad, and reached the ears of Heber's wife. **Went with Barak**—"For the sake of the great national cause she leaves her peaceful palm, and by her readiness to share in every danger evidences the truth of her announcements."—*Cassel*. **To Kedesh**—The house of Barak, and the rendezvous of the northern tribes. Verse 6.

**10. Ten thousand men at his feet**—That is, following after him as their leader. Compare Exod. xi, 8. Barak's soldiers were all footmen; he had no chariots.

**11. The Kenite**—On the Kenites, see note at chap. i, 16. The Hebrew reads, *And Heber the Kenite had separated himself from Kain, of the sons of Hobab*. Heber's emigration from the wilderness south of Arad, and his settlement here near Kedesh, is introduced at this point to prepare the reader for what follows in verses 17-22. **Hobab**—See at Num. x, 29. **Father in law of Moses**—In Numbers he is called *the son of Raguel*, (Raguel or Reuel is the same person as Jethro: compare Exod. ii, 18, with iii, 1,) and that is probably the more accurate statement. In this merely casual reference the writer does not pause for exact and detailed statements. According to Cassel "*התן*" means to contract affinity by marriage; and just as

in German *schwücker* (father in law) and *schwager* (brother in law) are at bottom one, so the Hebrew *התן* may

stand for both father in law and brother in law." **The plain of Zaanaim**—Rather, *the oak in Zaanaim*. The *Zaanannim* of Josh. xix, 33, was probably the same place. "The *oak* was probably some noted tree, perhaps a patriarch in a sacred grove, beneath or around which the nomad shepherds of those days were accustomed to pitch their tents, as Abraham pitched his by the oak of Mamre. The green pastures which abound around the ruins of Kedesh are studded to this day with large oak trees; and the writer has seen, at more than one place, the black tents of the nomad Turkman pitched beneath them. The name Zaanaim, which appears to signify *removings*, (as if a camping ground,) has passed away; at least no trace of it has been discovered."—*Porter*.

**15. The Lord discomfited Sisera**—Confused and confounded him, and gave such an impulse to the warriors of Barak that the vigorous use of their *swords* was more terrible than Jabin's chariots, and filled all the Canaanitish host with such sudden alarm that they fled panicstricken before the Israelites. There was also direct miraculous interposition. "They fought from heaven," says chap. v, 20, and Josephus states that there came a violent tempest and hail, which so obscured the eyes of Sisera's host that they could not use their arrows and slings, and

pursued after the chariots, and after the host, unto Harosheth of the Gentiles: and all the host of Sisera fell upon the edge of the sword; and there was not a man left. 17 Howbeit Sisera fled away on his feet to the tent of Jael the

wife of Heber the Kenite: for there was peace between Jabin the king of Hazor and the house of Heber the Kenite. 18 And Jael went out to meet Sisera, and said unto him, Turn in, my lord, turn in to me; fear not. And when he

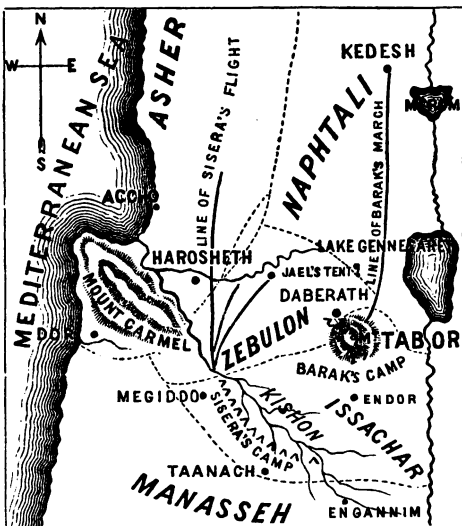
2 Heb.

unto one.

many were killed by their own horses and chariots. The rain had swelled the Kishon to a flood, so that its rushing waters swept multitudes away. Chap. v, 21. The flight of the defeated host would naturally be down the valley towards Harosheth. **Sisera lighted**—Hoping, probably, to elude pursuit.

16. **Barak pursued**—The footmen had the advantage of the enemy's chariots, which, after the rain, must have stuck in the softened soil. **Not a man left**—A hyperbolic expression to denote the utter ruin of Sisera's army. Chap. v, 12, intimates that some captives were taken.

17. **Tent of Jael**—According to Dr. Thomson, Heber had removed for the time from his home near Kedesh, and pitched his tent for winter quarters at the border of the Plain of Esdraelon. Hence the tent of Jael was not so far from the battle field as Kedesh, which was nearly two days' journey distant. "I once," says Thomson, "crossed the lower part of Esdraelon in the winter. It was then full of Arab tents, and at first I felt a little nervous; but my guide assured me there was no danger, for he was well acquainted with these Arabs. Their home was in the mountains north of Nazareth, and they only came down here to pass the cold months of winter. This was the very thing that Heber did, and who knows but these Arabs are lineal descendants of that heroic Jael." **Peace between Jabin... and... Heber**—This shows why Sisera so readily



entered Jael's tent, and seemed to have such confidence in her. He was probably acquainted with Jael, and knew of Heber's alliance with Jabin, and fled to her tent with the purpose and expectation of being sheltered there.

18. **Jael went out to meet him**—It is probable that tidings of Sisera's defeat and Israel's great victory had already reached her by some swift-footed fugitive, and she was looking out for further news, when lo! Sisera himself came rushing towards her tent. We understand that, being acquainted with Deborah's prediction, (verse 9,) she planned the murder of Sisera as soon as she saw him flying towards her, the conviction flashing that moment upon her that hers was the woman's hand by whom the Canaanitish chief should fall. See note at the end of the chapter.

had turned in unto her into the tent, she covered him with a \*mantle. **19** And he said unto her, Give me, I pray thee, a little water to drink; for I am thirsty. And she opened \*a bottle of milk, and gave him drink, and covered him. **20** Again he said unto her, Stand in the door of the tent, and it shall be, when any man doth come and inquire of thee, and say, \*Is there any man here? that thou shalt say, No. **21** Then Jael Heber's wife \*took a nail of the tent, and \*took a hammer in her hand, and went

8 Or, rug, or, blanket.—*v* Chap. 5. 25.  
 2 Josh. 2. 3, 5; 2 Sam. 17. 20.

**19. A bottle of milk**—"He asked water and she gave him milk." Chap. v, 25. Josephus states that it was milk already sour. Sour or curdled milk (*lebban*) is still a common and favourite drink among the Arabs. Thus Jael satisfied Sisera's thirst by giving him a drink esteemed better than water, and by such apparent kindness allayed suspicion.

**20. Thou shalt say, No**—On these words Bush has the following: "The custom adopted in some families of instructing servants to say, 'Not at home,' when a master or mistress does not wish to receive company, is directly at variance with the dictates of Christian simplicity and sincerity; nor is it anything in its favour that it here has the sanction of a wicked heathen warrior, doomed to destruction." On the morality of Jael's action, see at the end of the chapter.

**21. A nail of the tent**—Or, a tent-pin, sometimes made of iron, but commonly of wood, to which, when driven into the ground, the ropes of a tent are fastened. "The nail which Jael used was a tent-pin, now, as then, called *wated*, and the hammer was the mallet with which it is driven into the ground. It is not necessary to suppose that either of them were of iron. The *wated* was probably a sharp-pointed pin of hard wood, and the hammer was the ordinary mallet used by these tent-dwelling Arabs."—*Thomson*. **Smote the nail into his temples**—Stanley thus pictures this scene: "Her attitude, her weapon, her deed, are described both in the historic and poetic

softly unto him, and smote the nail into his temples, and fastened it into the ground: for he was fast asleep and weary. \*So he died. **22** And, behold, as Barak pursued Sisera, Jael came out to meet him, and said unto him, Come, and I will show thee the man whom thou seekest. And when he came into her tent, behold, Sisera lay dead, and the nail *was* in his temples. **23** So \*God subdued on that day Jabin the king of Canaan before the children of Israel. **24** And the hand of the chil-

*v* Chap. 5. 26.—4 Heb. put.—*s* Chap. 5. 27.  
 a Psa. 18. 47; 1 Chron. 22. 18.

account of the event, as if fixed in the national mind. She stands like the personification of the figure of speech so famous in the names of Judas the *Maccabee*, (the Hebrew word for hammer is *maccab*,) and Charles *Martel*—the Hammer of her country's enemies. Step by step we see her advance: first, the dead silence with which she approaches the sleeper, slumbering with the weariness of one who has run far and fast; then the successive blows with which she hammers, crushes, beats, and pierces through and through the forehead of the upturned face, till the point of the nail reaches the very ground on which the slumberer is stretched; and then comes the one startling bound, the contortion or agony with which the expiring man rolls over from the low divan, and lies weltering in blood between her feet as she strides over the lifeless corpse."

**Fastened it into the ground**—Rather, *it went down into the ground*; the tent pin passed through his head so as to reach to the very earth beneath him. **For he was fast asleep and weary**—This statement is parenthetical, showing how it was practicable for Jael to dispatch Sisera in the way she did. Compare the poetical description in chap. v, 26, 27.

**22. Behold, Sisera lay dead**—As Barak gazed on the bloody sight, and saw that Sisera had perished by a woman's hand, he realized the fulfilment of Deborah's words, (verse 9.) "The journey shall not be for thine honour, for the Lord shall sell Sisera into the hand of a woman."

children of Israel prospered, and prevailed against Jabin the king of Canaan,

5 Heb. *going went,*

**24. Prospered...prevailed...destroyed**—Compare marginal reading. "The meaning is, that Barak's great victory was the beginning of a successful resistance to Jabin, by which the Israelites recovered their independence, and finally broke the Canaanite power. Accordingly we hear no more of Canaanite dominion in the Book of Judges."

—*Hervey.*

The morality of Jael's deed has been, of course, the subject of many a dissertation. The enemies of the Bible would fain use it to throw reproach on the sacred history; and as both Jael and her deed are evidently praised by an inspired poetess, in chap. v, 24-27, the friends of truth have sought in various ways to show how such praise might be compatible with the apparent wickedness of Jael's act. It is claimed that her deed violated all the proper usages of war. A fugitive chieftain, an ally of her husband, defeated and almost exhausted, sought protection in her tent, and received from her more than the common tokens of security. But, in violation of the sacred rites of hospitality, she murdered in his sleep her confiding and unprotected guest. This surely makes up a dark picture; but it is one sided, and overdrawn by magnifying certain points at the expense of others which are equally prominent in the sacred history. The whole subject may be relieved of difficulty by attention to the following considerations.

1. Though Heber was at peace with Jabin, and neutral in this war, there were circumstances in view of which Jael might not have felt herself bound to observe at this time the treaty of her husband. She was, perhaps, an Israelitess; but if not, her husband's family were historically identified with the interests of Israel. She had before her eyes abundant evidence that Jabin's power was utterly broken and annihilated in all that region where Heber had his home. She could not but feel, therefore, that her husband's alliance with Jabin was no longer

until they had destroyed Jabin king of Canaan.

and was hard.

binding. "Israel's freedom is her freedom; Israel's glory her glory. Shall she be idle when the tyrant gives himself up into her hands? What if she saves him? Will it not be treason on her part against the ancient covenant with Israel? The conflict in which she finds herself is great, and none but a great and powerful soul could end it as she does. She scorns the reward which Sisera's safety might, perhaps, have brought her. She takes the nobler object into consideration—the freedom of a kindred nation—and the older right preponderates. A ruthless warrior is before her, the violator of a thousand laws of right, and all hesitation vanishes."—*Cassel.*

2. The prophecy of Deborah, that Sisera was to fall by a woman's hand, (verse 9,) was probably known to Jael. She had not been personally designated as that woman, but when she saw Sisera flying on foot and alone, and coming towards her tent, the thought might naturally have flashed upon her mind that she herself was the divinely appointed instrument.

3. In verse 19 we are expressly told that Jael went out to meet Sisera, and urged him to come in. Now suppose that upon his approach she had not gone forth to meet him, but, like the woman of Thebez who killed Abimelech, (chap. ix, 53,) had broken his skull with a stone, or even had suddenly rushed forth and thrust a dagger to his heart, who would have charged her with gross wickedness? But if it was her purpose, from the moment she first saw him running towards her, to destroy him, then where appears so much guilt and wickedness as is pretended, merely in the means she used? She probably knew no other way to ensure his destruction by her own hand. Her tent afforded no height from which to crush him with a stone, and to rush forth and attack him in single combat would have been to expose herself to needless danger, if not to certain death. She therefore strategically drew him as



into a snare and killed him. Once grant that his destruction was her settled purpose from the beginning, based on her knowledge of Deborah's prophecy, and the measures she used were but the stratagems of battle. Her deed receives all its glory and significance from the war, with which it is ever to be associated; and what are artifice and stratagem but legitimate parts of war? Who blames the artifice by which Ai was taken when once he sees that its destruction was the will of God? The ability of the greatest generals is often seen more in their skill to deceive and entrap the foe than in their prowess in battle; and, in verse 20, Sisera orders her to lie, and thus deceive his pursuers.

4. As for Deborah's praise of Jael's deed, a clew is furnished in the closing verse of her song, (chap. v, 31,) "So perish all thy enemies, Jehovah." It is to be explained, like the vindictive Psalms, from the standpoint of the Divine administration. "It is not the poetess, who utters a private wish of her own," says Bachmann, "but the prophetess, who utters a truth deeply grounded in the very essence of God—a weighty law of divine righteousness for all after ages to observe. Sisera's fall is regarded by her as a righteous judgment of Heaven upon one who was a foe to the name and kingdom of God." The same Spirit that could justly curse Meroz for neglect to intercept the flying foe (chap. v, 23) might well bless Jael's deed, but might as justly have cursed her had she been guilty of similar neglect. And so the whole song of Deborah breathes the noblest theocratic spirit of her age and people.

There is no need, therefore, of supposing that Deborah speaks only as the poetess, or the patriotic woman in sympathy with the fortunes of Israel; and we reject the notion of Farrar, (in Smith's Bible Dictionary,) and all similar views, that an inspired prophetess uttered this blessing "in the passionate moment of patriotic triumph," without pausing "to scrutinize the moral bearings of an act which had been so splendid a benefit to herself and her people."

## CHAPTER V.

### THE SONG OF DEBORAH, 1-31.

Among the many impassioned poems with which Hebrew literature abounds, this triumphal ode, universally known as "Deborah's Song," is one of the most splendid specimens. In it abound force, beauty, grandeur, and sublimity. Bold and startling metaphors, sudden and abrupt transitions, and occasional touches of sarcasm, most consummately set, are noticeable features of the song; and, while they serve to make the thoughts presented more impressive, often render the exposition very difficult. We have felt that no commentary based upon the common version of this chapter would meet the wants of the modern student unless accompanied by a translation more true to the sense and emotionality of the original. The late Dr. Edward Robinson said of the common English version of this song, that "in many parts it is wholly unintelligible." We therefore give underneath the text of the authorized version, and so as to be easily compared with it, a new and literal translation, in which the order and force of the Hebrew original are, as far as possible, preserved; and to save circumlocution, our notes are based on the new translation.

Cassel points out the alliteration, which he regards as an important feature of the song, and as betraying, more than any thing else, the presence of conscious art in its construction. Such alliteration is, to a certain extent, noticeable in the Hebrew text; but an attempt to transfer it into a modern version would be likely to lose somewhat in accuracy. In our own translation, however, we have preserved, at places, even this feature of the Hebrew.

The following analysis will serve to present in a condensed form the order of thought followed by the prophetess:

1. Opening hymn to Jehovah. Verses 2-5.
2. The emergency. Verses 6-8.
3. Grand triumphal chorus. Verses 9-12.
4. The gathering of the tribes to the war, with praises and reproaches according to their merits. Verses 13-18.
5. Vivid picture of the battle. Verses 19-23.
6. The ruin of the enemy. Verses 24-31.

## CHAPTER V.

**THEN** <sup>a</sup>sang Deborah and Barak the son of Abinoam on that day, saying,

**2** Praise ye the Lord for the <sup>b</sup>avenging of Israel, <sup>c</sup>when the people willingly offered themselves. **3** <sup>d</sup>Hear, O ye

**2.** For the loosing of locks in Israel,  
For the free self-offering of the people,  
Bless Jehovah!

<sup>a</sup> See Exod. 15. 1; Psa. 18, title.—<sup>b</sup> Psa. 18. 47.

<sup>c</sup> 2 Chron. 17. 16.—<sup>d</sup> Deut. 32. 1, 3; Psa. 2. 10.

**1. Then sang Deborah and Barak.**—As Moses and Miriam led Israel in singing the triumphal song of Exod. xv, so in this case Barak probably led the men, and Deborah the women, and at the appropriate periods these responded to one another. Compare also 1 Sam. xviii, 6, 7. No one will pretend that both Deborah and Barak were jointly the *authors* of this poem. An all but universal opinion ascribes it to Deborah herself, and in support of this opinion we may urge—(1.) Various evidences that it was composed by a contemporary of the scenes described. (2.) The thought, again and again suggested in the song itself, that the author was a woman. "A man," says one writer, "would have portrayed the boldest deeds of arms, the most striking scenes of the struggle, which the woman only designates by a single pencil-stroke, while she dwells with delight upon the flight of the enemy. Only a woman could praise the deed of Jael as Deborah did. To none other than a woman's mind would the cares and anxieties of the mother be suggested, as the chariot of Sisera long delayed its coming." (3.) A comparison of verses 3 and 7 clearly shows that Deborah is the professed authoress. Of all the Judges only Deborah prophesied, and she expressed herself in lyric song. And she sang, not as Miriam, who merely led the singing of a song another had composed, but as Moses, the victor, and the creator of the song. **On that day**—That day when Israel returned from the battle, flushed with enthusiasm over their great national triumph. This song was doubtless composed by the prophetess immediately after the victory, and this most naturally explains the freshness and emotionality apparent in nearly every line.

**2. For the loosing of locks**—A poetical expression denoting an act of self-consecration to God's service, and to be explained, metaphorically, as an allusion to the unrestrained growth of the locks of one who took upon himself the Nazarite vow. The Hebrew is פָּרַעַת פְּרָעוֹת, which the English version, following substantially the Syriac and Arabic, renders, *For the avenging*; Septuagint, *For the leading of the leaders*; Luther, *That Israel has again become free*. These versions represent the principal explanations of the commentators, ancient and modern, but they have received various modifications, and, of course, each different rendering has the support of certain special reasons. But they all fail in this most important particular, that they are destitute of any sure support or ground in Hebrew usage. The verb פָּרַעַת is used sixteen times in the Old Testament, and everywhere has the meaning of *loosing*, or *letting loose*, from some sort of restraint, but never, as Luther and others would have it, of the emancipation of a people from bondage. In Lev. x, 6; xiii, 45; xxi, 10; Num. v, 18, it is used of loosing the head of its covering or head-dress. In Exod. xxxii, 25, it is twice used of letting the people loose from all restraint, and giving them over to wild play and licentious revelling. Similar is the meaning in 2 Chron. xxviii, 19. In Prov. i, 25; iv, 15; viii, 33; xiii, 18; xv, 32; xxix, 18, it is used of breaking loose from, or abandoning, that which is good or evil: in Exod. v, 4, of letting a laborer loose from his allotted task; and in Ezek. xxiv, 14, of Jehovah loosing the guilty from penalty. In all these cases it is clear that the main idea of the word is that of

kings; give ear, O ye princes; I, *even I*, will sing unto the Lord; I will sing *praises* to the Lord God of Israel.

**4** LORD, "when thou wentest out of Seir, when thou marchedst out of the field of Edom, 'the earth trembled, and

3. Hear, O kings! give ear, O princes!

I to Jehovah, even I, will sing;

Will sound the harp to Jehovah, the God of Israel.

4. O Jehovah! in thy going out from Seir,

In thy marching from the field of Edom,

e Deut. 33. 2; Psa. 68. 7.—f 2 Sam. 22. 8;

Psa. 68. 8; Isa. 64. 3; Hab. 3. 3, 10.

loosing from restraint, and when used of the hair, as in our text, it naturally means letting it go loose and free from all artificial cuttings, shavings, or restraints. This was what the Nazarite did. The noun פָּרַע occurs in the

singular but twice, (Num. vi, 5; Ezek. xlv, 20,) and in both places means a *lock of hair*. This no one questions. Why, then, should the plural of the same word (occurring only here and in Deut. xxxii, 42) be rendered either *revenges*, or *leaders*, or *freemen*? The English version of Deut. xxxii, 42—the *beginning of revenges*—makes no sense at all; but *head of flowing locks*, is a most simple and natural translation of the original. We therefore translate

בְּפָרַע פָּרַעוֹת for the *loosing of locks*,

and explain with Cassel, (in Lange's *Bibelwerk*), that the expression is a poetical allusion to the unrestrained growth of the locks of a Nazarite. Of Samson it was ordered that no razor should come upon his head, (Judges xiii, 5,) and when Hannah vowed to consecrate her son to God's service she said, "No razor shall come on his head;" that is, his locks shall be left loose and free to grow. *The loosing of locks in Israel*, as expressive of a solemn act of consecration to God's service, is further explained and confirmed by the next line of the parallelism—for the *free self-offering of the people*. All the people who had taken part in this great war against the hosts of Jabin are conceived of as having taken on them a vow of consecration to Jehovah as solemn and divine as that of a Nazarite. "They were the long-haired heroes of a divine freedom." **Bless Jehovah**—For all this

blessed and glorious consecration the prophetess first bursts out in an ascription of joyful praise to Jehovah.

3. **Kings...princes**—The kings and princes of the Canaanites (and, indeed, of all the earth) are referred to, not the princes of Israel, for Israel, at this time, had no kings. The prophetess, having opened her song with an exclamation of blessing to Jehovah, now boldly calls on the heathen kings to listen to her strains of triumph, and from them take warning and instruction. Compare Psa. ii, 10. **I...even I will sing**—That is, I, Deborah; comp. verse 7. "O kings," she says, in lofty defiance, "I, even I, a feeble woman, sing a song of triumph over you." **Will sound the harp**—The original word rendered "sound the harp," is the one used for singing with an instrument. She will not only sing, but play with a stringed instrument to the Lord.

4. **Thy going out from Seir**—What going out from Seir is here meant? There is an allusion to the desert-journey of Israel, and the theophanies connected with it, especially the theophany at Sinai; and the same occurs in substance again in Psalm lxviii, 7, 8, and Hab. iii, 3, 4. That sublime theophany was the grand independence day of Israel, always fresh, and to be celebrated in the greatest of national hymns; but to explain this verse and the following as a reference exclusively to that ancient time, and as having no other application, is to meet insuperable difficulty in bringing the passage into any sort of harmony with the context. We, therefore, reject such an explanation of these words. The trembling earth, the dropping heavens, the quaking mountains, together with

the heavens dropped, the clouds also dropped water. <sup>5</sup> The mountains melted from before the LORD, *even* <sup>6</sup> that Sinai from before the LORD God

of Israel. <sup>6</sup> In the days of 'Shamgar the son of Anath, in the days of 'Jael, the highways were unoccupied, and the <sup>2</sup>travellers walked through <sup>3</sup>by-

The earth did tremble; yea, the heavens did drop:

Yea, the dark clouds dropped water.

5. The mountains quaked before Jehovah—

That Sinai before Jehovah, the God of Israel.

6. In the days of Shamgar the son of Anath,

In the days of Jael, ceased the roads,

And the travellers of highways travelled roads of crookedness.

*g* Deut. 4. 11; Psa. 97. 5; 114. 4; 144. 5; Isa. 64. 1; Jer. 4. 24; Nah. 1. 5; Hab. 3. 6.—<sup>1</sup> Heb. *flooded*.—<sup>h</sup> Exod. 19. 18.—<sup>i</sup> Chap. 3. 31.

*k* Chap. 4. 17.—<sup>l</sup> Lev. 26. 22; 2 Chron. 15. 5; Isa. 33. 8; Lam. 1. 4; 4. 18.—<sup>2</sup> Heb. *walkers of paths*.—<sup>3</sup> Heb. *crooked ways*.

the statements of verses 20 and 21 that the heavens fought, and the Kishon swept the hosts of Sisera away, all point to a terrible thunder storm which God sent on that occasion to discomfit the enemies of his people. See note on chap. iv, 15. The inspired poetess saw in that tempest a sublime theophany, which reminded her of the ancient scenes at Sinai, and she very naturally passes from her address to the heathen kings (verse 3) to speak of this miraculous interposition of Jehovah. She clothes her description in imagery drawn from the theophany at Sinai. Compare the use of similar imagery in Psa. xviii, 7-15. The going out from Seir, and through the fields of Edom, is, therefore, to be explained as the approach, from that southern quarter of the heavens, of the tremendous tempest in which Jehovah moved forth from his seat on Sinai, and marched to the rescue of his people. See note on next verse. This view, which is that of Robinson and some of the best scholars, seems to us much more tenable than that of most expositors, which makes verses 4 and 5 the description of a scene which had no connexion at all with the subject matter of this song. **Heavens did drop**—Poured down floods of water, that speedily swelled the Kishon and other streams so as to sweep multitudes of the warring host away. Compare verse 21.

5. **Mountains quaked**—The fearful peals of thunder which accompanied the storm shook hills and plains. The English version, *melted*, (*margin, flowed*),

is after the Vulgate, and is supported by many interpreters, but is less suitable than *quaked*, which is the version of the Septuagint, Gesenius, Fürst, and many of the best scholars. These latter derive the word from שָׁקַד, *to shake*, (compare Isa. lxiv, 1, 3;) the former from שָׁקַד, *to flow*. **That Sinai**—The traditional seat of Jehovah, so famous in the history of the Hebrews. Sinai would naturally be mentioned if this storm came from the fields of Edom; for before Zion became the central seat of worship for all the tribes, Israel would naturally conceive of Jehovah as dwelling on Mount Sinai. So in this highly wrought description, that Sinai is represented as trembling when Jehovah moves from it northward to defend his people. Psa. lxxviii, 7, 8, is evidently based on this passage in Judges, and is an imitation of it; but is so changed and modified as to suit its own particular context.

6. **Shamgar**—See on chap. iii, 31. **In the days of Jael**—Many scholars understand that this Jael was not the wife of Heber, mentioned in chap. iv, 17, and in verse 24 of this chapter, for such a reference to a contemporary, and one so prominent in this very victory over Sisera, would be strange; besides, the context seems to refer to a period previous to the time when Deborah arose; and the prophetess carefully distinguishes her contemporary as "the wife of Heber, the Kenite." They therefore understand by this Jael either another name for Shamgar, or Eud,

O. T.

ways. 7 *The inhabitants of the villages* | in Israel. 8 They "chose new gods; ceased, they ceased in Israel, until that | then *was* war in the gates: ° was there  
 Deborah arose, that I arose "a mother | a shield or spear seen among forty thou-

7. Ceased the government in Israel—they ceased,  
 Until I, Deborah, arose,  
 I arose, a mother in Israel.

8. He chose gods that were new;  
 Then war was at the gates;  
 Shield could there be seen, and spear,  
 Among forty thousand in Israel?

*m Isa. 49. 23.—n Deut. 32. 16; chap. 2. 12, 17.*

*o So 1 Sam. 13. 19, 22; chap. 4. 8.*

as Gideon is also called Jerubbaal, (chap. vi, 32,) or else a judge (either male or female) who lived soon after the time of Shamgar, but of whom we have no other mention. But as this is all conjecture, it is, perhaps, safer to understand the Jael of this history, whom it is Deborah's purpose to immortalize in song. Shamgar and Jael may be mentioned as bounding the age of misery and fear: as if she had said, From the days of Shamgar to those of Jael. She modestly names Jael here instead of herself, whom she names in the next verse in connexion with a similar thought. **Ceased the roads**—Ceased to be travelled, as explained in the next line. The highways were abandoned on account of the dangers to which travellers were exposed; and those who were obliged to travel turned aside from them, and stole from place to place by winding by-paths. "We have ourselves," says Kitto, "known in the East, in unsettled times, persons afraid to stir, for months together, beyond their towns and villages; and for still longer periods travelling wholly abandoned, or undertaken only in large and well-armed bodies."

7. **Ceased the government**—During the long period of subjection and disorder just described, there ceased to be any government in Israel worthy of the name. Dominion was in the hands of foreign rulers, and the Hebrew people were shut up in their towns and villages, not daring to go forth; the laws were not observed, and even the work of Shamgar seems to have been only a throwing off of the yoke by one grand feat of strength, and not a gov-

ernment of the people. **They ceased**—That is, the *ruling powers*, the *civil rulers*, which the word government necessarily implies. Etymologically, there is much reason to cling to the common version, *villages*, for פְּרוֹן, which we have rendered *government*; but the same word occurs again in verse 11, and in such a connexion as to make no tolerable sense it rendered *villages*. We therefore give the above explanation, which has the support of the Septuagint, Vulgate, Gesenius, Fürst, and many of the best scholars. **I, Deborah**—These words, in the absence of any thing sufficient to make it improbable, clearly fix the authorship of this song in the prophetess herself. **A mother in Israel**—As a distinguished chieftain, providentially raised up to lead a nation through a revolution, or to throw off a foreign yoke, is called a *father of his country*, so Deborah arose, a mother in Israel.

8. **He chose gods that were new**—Israel chose new gods; that is, worshipped false gods, the idols of the heathen. See chap. ii, 12, 13. **Then . . . war**—War followed Israel's idolatry, as a penal consequence. **Forty thousand in Israel**—This is not to be taken as an exact specification of the whole number of warriors in Israel at this time, but a round number, purposely large, among whom no arms could be found; and the question is a poetical intimation of the great destitution of warlike weapons in Israel. Their oppressors had probably robbed them of their arms, (comp. 1 Sam. xiii, 19–22,) and they had become too indifferent, or too dejected, to seek for new ones.

sand in Israel? **9** My heart is toward the governors of Israel, that offered themselves willingly among the people. Bless ye the Lord. **10** "Speak, ye that ride on white asses, ye that sit in judgment, and walk by the way.

**11** They that are delivered from the noise of archers in the places of drawing water, there shall they rehearse the righteous acts of the Lord, even the righteous acts toward the inhabitants of his villages in Israel: then shall the

9. My heart is towards the rulers of Israel,  
Those freely offering themselves among the people;  
Bless Jehovah!
10. O riders of dappled she-asses,  
Reposers on splendid carpets,  
And travellers on the way,  
Meditate the song!
11. From the voice of spoil-dividers between the water-troughs  
There let them celebrate the righteous acts of Jehovah,  
The righteous acts of his government in Israel.  
Then went down to the gates the people of Jehovah.

p Verse 2.—*g* Psa. 105. 2; 145. 5.—*4* Or, *Meditate*.—*r* Chap. 10. 4; 12. 14.

s Psa. 107. 32.—*5* Heb. *righteousnesses of the LORD*.—*t* 1 Sam. 12. 7; Psa. 145. 7.

**9. My heart is towards the rulers**—That is, her heart now turns with feelings of gratitude towards those noble Israelitish heroes and chieftains who volunteered in the battle with Sisera.

**10. Dappled she-asses**—Such as had a reddish skin marked with white streaks or spots. Asses of this colour were scarce and costly, and therefore none but the rich and noble among the people were accustomed to ride on them. **Splendid carpets**—This seems to be the full meaning of the original word מִדְּבָרִים. The Orientals were accustomed to repose, either for pleasure or for sleep, on mats and rugs. They who reposed on rich carpets were the wealthy. The English version *judgment*, which follows the Septuagint, Vulgate, and others, is inadmissible. **Travellers on the way**—The lower and middle classes. Thus in this verse the prophetess addresses three classes: the nobles who ride on costly beasts, the wealthy who repose in splendid state, and the more common people, who can now travel on the roads without danger, and not feel obliged, as formerly, to steal through crooked by-ways. **Meditate the song**—Ponder the subject-matter of this triumphal ode, and talk it over when ye ride, when ye sit down, or when ye are walking on the road.

**11. From the voice**—That is, by the voice; *from*, here, denoting the instrumental cause. Or perhaps the sense may be, *above the voice*; that is, louder than the voice, showing a greater rejoicing than those that divide the spoil. **Spoil dividers**—Some render the word *archers*. Robinson describes the persons referred to as "the victorious warriors who return, laden with booty, to their various tribes, and halt at the watering-places to divide out the spoil. These, as is well known, are the usual places of encampment and rest in the East; and the division of the plunder was also an occasion of rejoicing and song. See the description of such a scene. 1 Sam. xxx, 16." **Let them celebrate**—Let those who divide the spoil tell and sing their victory again and again. **Righteous acts of Jehovah**—His marvellous works in behalf of Israel, such as Deborah now celebrated. **Government**—See note on verse 7. **Then went down to the gates**—That is, rallied to their gates to prepare for battle. The prophetess here begins to sing the action of the different tribes, but after this one line she pauses to call on others to join her, (verse 12,) and then in verse 13 resumes her rehearsal by returning to the word יֵרֵד, *went, or came, down*.

people of the LORD go down to the gates.  
**12** "Awake, awake, Deborah: awake, awake, utter a song: arise, Barak, and lead thy captive captive, thou son of Abinoam. **13** Then he made him that remaineth "have dominion over the no-

bles among the people: the LORD made me have dominion over the mighty.  
**14** "Out of Ephraim *was there* a root of them 'against Amalek; after thee, Benjamin, among thy people; out of 'Machir came down governors, and out of

**12.** Awake, awake, O Deborah!

Awake, awake, utter a song!

Arise, O Barak!

And lead captive thy captives, O son of Abinoam!

**13.** Then came down a remnant of the nobles of the people, Jehovah came down to me, among the mighty ones;

**14.** Out of Ephraim—whose root is in Amalek—  
 After thee was Benjamin among thy people;  
 Out of Machir came down rulers,

u Psa. 57. 8. —v Psa. 68. 18. —w Psa. 49. 14.

x Chap. 3. 27. —y Chap. 3. 13. —z Num. 32. 39, 40.

**12. Awake, awake**—Having in the previous verses sung of the sublime coming of Jehovah from Sinai to deliver the nation from its fallen state, and having called on all classes to join her in the song, she now begins her vivid picture of the war with Sisera with this impassioned introduction. **Arise, O Barak**—In the singing of this song, Deborah, leading the women, and Barak, leading the men, responded to each other. **Lead captive thy captives**—This represents the triumph as complete, and the victor as returning from the field with a long train of captives following his triumphal march.

**13. Then came down**—We feel constrained to discard the Masoretic punctuation in this word ירד, and translate it as if written ירד. To render it in the imperative, or with Robinson and others to supply *I said*, is awkward and unnecessary. The poetess refers to the coming down from their mountain homes of the valiant heroes who rendered such noble services in this war. The words *nobles, mighty ones, rulers, commanders, and princes*, in this and the two following verses, are to be understood as titles of honour attributed to those valiant soldiers in view of their noble work. **Jehovah came down to me**—To me, Deborah. This coming of Jehovah to the prophetess is explained by chap. iv, 6, 7. Jehovah came to Deborah with a revelation of the triumph over Jabin's army which

was about to exalt Israel from the dust. **Among the mighty ones**—Not *against* the mighty, for then we should have לְ, but י, *in, or among*. As the heroes of the land rallied around her, Jehovah himself came, as it were, among them, and also accompanied her as an ally to the war.

**14. Out of Ephraim**—We are here to supply in thought, *they came down*, from the preceding verse. That is, the heroes came out of Ephraim. The poetess goes on until verse 19 in specifying the action of the different tribes.

**Whose root**—Or, *their root*, that is, their fixed abode, their established dwelling or lot. **In Amalek**—In chap. xii, 15, mention is made of "the land of Ephraim, in the mount of the Amalekites;" whence it appears that a colony of this people had migrated from the south of Palestine, and settled among the Canaanites, and given their name to the territory which afterwards became the possession of Ephraim. **After thee**—After Ephraim. **Among thy people**—Among Ephraim's people. In approaching the Plain of Jezreel from the south, Benjamin, from his more southern location, would naturally follow after Ephraim; but as both advanced it would seem that the Benjamites became mixed with the more powerful Ephraimites. **Out of Machir**—Machir was the only son of Manasseh, and through him were all the Manassites descended. Gen. i, 23; Num. xxvii, 1. The name is here

Zebulun they that \*handle the pen of the writer. 15 And the princes of Issachar were with Deborah; even Issachar, and also \*Barak: he was sent on 'foot into the valley. \*For the divisions of Reuben there were great

\*thoughts of heart. 16 Why abodest thou \*among the sheepfolds, to hear the bleatings of the flocks? 16 For the divisions of Reuben there were great searchings of heart. 17 \*Gilead abode beyond Jordan: and why did Dan re-

And out of Zebulun those that draw the pencil of the writer.

15. And the princes in Issachar were with Deborah,  
Even Issachar, the support of Barak;  
In the valley was he sent at his feet.

By the streams of Reuben

Great were the determinations of heart.

16. Why satest thou between the double sheepfolds?  
To hear the pipings of the herds?

By the streams of Reuben

Great were the deliberations of heart

17. Gilead beyond the Jordan dwelt;  
And Dan, why sojourns he in ships?

6 Heb. *draw with the pen, &c.*—a Chap. 4. 14.—7 Heb. *his feet.*—8 Or, *In the divis-*

*ions, &c.*—9 Heb. *impressions.*—b Num. 32. 1.—10 Or, *In.*—c See Josh. 13. 25, 31.

used poetically for that part of the tribe of Manasseh which was located on the west of the Jordan; just as Gilead, Manasseh's grandson, is used, verse 17, for the eastern Manassites. **Those that draw the pencil of the writer**—As the word here rendered *pencil* (שֶׁבַט) generally means *rod*, or *sceptre*, most modern scholars translate, *the staff of the commander*. But there seems no need of departing from the ordinary meaning of the words. The word מִשְׁכֵּי here represents the writer as *drawing* the letters with his pencil, and the pencil or style is metaphorically called the writer's *sceptre*, as being the emblem of his power and worth. Zebulun's location on the Phœnician coast led his people to commercial enterprise, and to the cultivation of the art of writing. Clerks and accountants would therefore become numerous in that tribe. Deborah's oracle and Barak's trumpet aroused even the *literati* to join the army. This was specially worthy of notice, since the quiet life and peaceful calling of the writer make him naturally averse to war.

15. **Was he sent at his feet**—This was the way in which Issachar was Barak's support. Obedient to orders, he followed at his feet (that is, immediately after him, as in chap iv, 10) in the valley of the Kishon, and assisted Barak

in the fight. **Determinations of heart**—This must be taken in connexion with *deliberations of heart* in the next verse, when this whole reference to Reuben will appear as a masterpiece of irony. They heard the call of Deborah, and at once began to make great plans and lofty resolutions and determinations to give their help to the war; but, as if charmed by the pipings among the flocks, all their great resolutions end in deliberations!

16. **Double sheepfolds**—The word is in the dual number, and designates the enclosures made of hurdles, left open at the top, and usually separated by a hurdle into two parts for the two different kinds of flocks—sheep and goats. **Pipings of the herds**—The pipings of the shepherds among the flocks.

17. **Gilead**—The name of the grandson of Manasseh is here used poetically for the half tribe of Manasseh that dwelt on the east of the Jordan. Compare note on verse 14. Those eastern tribes heeded not the summons of Deborah. **Dan...ships**—The portion of Dan took in the port of Joppa, (Josh. xix, 46,) and the Danites who dwelt there, and at other places near or on the coast, doubtless interested themselves with the commerce of the Phœnicians. Hence the allusion to their



main in ships? <sup>d</sup> Asher continued on the sea <sup>11</sup> shore, and abode in his <sup>12</sup> breaches. **18** <sup>e</sup> Zebulun and Naphtali were a people that <sup>13</sup> jeopardized their lives unto the death in the high places of the field. **19** The kings came and fought;

then fought the kings of Canaan in Taanach by the waters of Megiddo; <sup>f</sup> they took no gain of money. **20** <sup>g</sup> They fought from heaven; <sup>h</sup> the stars in their <sup>14</sup> courses fought against Sisera. **21** <sup>i</sup> The river of Kishon swept them

Asher sat at the shore of the sea,  
And upon his harbours dwells.

18. Zebulun, a people that scorned his soul to death,  
And Naphtali, upon the high places of the field.
19. There came kings; they fought;  
Then fought the kings of Canaan,  
At Taanach, upon the waters of Megiddo.  
Spoil of silver they did not take.
20. From heaven they fought,  
The stars from their courses fought with Sisera.
21. The river Kishon snatched them away,

<sup>d</sup> Josh. 19. 29, 31.—<sup>11</sup> Or, *port*.—<sup>12</sup> Or, *creeks*.—<sup>e</sup> Chap. 4. 10.—<sup>13</sup> Heb. *exposed to reproach*.

<sup>f</sup> Chap. 4. 16; *Psa.* 44. 12; see verse 30.—<sup>g</sup> See Josh. 10. 11; *Psa.* 77. 17, 18.—<sup>h</sup> Chap. 4. 15.—<sup>i</sup> Heb. *paths*.—<sup>j</sup> Chap. 4. 7.

dwelling in ships. **Asher**—For the location of this tribe, see on Josh. xix, 24–31.

**18. Zebulun**—Mentioned a second time (compare verse 14) because of the extraordinary bravery and heroism of the warriors of this tribe. **Scorned his soul to death**—Hazarded his life on the most conspicuous places of the battle field. So bold and fearless was he that he seemed actually to *scorn* (חָרַף) his own life, and to treat it with contempt. **And Naphtali**—The same heroism and daring are predicated of the warriors of this tribe also, only the name of the tribe occurs but this once. The prominence of these two tribes in the action is seen in chap. iv, 6, 10.

**19. There came kings**—Canaanish kings or princes confederate with Jabin. Compare Josh. xi, 1–5. As in Joshua's time, so now, all these kings combined together to fight with Israel. **At Taanach**—The modern Taannuk, in the southwestern part of the great Plain of Esdraelon. See at Josh. xii, 21. **Megiddo**—The modern el-Lejjun, about four miles northwest of Taannuk. See again at Josh. xii, 21. **The waters of Megiddo** are the numerous small streams in the neighbourhood, which flow into and help to form the ancient Kishon. **Spoil of silver they did not take**—A caustic sentence.

They gathered no spoils. Their plans of conquest ended in dire defeat.

**20. From heaven they fought**—The elements of nature assisted in the strife. The violent thunder storm on which Jehovah rode over the fields of Edom was so terrible that the very heavens appeared to drop. See on verse 4 and chap. iv, 15. **The stars from their courses fought**—This is a more minute defining of the thought in the preceding line. The bursting clouds and darting lightnings are poetically spoken of as if the stars had started from their orbits and mingled in the war of elements.

**21. The river Kishon snatched them away**—This celebrated stream has two principal sources, one at the base of Mount Tabor, and the other in the large fountain of Jerrin, (Engannim,) about fifteen miles south of Tabor. Its general course is northwesterly, sweeping along the northern base of Mount Carmel, and emptying into the Mediterranean. It drains the great valley of Esdraelon. In the southern part of the plain, at Megiddo and Taanach, the Kishon is not a permanent stream, but flows only during the rainy season; but after a violent rain storm the dry bed suddenly changes to a sweeping torrent, and snatches away everything it meets. So in the

away, that ancient river, the river Kishon. O my soul, thou hast trodden down strength. **22** Then were the horsehoofs broken by the means of the <sup>16</sup>prancings, the prancings of their mighty ones. **23** Curse ye Meroz, said the angel of the Lord, curse ye bitterly the inhabitants thereof; <sup>17</sup>because they

came not to the help <sup>1</sup>of the Lord, to the help of the Lord against the mighty. **24** Blessed above women shall <sup>18</sup>Jael the wife of Heber the Kenite be; <sup>19</sup>blessed shall she be above women in the tent. **25** <sup>20</sup>He asked water, and she gave him milk; she brought forth butter in a lordly dish. **26** <sup>21</sup>She put her hand to

The river of ancient times, the river Kishon  
Trample down, O my soul, the strong!

- 22.** Then smote the hoofs of the horse,  
From the galloppings, the galloppings of his strong ones.  
**23.** Curse Meroz! said the angel of Jehovah,  
Curse with a curse her inhabitants;  
For they came not to the help of Jehovah,  
To the help of Jehovah, among the mighty ones.  
**24.** Blessed above women be Jael,  
The wife of Heber the Kenite;  
Above women in the tent let her be blessed.  
**25.** Water he asked, milk she gave;  
In a bowl of the nobles she brought him curds.

<sup>15</sup>Or, *trampings*, or, *plungings*.—*k* Chap. 21. 9, 10; Neh. 3. 5.—*l* 1 Sam. 17. 47; 18. 17;

<sup>25. 26.</sup>—*m* Chap. 4. 17.—*n* Luke 1. 28.—*o* Chap. 4. 19.—*p* Chap. 4. 21.

present case, the rushing waters carried away the bewildered soldiers of Sisera. **Trample down, O my soul**—A burst of enthusiastic exultation over such a sudden destruction of the strong enemy.

**22. From the galloppings**—The rapid and hasty flight of the Canaanite heroes caused their horses' hoofs to smite terribly the ground. The frantic steeds struggled to get loose from the chariots, and escape the miry ground, and became more frantic still by the urgency of their strong drivers. *The gallopping of his strong ones* is to be explained as the galloppings caused by the strong men that urged on their frantic flight. This verse, says Robinson, presents "a most vivid image of hasty and rapid flight and hot pursuit."

**23. Curse Meroz**—The name of this place occurs here only, and of its history we have no other trace. Perhaps it utterly perished by reason of this awful curse. It would seem to have lain along the route of the flying Canaanites, and its inhabitants culpably neglected to help the leaders of Israel in their pursuit. The apathy of some of the tribes only called forth censure or reproach, (verses 16, 17;)

but the neglects of Meroz were so great as to call forth a bitter curse. **Angel of Jehovah**—Some think Deborah herself is meant; but the reference is more likely to the Angel who fought for Israel, and perhaps revealed himself to the prophetess. **Among the mighty ones**—See note on verse 13.

**24. Blessed... be Jael**—From the cursing of Meroz the prophetess turns to the blessing of Jael, and puts the blessing in contrast with the curse. Note at end of chap. iv. This blessing of the inspired poetess, as well as the curse pronounced on Meroz, breathes the spirit of the vindictive psalms. The blessing does not require us to defend the absolute morality of Jael's act. Grotius had not then written on the laws of nations, nor had the softening spirit of the Gospel yet done its work in exalting the standard of morality. The act of Jael and the song and soul of Deborah were at the level of the laws of war in their age. The prophetess aims to immortalize the heroine. **Women in the tent**—Women that dwell in tents; shepherdesses.

**25. A bowl of the nobles**—A costly bowl, such as only nobles were wont to use. **Curds**—Or, *curdled milk*, a

the nail, and her right hand to the workmen's hammer; and <sup>16</sup> with the hammer she smote Sisera, she smote off his head, when she had pierced and stricken through his temples. **27** <sup>17</sup> At her feet he bowed, he fell, he lay down: at her feet he bowed, he fell: where he bowed, there he fell down <sup>18</sup> dead.

26. Her hand to the tent-pin she stretched forth,  
And her right hand to the hammer of the workmen;  
And she hammered Sisera, she crushed his head,  
And she smote through and transfix'd his temples.
27. Between her feet he sunk down, he fell, he lay;  
Between her feet he sunk down, he fell;  
Where he sunk down, there he fell slain.
28. Through the window she bent forward, and cried aloud,  
The mother of Sisera, through the lattice-window:  
Wherefore delays his chariot to come?  
Wherefore linger the paces of his royal steeds?
29. The wise ones of her princesses answer her,  
Also she returns answer to herself:
30. Are they not finding, dividing, the spoil:  
A maiden, two maidens, to the head of a hero;

16 Heb. *she hammered*.—17 Heb. *Between*.  
18 Heb. *destroyed*.

common and favourite beverage in the East. The Septuagint, Vulgate, and English versions erroneously render the word *butter*.

**27. He sunk down, he fell**—The reference is doubtless to the supposed convulsion in which he rolled off from the low divan and fell to the floor. See note on chap. iv, 21.

**28. The mother of Sisera**—The poetess passes from one female character to another—from Jael, the Sisera's mother. This abrupt and striking prosopopœia is one of the most masterly passages in this truly grand poem. "Who should first suffer anxiety, if not a *mother*? Of a wife nothing is said; such love thrives not in the harem of a prince. He is his mother's pride, the great hero who had been hitherto invincible. What she has in him, and what she loses, concerns no other woman."—*Cassel*. Never dreaming of defeat, this proud mother confidently awaits her son's triumphal return, but grows impatient at his long delay, and she and her royal maidens entertain themselves with speculations noticeably characteristic of oriental fe-

**28** The mother of Sisera looked out at a window, and cried through the lattice, Why is his chariot ~~so~~ long in coming? why tarry the wheels of his chariots? **29** Her wise ladies answered her, yea, she returned <sup>19</sup> answer to herself, **30** 'Have they not sped? have they ~~not~~ divided the prey; <sup>20</sup> to every man a

19 Heb. *her words*.—*q* Exod. 15. 9.—20 Heb. *to the head of a mark*.

male vanity. **Lattice-window**—Of this character are the windows of all female apartments in the East. **Royal steeds**—The Hebrew word means *state chariots*, but the preceding word **paces** shows that the reference is more particularly to the horses that drew the chariots.

**29. The wise ones**—Here is another touch of irony. What wisdom was in their counsels and hopes! **She also**—She also falls in with the fond hopes of her wise ladies, and keeps murmuring the answer to herself.

**30. The spoil**—The spoil, or booty, as the context shows, was supposed to consist of captive girls and rich garments. None but oriental females would speculate in the manner here portrayed. Their joy would be, not that the enemy was defeated, and great deeds of arms had brought glory to their country, and to their fathers, husbands, and sons, but that much spoil had been taken, and especially of that kind in which females delighted. **Two maidens, to the head of a hero**—That is, one or two captive females assigned to each warrior, a common

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

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

Spoil of dyed garments for Sisera;

Spoil of dyed garments; embroidery;

A dyed garment of double embroidery at the necks of the spoil?

31. So shall perish all thy enemies, O Jehovah!

But they that love him shall be as the going forth of the sun in his strength.

r Psalm 83. 9, 10. — e 2 Samuel 23. 4.

f Psalm 19. 5.

custom of the ancient times. **Dyed garments for Sisera**—"The wise lady of the harem was not desirous that Sisera himself should acquire any damsels. She wished only for variegated garments and showy trappings for the triumphal procession of her lord."—

**Herder. Of double embroidery**—Embroidered on both sides. **At the necks of the spoil**—To be hung and carried in the triumphal procession, on the necks of the captive maidens, who were so important a part of the *spoil*. These ladies of the harem doubtless expected to share largely in these rich garments, but they looked to see them brought on the necks of the captive damsels. Others explain, *for the neck of the spoiler*, that is, Sisera; or, as English version, *for the necks of them that take the spoil*. Bertheau and Keil read *לְנֶפֶשׁ הַמַּלְכָּה*, *queen*, instead of *לְנֶפֶשׁ הַמַּלְכָּה*, *spoil*. But for

this latter there is no authority, and the former is unnecessary, and far less simple and natural than the explanation we have given.

**31. So shall perish**—Or, *so let all thy enemies perish*. "The prophetess does not stop to say that all the hopes of Sisera's mother were dashed to the ground, but she implies this in another abrupt apostrophe, in which she invokes like destruction upon all the enemies of Jehovah. This abruptness makes a far more vivid impression than any language."—*Robinson*. **As the going forth of the sun**—A bold and striking figure, which forcibly and truly indicates the rising and growing power of the true Israel or God. **Rest forty**

**years**—The result of this great victory over Jabin's host, a victory that has no parallel in the history of the Judges. Joshua's great battle at Merom seemed to have crushed the northern Canaanites; but from that fearful blow they rallied again, and regained, apparently, nearly all their ancient power. But by this defeat of Sisera's host the kingdom of Hazor seems to have been utterly ruined, and we hear no more of Canaanitish dominion in northern Palestine. Hence the prophets conceived this victory as a type of Jehovah's ultimate triumph over all his foes.

How many of the sacred books have their divine songs! In Genesis (xlix) we have Israel's dying blessing, a psalm prophetic of the destinies of his children; in Exodus (xv) Moses celebrates the triumph at the Red Sea; in Numbers (xxiii, xxiv) are the wondrous oracles of Balaam; and in Deuteronomy (xxxii, xxxiii) the last song of Moses. Here in Judges we have Deborah's song; in 1 Samuel (ii) Hannah's *magnificat*; and in 2 Samuel (xxii, xxiii) David's songs of triumph over all his foes. In the New Testament (Luke i) we have the *Magnificat* of Mary and the song of Zacharias; "and all these songs," says Wordsworth, "are preludes to the new song, the song of Moses and the Lamb, which the saints of the Church glorified, from all nations, will sing at the crystal sea, with the harps of God, (Rev. xiv, 1-3; xv, 2-4,) when all the enemies of Christ and his Church will have been subdued, and their victory will have been consummated for ever."

## CHAPTER VI.

**A**ND <sup>a</sup>the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the Lord: and the Lord delivered them into the hand <sup>b</sup>of Midian seven years. **2** And the hand of Midian <sup>c</sup>prevailed against Israel: and because of the Midianites the children of Israel made them <sup>d</sup>the dens which are in the mountains, and caves, and

<sup>a</sup> Chap. 2. 19.—<sup>b</sup> Habakkuk 3. 7.—<sup>c</sup> 1 Heb. *was strong*.—<sup>d</sup> 1 Samuel 13. 6; Hebrews 11. 38.  
—<sup>e</sup> Chap. 3. 13.

## CHAPTER VI.

## MIDIANITE OPPRESSION, 1-10.

**1. Israel did evil**—Though, on account of their sins, the kings of Mesopotamia, Moab, and Hazor successively overran and oppressed the land, and though, after long years of servitude and sorrow, they repented and had deliverance from God, they profited not by their bitter experiences. Again and again they *did evil*, and thereby brought upon their own necks the yoke of other heathen powers. **The hand of Midian**—The Midianites were descendants of Abraham and Keturah, (Gen. xxv, 2,) and dwelt in the country east and southeast of the Moabites and Ammonites. They were a nomadic people, and roamed over a vast tract of country. Among them Moses found a home when he fled from Pharaoh, and Horeb and a part of the Sinaitic peninsula seem to have been possessed by them. Exod. ii, 15; iii, 1. But when the Israelites approached the borders of Canaan, and had conquered Sihon and Og, the Midianites contiguous to the Moabites joined with the latter in seeking their overthrow. Num. xxii, 4, 7. They were a wily people, and did much to injure Israel, (Num. xxv, 8;) and one of the last acts of Moses was to make war with them and utterly defeat and spoil them. Num. xxxi, 1-12. Now after a lapse of two hundred years they had recovered strength, and God used them as the rod of his anger to scourge his guilty people. **Seven years**—Though this oppression was not as long as previous ones, it was more severe.

**2. The dens which are in the mountains**—The recesses, fissures, and

strong holds. **3** And so it was, when Israel had sown, that the Midianites came up, and <sup>a</sup>the Amalekites, <sup>b</sup>and the children of the east, even they came up against them; **4** And they encamped against them, and destroyed the increase of the earth, till thou come unto Gaza, and left no sustenance for Israel, neither <sup>c</sup>sheep, nor ox, nor ass.

<sup>a</sup> Gen. 29. 1; chap. 7. 12; 8. 10; 1 Kings 4. 30; Job 1. 8.—<sup>b</sup> Lev. 26. 16; Deut. 28. 30, 33, 51; Micah 6. 15.—<sup>c</sup> Or, *gout*.

hollow places which had been worn by the water-courses in the mountain sides. **Caves**—Such as abound all through the hill country of Palestine. **Strong holds**—Mountain fastnesses not easily accessible to the foe. It seems that the Midianites cared not to exterminate the Israelites, but to occupy their rich pastures.

**3. So it was**—Constantly for the seven years. Verses 3-6 picture the ordinary state of the land during all this Midianite oppression. **The Amalekites**—Also a nomadic race, who had dwindled into a band of robbers, and were ready to join with any stronger tribe in a predatory adventure. See on chap. iii, 13, and compare Gen. xiv, 7; Exod. xvii, 8. **Children of the east**—A general name applied indiscriminately to all the tribes that occupied the deserts east of Palestine. Compare chap. viii, 10. **The east**—*kedem*—was a term naturally and appropriately given by the early Israelites to the vast range of desert country that lay before them toward the rising sun, as they gazed from the hills on the east of the Jordan.

**4. Till thou come unto Gaza**—Even to the southwestern quarter of the land. "As the enemy invaded the land with their camels and flocks, and on repeated occasions encamped in the Valley of Jezreel, (verse 33,) they must have entered by the main road which connects the countries on the east with Palestine on the west, crossing the Jordan near Beisan, and passing through the Plain of Jezreel; and from this point they spread over Palestine to the sea-coast of Gaza."—*Kril*. Hence it was that the Manassites, to whom Gideon belonged, and whose lot on the west of

**5** For they came up with their cattle and their tents, and they came <sup>as</sup> grasshoppers for multitude; <sup>for</sup> both they and their camels were without number: and they entered into the land to <sup>to</sup> destroy it. **6** And Israel was greatly impoverished because of the Midianites; and the children of Israel <sup>cried</sup> unto the LORD. **7** And it came to pass, when the children of Israel cried unto the LORD because of the Midianites, **8** That the LORD sent <sup>a</sup> prophet unto the children of Israel, which said unto them, <sup>Thus</sup> saith the LORD God of Israel, <sup>I</sup> brought you up

<sup>g</sup> Chap. 7. 12.—<sup>h</sup> Psa. 83. 4, 12.—<sup>i</sup> Chap. 8. 15; Hos. 5. 15.—<sup>3</sup> Heb. *a man, a prophet*.—<sup>k</sup> Neh. 9. 9, 12; Psa. 136. 10, 16; Isa. 63. 9, 14;

the Jordan lay in the Plain of Jezreel, were special sufferers from these invasions.

**5. As grasshoppers**—Or *locusts*, a specimen of whose desolating and all-devouring march is depicted in Joel i, 4; ii, 1-11. They come in such numbers as to darken all the land, and speedily consume every green thing.

**6. Israel was greatly impoverished**—Driven from their pastures and robbed of their flocks, (verse 4,) what else could be the result? The oppression of these children of the East may be inferred from the exacting habits of their modern, Bedouin descendants, whose chiefs will extort tribute upon tribute from their own subjects until they become utterly impoverished and ruined.

**8. The Lord sent a prophet**—Before providing a deliverer God sends a messenger to reprove them for their sins, and impress them with the thought that all their woes were a punishment for idolatry. This is the only specific mention of a prophet in the history of the Judges. The special age of prophets was yet future.

**10. Gods of the Amorites**—The word *Amorites* is here, as in Gen. xv, 16, and Josh. xxiv, 15, put for the whole of the Canaanitish tribes. Their idol gods they were not to fear. "Perhaps in this case a special reason may be found for the use of *Amorite*, if the prophet was addressing those who dwelt in the mountains where the Amorites chiefly dwelt."—*Hervey*.

from Egypt, and brought you forth out of the house of bondage: **9** And I delivered you out of the hand of the Egyptians, and out of the hand of all that oppressed you, and <sup>I</sup> drave them out from before you, and gave you their land; **10** And I said unto you, *I am* the LORD your God; <sup>to</sup> fear not the gods of the Amorites, in whose land ye dwell: but ye have not obeyed my voice.

**11** And there came an angel of the LORD, and sat under an oak which *was* in Ophrah, that *pertained* unto Joash <sup>the</sup> Abi-ezrite: and his son <sup>Gideon</sup> threshed wheat by the winepress, <sup>to</sup>

Ezek. 20. 5.—<sup>i</sup> Psa. 44. 2, 3.—<sup>m</sup> 2 Kings 17. 35, 38; Jer. 10. 2.—<sup>n</sup> Josh. 17. 2.—<sup>o</sup> Heb. 11. 32.—<sup>4</sup> Heb. *to cause it to flee*.

#### CALL OF GIDEON, 11-24.

**11. There came an angel**—Verses 14, 16, 22, 23, show that this Angel was the manifestation of Jehovah himself, the Angel of the Covenant, who so often appeared in human form to the worthies of the Old Testament, and thus partially anticipated the incarnation of a later age, the man Christ Jesus. The prophet (verse 8) came to reprove the people and show them the cause of their woes; the Angel came to commission their deliverer. **Sat under an oak**—Literally, *the oak*; a well-known tree hard by Gideon's winepress. The Angel took the form of a wayfaring man with a staff in his hand. Verse 21. Compare note on chapter ii, 1. **Ophrah**—A village in the tribe of Manasseh, belonging to the family of Abi-ezer, but famous only in connection with the history of Gideon. It lay, probably, among the hills on the east of the great Plain of Esdraelon, but its exact location is unknown. **Joash the Abi-ezrite**—Abi-ezer was a descendant of Manasseh, (Joshua xvii, 2,) and his family, of whom Joash was probably now the head, was small in that tribe. Verse 15. **Gideon threshed wheat by the winepress**—Knocked or beat out the wheat with a stick, in distinction from threshing by means of oxen or by instruments used on the large open threshing floors of the country. **To hide it from the Midianites**—This was why he threshed by the winepress. "The summer threshing floors are in the

hide it from the Midianites. **12** And the angel of the Lord appeared unto him, and said unto him, The Lord is with thee, thou mighty man of valour. **13** And Gideon said unto him, O my Lord, if the Lord be with us, why then is all this befallen us? and where be all his miracles which our fathers told us of, saying, Did not the Lord bring us up from Egypt? but now the Lord hath forsaken us, and delivered us into the hands of the Midianites. **14** And the Lord looked upon him, and said, Go in this thy might, and thou shalt save Israel from the hand of the Mid-

*p* Chap. 13. 3; Luke 1. 11, 28.—*q* Josh. 1. 5.—*r* So Psa. 89. 49; Isa. 59. 1; 63. 15.—*s* Psa. 44. 1.—*t* 2 Chron. 15. 2.—*u* 1 Sam. 12. 11; Heb. 11. 32, 34.—*v* Josh. 1. 9; chap. 4. 6.—*w* See 1 Sam. 9. 21.

open country, and on an elevated position, to catch the wind when winnowing the grain, and would be altogether unsafe at such a time; while the vineyards are hid away in the wadies, and out on the wooded hills, and thus adapted for concealment. I myself have seen grain thus concealed in this same country during the lawless days of civil war."—*Thomson*.

**12. The Lord is with thee, thou mighty man of valour**—These inspiring words were designed to be a source of comfort and strength to Gideon. He is called a mighty hero, not because he has already distinguished himself by great deeds of valour, but in reference to what he is yet to do, all which was known to this Angel.

**14. The Lord looked upon him**—This clearly shows that this Angel was the manifestation of Jehovah himself, and this *looking upon him* was an impressive gaze which made him conscious of the Divine Presence, and imparted to him a divine power. **In this thy might**—The might and strength which I herewith impart. **Have not I sent thee**—Language of divine assurance. Compare marginal references.

**15. My family is poor in Manasseh**—Literally, *my thousand*. For convenience in government Israel was divided into thousands, hundreds, fifties, and tens. Exod. xviii. 21, 25. A thousand in this technical sense might

ianites: have not I sent thee? **15** And he said unto him, O my Lord, wherewith shall I save Israel? behold, my family is poor in Manasseh, and I am the least in my father's house. **16** And the Lord said unto him, Surely I will be with thee, and thou shalt smite the Midianites as one man. **17** And he said unto him, If now I have found grace in thy sight, then show me a sign that thou talkest with me. **18** Depart not hence, I pray thee, until I come unto thee, and bring forth my present, and set it before thee. And he said, I will tarry until thou

*5* Heb. *my thousand is the meanest*; Exod. 18. 21, 25; Micah 5. 2.—*a* Exod. 3. 12; Josh. 1. 5.—*y* Exod. 4. 1-8; verses 36, 37; 2 Kings 20. 8; Psa. 86. 17; Isa. 7. 11.—*z* Gen. 18. 3, 5; chap. 13. 15.—*6* Or, *meat offering*.

become greater or smaller in the course of time. Its numbers, like those of a regiment of an army, might become much diminished, and yet the old title of *thousand* remain. That thousand in Manasseh to which Gideon belonged had become feeble, though its exact numerical strength might not have been known.

**16. As one man**—As if all the Midianitish host was a single individual, and he were executed at a stroke.

**17. Show me a sign**—Give me some miraculous evidence that this is no illusion, and that Jehovah really speaks to me. Gideon's several answers show a trembling heart and a wavering faith.

**18. My present**—The original word, *minchah*, "does not mean a sacrifice in the strict sense, nor merely a gift of food, but a sacrificial gift in the sense of a gift presented to God, on the acceptance of which he hoped to receive the sign which would show whether the person who had appeared to him was really God. This sacrificial gift consisted of such food as they were accustomed to set before a guest whom they wished especially to honour."—*Keil*. The sign by which Gideon would judge of the character of his guest was probably, as Henry says, "if he ate of it as common meat he would suppose him to be a man, a prophet; if otherwise, as it proved, he should know him to be an angel."

come again. **19** \*And Gideon went in, and made ready <sup>a</sup>a kid, and unleavened cakes of an ephah of flour: the flesh he put in a basket, and he put the broth in a pot, and brought <sup>it</sup> out unto him under the oak, and presented <sup>it</sup>. **20** And the angel of God said unto him, Take the flesh and the unleavened cakes, and <sup>b</sup>lay them upon this rock, and <sup>c</sup>pour out the broth. And he did so. **21** Then the angel of the Lord put forth the end of the staff that <sup>was</sup> in his hand, and touched the flesh and the

<sup>a</sup> Gen. 18. 6-8. — <sup>b</sup> 7 Heb. *a kid of the goats.*  
— <sup>c</sup> Chap. 13. 19. — <sup>d</sup> See 1 Kings 18. 33, 34. —  
<sup>d</sup> Lev. 9. 24; 1 Kings 18. 38; 2 Chron. 7. 1. —  
<sup>e</sup> Chap. 13. 21.

**19. A kid...cakes**—Compare the similar meal which Abraham prepared for his divine guests under the oak of Mamre. Gen. xviii, 5-8. **An ephah**—A measure of about four and one half pecks. **Flesh he put in a basket...broth in a pot**—"The Orientals do not, as we do, use broth in which meat has been boiled as a soup. But they do use stews, such as the pottage for which Esau sold his birthright, and such as the sons of the prophet were preparing when they put into it by mistake some poisonous herb. Thus, we apprehend, part of the kid was prepared, and this was the part brought out in the pot. While this was in preparation over the fire, the other part had been cut up into slips and roasted before the fire upon skewers, in which way meat is very rapidly dressed in the East into what is called *kabobs*, which stand in the same place as chops and steaks with us, only that the pieces are very much smaller. This, we apprehend, was what was brought in the basket."—*Kittó*.

**20. Angel of God**—This expression is used here instead of *Angel of Jehovah*, as in verse 11. The reason for the change is not easy to explain. Cassel thinks it is because "the nature of the angel, as a divine being, here begins to declare itself," and *Elohim* is used instead of *Jehovah* to indicate "how the angel in his individual appearance can contain in himself the power of God."

**21. The staff that was in his hand**—Hitherto the Angel had appeared like a wayfaring man. **Fire out**

unleavened cakes; and <sup>a</sup>there rose up fire out of the rock, and consumed the flesh and the unleavened cakes. Then the angel of the Lord departed out of his sight. **22** And when Gideon <sup>b</sup>perceived that he <sup>was</sup> an angel of the Lord, Gideon said, Alas, O Lord God! <sup>c</sup>for because I have seen an angel of the Lord face to face. **23** And the Lord said unto him, <sup>d</sup>Peace <sup>e</sup>be unto thee; fear not: thou shalt not die. **24** Then Gideon built an altar there unto the Lord, and called it <sup>f</sup>\*Jehovah-

<sup>f</sup> Gen. 16. 13; 32. 30; Exod. 33. 20; chap. 18. 22.  
— <sup>g</sup> Dan. 10. 19. — <sup>h</sup> That is, *The LORD send peace*; see Gen. 22. 14; Exod. 17. 15; Jer. 33. 16.  
Ezek. 48. 35.

**of the rock**—Most startling and impressive miracle, showing beyond all possibility of doubt that this was indeed Jehovah's Angel. **Departed out of his sight**—Vanished. "The expression does not warrant the assumption that the Angel ascended to heaven in this instance, as in chap. xiii, 20, in the flame of the sacrifice."—*Keil*.

**22. Because I have seen an angel**—The wavering faith that asked for a sign now trembles and despairs because a sign is given. Gideon was awed and astonished at his divine commission to save Israel. To strengthen his faith he asked a sign, and so overwhelming in majesty and power was the sign granted that he trembled before it, and, forgetful of his divine commission, he began to fear that he must die. This whole narrative shows up Gideon as a man of sudden and strong emotions, yet unassuming and simple, and honest in his modesty. Prevalent and strong was the conviction among the ancients that no man could behold the face of Jehovah and live. Compare Gen. xxxii, 30; Exod. xxxiii, 20; Judges xiii, 22.

**23. The Lord said**—After having vanished to convince Gideon of his divinity, the Angel returns again to assure his heart. The Angel probably appeared and spoke again just as he did at the beginning of their interview.

**24. Jehovah-shalom**—That is, *Jehovah is peace*. He erected this altar both in gratitude to God for his mercy in remembering Israel, and as a memorial and witness of the blessed peace which was in that spot granted unto him.



shalom: unto this day it *is* yet <sup>h</sup> in Ophrah of the Abi-ezrites.

**25** And it came to pass the same night, that the LORD said unto him, Take thy father's young bullock, <sup>e</sup> even the second bullock of seven

*A Chap. 8. 32.—9 Or, and.—4 Exod. 34. 13; Deut. 7. 5.*

That revelation to Gideon was a sign and pledge that God was about to remove the rod of his anger from Israel, and be again at peace with them. That altar, with its sacred associations, long remained, and when this book of Judges was written, it was **yet in Ophrah of the Abi-ezrites**, still called by its old name. This altar must not be confounded with the one which Gideon was commanded to build on the top of the stronghold, (verse 26,) in the place of the altar of Baal.

#### OVERTHROW OF THE ALTAR OF BAAL, 25-32.

Having built the Jehovah-shalom altar on the rock where Jehovah had manifested himself to him, Gideon is next commissioned to tear down the Baal altar, which had too long dishonoured his native mountain height, and erect in its place another altar to Jehovah. We must not fall into the error of several commentators, of confounding this altar with the one just mentioned in verse 24. It was built in another place, and largely for another purpose.

**25. The same night**—The same night on which he had seen the manifestation of the Lord. It was probably evening, perhaps after sunset, that Gideon threshed his wheat. For the darkness, no less than the seclusion of the winepress, (verse 11,) would help to hide him from the Midianites. The interview with the Angel, and the building of the Jehovah-shalom altar, occupied the first part of the night; but after that miraculous scene it was not proper that Baal's altar should see the rising of another sun. And, further, he feared to do it by day. Verse 27. All Gideon's triumphs were partly owing to rapid and sudden onsets. **The Lord said**—That is, the same covenant Angel who had manifested himself to

years old, and throw down the altar of Baal that thy father hath, and <sup>1</sup> cut down the grove that *is* by it: **26** And build an altar unto the LORD thy God upon the top of this <sup>10</sup> rock, <sup>11</sup> in the ordered place, and take the second bul-

*10 Heb. strong place.—11 Or, in an orderly manner.*

Gideon that night. He doubtless gave this commandment to overthrow the altar of Baal before he left him under the oak. **Even the second bullock**—Second in age among the bullocks that belonged to Joash. Gideon's father had, probably, lost most of his cattle by the Midianite conquerors, (compare verse 4,) so that it was easy to designate what he had left by giving to each particular epithets. The Hebrew indicates two bullocks. Literally, *the ox-bullock*, which belongs to thy father, and *the second bullock*. But as no mention is afterward made of the ox-bullock, many expositors understand that only one bullock is intended, and *the second bullock* is only an explanatory clause, as the English version makes it by translating *1, even*. This explanation seems best to suit the context; though it is possible that two bullocks were offered, and that only the one seven years old receives particular notice. **Of seven years old**—Its age covered exactly the period of Midianite oppression, (verse 1,) and it would seem that for this reason its age is designated. The fact was a noticeable one. **The grove that is by it**—Rather, *the Asherah that is upon it*; that is, the pillar or wooden statue of Asherah, the female divinity of the Canaanites, as Baal was the male divinity. See notes on chaps. ii, 13, and iii, 7. This verse shows how sadly the family of Joash had fallen into idolatry, and yet his family was only one of many in Israel similarly fallen.

**26. Upon the top of this rock**—Rather, *the top of this stronghold*. The reference is to the fortified summit of the mountain or hill on which Ophrah stood, not the rock on which Gideon had already built his Jehovah-shalom altar. **In the ordered place**—Rather, as in the margin, *in an orderly manner*;

lock, and offer a burnt sacrifice with the wood of the grove which thou shalt cut down. **27** Then Gideon took ten men of his servants, and did as the Lord said unto him: and so it was, because he feared his father's household, and the men of the city, that he could not do it by day, <sup>a</sup>that he did it by night. **28** And when the men of the city arose early in the morning, behold, the altar of Baal was cast down, and the grove was cut down that *was* by it, and the second bullock was offered upon the altar *that was* built. **29** And they said one to another, Who hath done this thing? And when they inquired and asked, they said, Gideon the son of

<sup>a</sup> Psa. 112. 5.—<sup>l</sup> Jer. 26. 11.—<sup>m</sup> Exod. 23. 2; Num. 14. 6; Eph. 5. 11.—<sup>12</sup> That is, *Let Baal*

literally, *with the arrangement*; that is, with that order, arrangement, and disposition which becomes a thing so sacred as an altar to Jehovah. Some, without sufficient reason, understand the Hebrew word to refer to the materials of the overthrown altar of Baal, out of which the new altar was to be built; others to the pieces of wood at the Baal altar which were lying there in readiness for use in the idol sacrifices. **The wood of the grove**—Rather, *the wood of the Asherah*; that is, of the wooden statue mentioned in the preceding verse.

**27. He feared his father's household**—He knew their devotion to the Baal worship, and that they would regard the overthrow of Baal's altar as most impious sacrilege. **He could not do it by day**—He had reason to expect that he would be hindered from doing it if he attempted it by daylight. The angel did not command him to do it that same night; but, for the reason here given, he himself decided to set about it at once.

**28. Behold... the second bullock was offered**—Its carcass was not yet consumed, but was smoking and burning still, when the men of the city arose; for it was probably near morning when Gideon and his ten men finished their work.

**29. They said, Gideon**—Who said? The answer is uncertain. Perhaps some of the ten servants who assisted Gideon reported his deed, or else the men of

Joash hath done this thing. **30** Then the men of the city said unto Joash, 'Bring out thy son, that he may die: because he hath cast down the altar of Baal, and because he hath cut down the grove that *was* by it. **31** And Joash said unto all that stood against him, "Will ye plead for Baal? will ye save him? he that will plead for him, let him be put to death whilst *it is yet morning*: if he *be* a god, let him plead for himself, because *one* hath cast down his altar. **32** Therefore on that day he called him <sup>12</sup> Jerubbaal, saying, Let Baal plead against him, because he hath thrown down his altar.

**33** Then all <sup>o</sup> the Midianites and the

*plead*.—<sup>n1</sup> Sam. 12. 11; 2 Sam. 11. 21, *Jerub-beneth*.—<sup>o</sup> Verse 3.

the city may have suspected Gideon because of some well-known opposition of his to the prevalent idolatry.

**30. That he may die**—Such sacrilege, in their judgment, deserved immediate death.

**31. Joash said**—The father stands up bravely for his son. The son's bold act seems to have inspired Joash with a kindred zeal, and, possibly, Gideon may have informed his father of his interview with the angel. **Whilst it is yet morning**—Literally, *until the morning*. But <sup>12</sup> *until*, here has the force of *while, during*, as in chap. iii, 26; and so the English version gives the true sense. Keil makes *until the morning* an independent clause, referring to the morning of the following day, and exclaims: "Let us wait until to-morrow, and give Baal time to avenge the insult which he has received!" But this thought is not conveyed by the words of the text. **If he be a god, let him plead for himself**—Wise and all-sufficient argument. A poor god that, which in a case like this was unable to defend himself.

**32. He called him Jerubbaal**—The *Baal-fighter*. The subject of the verb *called* is indefinite—*one called him*, like the subject of *cast down* in the preceding verse. The idea is, that from that day *Jerubbaal* became Gideon's common but honourable name. "When it became apparent to the people that Baal could not do him any harm, Jerub-

Amalekites and the children of the east were gathered together, and went over, and pitched in <sup>2</sup>the valley of Jezreel.

**34** But <sup>1</sup>the Spirit of the LORD <sup>12</sup>came upon Gideon, and he <sup>1</sup>blew a trumpet; and Abi-ezer <sup>14</sup>was gathered after him.

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

**36** And Gideon said unto God, If thou wilt save Israel by mine hand, as thou hast said, **37** <sup>1</sup>Behold, I will put

a fleece of wool in the floor; and if the dew be on the fleece only, and <sup>1</sup>it be dry upon all the earth <sup>beside</sup>, then shall I know that thou wilt save Israel by mine hand, as thou hast said. **38** And it was so: for he rose up early on the morrow, and thrust the fleece together, and wringed the dew out of the fleece, a bowl full of water. **39** And Gideon said unto God, 'Let not thine anger be hot against me, and I will speak but this once: let me prove, I pray thee, but this once with the fleece; let it now be dry only upon the fleece, and upon all the ground let there be dew. **40** And

<sup>p</sup> Josh. 17. 16.—<sup>q</sup> Chap. 3. 10; 1 Chron. 12. 18; 2 Chron. 24. 20.—<sup>13</sup> Heb. *clothed*.—<sup>r</sup> Num.

10. 3; chap. 3. 27.—<sup>14</sup> Heb. *was called after him*.—<sup>s</sup> See Exod. 4. 3, 4, 6, 7.—<sup>t</sup> Gen. 18. 32.

baal became a *Baal-fighter*, one who had fought against Baal."—*Keil*.

#### PREPARATIONS FOR WAR, 33-35.

**33. Pitched in the valley of Jezreel**—For purposes of plunder and oppression, as is explained in verses 3-6. This was a fresh invasion.

**34. The Spirit of the Lord came upon Gideon**—Literally, *clothed him*; wrapped him round as with a garment, or a strong coat of mail, so as to make him secure against his foes. Compare the same expression in 1 Chron. xii, 18; 2 Chron. xxiv, 20; Luke xxiv, 49.

**Blew a trumpet**—The customary signal for calling troops together, or collecting an army. Comp. chap. iii, 27. **Abi-ezer was gathered**—That is, the family or descendants of Abi-ezer, who dwelt in Ophrah. His own kindred were the first to rally around him; next his tribe, and then other tribes.

**35. Manasseh . . . Asher . . . Zebulun . . . Naphtali**—These tribes were near at hand, and could be easily summoned; but why other tribes were not also notified does not appear. Subsequently the Ephraimites were summoned to head off the flying Midianites, (vii, 24,) but for all that took offence. Chap. viii, 1. **They came up to meet them**—That is, the men of Asher, Zebulun, and Naphtali came to meet the Manassites.

#### THE SIGN OF THE FLEECE, 36-40.

Having assembled the thousands of Manasseh, Asher, Zebulun, and Naph-

tali, Gideon prays for one more sign from heaven, not so much for strengthening his own faith, (though that may have wavered again when he saw the vast host of the enemy in the plains below,) as for inspiring with confidence and holy heroism the hearts of those who rallied to his standard.

**37. A fleece of wool**—A homely sign, indeed, but none the less natural and appropriate among a simple, nomadic people. Jehovah's condescension in using a sign so simple, and yielding to this seemingly presumptuous request of Gideon, affords two lessons: 1. That he makes the weak things of the world confound the mighty, (1 Cor. i, 27;) 2. That he never ignores the prayer of the humble. **The floor**—The threshing floor, a small plot of ground in the open air, smoothed down and beaten hard. See on Ruth iii, 2.

**38. A bowl full of water**—Heavy dews are wont to fall in Palestine, especially on the highlands, and wool naturally absorbs much dew. Kitto says, that while travelling in some parts of western Asia he "often found cloaks of sheepskin, exposed to the open air, as heavy with dew as if they had been dipped in water." The preternatural sign in this case of Gideon lay in the fact implied, but not stated, that, while the fleece was so heavy with dew, the ground all around was dry.

**39. Dry only upon the fleece**—This of the two was the more astounding miracle, for that the wool, which so naturally absorbs dew, should be dry,

God did so that night: for it was <sup>a</sup> dry upon the fleece only, and there was dew on all the ground.

## CHAPTER VII.

**T**HEN <sup>a</sup>Jerubbaal, who *is* Gideon, and all the people that *were* with him, rose up early, and pitched beside the well of Harod: so that the host of the Midianites were on the north side of them, by the hill of Moreh, in the

<sup>a</sup> Psalm 107. 33, 35.—<sup>c</sup> Chapter 6. 32.—<sup>b</sup> Deuteronomy 8. 17; Isaiah 10. 13; 1 Corin-

and all the earth around wet with the dews of night, was an all-controlling evidence in this case that God would save Israel by Gideon's hand.

This sign of the fleece has been thought to have its typical significance. Dew may well represent the grace and blessings of Almighty God. According to Origen, the fleece wet with dew while all around was dry represented the Israelitish people blessed with the Covenants and Law, while all surrounding nations were left without them. The reversed sign, of the fleece dry and dew on all the ground, prefigured the coming time when Israel for unbelief would be rejected, and all the Gentiles receive the dews of heavenly grace. Others have given the signs a slightly different reference. But we may better make the allusion more general, and say that this double miracle symbolizes the course of the Divine Government in the history of nations. That Almighty Power that wrought these miracles will ever, in his government of the world, bestow or withhold his grace according to his infinite wisdom and the deserts of men and nations. If Israel, or any other nation, honour his Name and Law, they shall receive the blessings of his heavenly grace and power; but if they reject him, vengeance is his, and they may not hope to escape the rod of his anger.

## CHAPTER VII.

GIDEON'S ARMY REDUCED TO THREE HUNDRED, 1-8.

1. **The well of Harod**—Or, *fountain of trembling*. See on verse 3. Probably the large fountain *Ain Jalud*,

valley. 2 And the LORD said unto Gideon, The people that *are* with thee *are* too many for me to give the Midianites into their hands, lest Israel <sup>b</sup>vaunt themselves against me, saying, Mine own hand hath saved me. 3 Now therefore go to, proclaim in the ears of the people, saying, 'Whosoever *is* fearful and afraid, let him return and depart early from Mount Gilead. And there returned of the people twenty and

thians 1. 29; 2 Corinthians 4. 7.—<sup>c</sup> Deuteronomy 20. 8.

at the northern base of Mount Gilboa. It is a large pool forty or fifty feet in diameter, and from it flows, down the valley, eastward, a stream strong enough to turn a mill. By this same spring the Israelitish army encamped at a later day, before their disastrous battle with the Philistines, in which Saul was slain. See note on 1 Sam. xxix, 1. **By the hill of Moreh, in the valley**—This hill of Moreh is not to be confounded with the *oak* or *oaks* of Moreh, (wrongly rendered *plain* in English versions,) near Shechem, (Gen. xii, 6; Deut. xi, 30,) but was the Little Hermon, lying directly north of the Ain Jalud; and *the valley* was the broad plain situated between this mountain and Mount Gilboa on the south. This valley is really the eastern arm of the great Plain of Jezreel, and runs quite down to the Jordan. It was doubtless the great highway by which the Midianites came from the Jordan and pitched in the Valley of Jezreel. Chap. vi, 33. Between Mount Gilboa and the Little Hermon the valley is about two and a half miles wide, and all along in it lay the children of the East, like grasshoppers for multitude. Verse 12.

2 **Lest Israel vaunt themselves**—As human nature is ever prone to do. Compare marginal reference.

3. **Whosoever is fearful and afraid**—The word rendered *afraid* is identical with the name *Harod*, given to the fountain in verse 1, and hence some have supposed that the fountain took its name—*fount of trembling*—from the fears and tremblings of the people on this occasion. The same word is used of Saul's trembling on the same battlefield. 1 Sam. xxviii, 5. **From Mount**

O. T.

two thousand; and there remained ten thousand. **4** And the Lord said unto Gideon, 'The people *are* yet *too* many; bring them down unto the water, and I will try them for thee there: and it shall be, *that* of whom I say unto thee, This shall go with thee, the same shall go with thee; and of whomsoever I say unto thee, This shall not go with thee, the same shall not go. **5** So he brought down the people unto the water: and the Lord said unto Gideon, Every one that lappeth of the water with his tongue, as a dog lappeth, him shalt thou set by himself; likewise every one that boweth down upon his knees to drink. **6** And the number of them that lapped, *putting* their hand to their mouth, were three hundred men: but all the rest of

the people bowed down upon their knees to drink water. **7** And the Lord said unto Gideon, 'By the three hundred men that lapped will I save you, and deliver the Midianites into thine hand: and let all the *other* people go every man unto his place. **8** So the people took victuals in their hand, and their trumpets: and he sent *all the rest* of Israel every man unto his tent, and retained those three hundred men: and the host of Midian was beneath him in the valley.

**9** And it came to pass the same night, that the Lord said unto him, Arise, get thee down unto the host; for I have delivered it into thine hand. **10** But if thou fear to go down, go thou with Phurah thy servant down to the

d Psa. 33. 16.—e1 Sam. 16. 7; Psa. 7. 9; 56. 10; Judges 6. 27.

f1 Sam. 14. 6.—g Gen. 46. 2, 3; Job 4. 12, 13; Acts 13. 9, 10; 27. 23.

**Gilead**—This expression it is difficult to understand, since Mount Gilead is beyond the Jordan, and the Israelites were now at Mount Gilboa. The most natural supposition is, that the word Gilead is an error in the text, and we should read Gilboa. Le Clerc, Houbigant, Geddes, and others, adopt this conjectural reading. But as there is no authority for such a change of the text, some have supposed that there was a mountain by the fountain of Harod called Gilead, of which no other trace remains. Ewald suggests that the phrase "Mount Gilead" had become a synonym for the tribe of Manasseh, and is here used as a sort of war-cry for the tribe. This bidding the cowardly depart lest they should intimidate the rest was commanded even in the law. Deut. xx, 8.

**4. Down unto the water**—That is, the fountain Harod, and the stream that flowed from it.

**5. Lappeth of the water with his tongue**—The Hebrew word for lapping (לָלַץ, *yalok*) is onomatopoeic, and sounds in its pronunciation like the noise of a dog when drinking. It appears from the next verse that the three hundred that lapped took up the water from the fountain in the hollow of their hands, and thence licked it into their mouths. This manner of drinking was no evidence of fear and cowardice,

as Josephus imagines, but rather a commendable qualification in a soldier. For in the heat of battle it might often give a warrior great advantage over his foe, if, coming to a stream, he could thus easily refresh himself with drink without being obliged, if he drank at all, to fall down on his knees, and thereby expose himself to almost certain death from his enemy. "Those only are the true warriors of Jehovah, who, when an enjoyment is offered, as for instance, refreshment at a living well, taste it only in passing, and while standing on the alert; not seeking enjoyment, and crouching down to it in indolent comfort, but, mindful every minute of the business in hand and the desired victory, only lapping the water like dogs upon their way."—Ewald.

**8. The people took victuals**—Rather, *They took the victuals of the people, and their trumpets*. That is, the three hundred chosen men took the provisions of the people, the provisions and trumpets with which the people supplied them, after which the rest of the ten thousand (namely, nine thousand seven hundred) went to their homes.

THE PRESAGEFUL DREAM, 9-14.

**9. The same night**—It was probably night, or late in the afternoon, when the rest of the people were sent away.

**10. But if thou fear**—The meaning of this verse and the preceding is thus

host: **11** And thou shalt <sup>b</sup>hear what they say; and afterward shall thine hands be strengthened to go down unto the host. Then went he down with Phurah his servant unto the outside of the <sup>c</sup>armed men that *were* in the host. **12** And the Midianites and the Amalekites and <sup>d</sup>all the children of the east lay along in the valley like grasshoppers for multitude; and their camels *were* without number, as the sand by the sea side for multitude. **13** And

<sup>a</sup> Verses 13-15; see Gen. 24. 14; 1 Sam. 14. 9, 10.  
—<sup>b</sup> Or, *ranks by fives*; Exod. 13. 18. — <sup>c</sup> Chap.

well paraphrased by Keil: "Go with thy three hundred men *into* (בְּ) the hostile camp to smite it, for I have given it into thy hand; but if thou art afraid to do this, go down first with thine attendant to (אֶל) the camp, to ascertain the state and feeling of the foe, and thou wilt hear," etc. He who would give to a wicked and adulterous generation no sign but that of Jonah (Matt. xii, 39) multiplied his signs to the simple minded and humble Gideon.

#### 11. The outside of the armed men

—On the word מִשְׁמֵר, rendered *armed men*, see at Exod. xiii, 18, and Josh. i, 14. It does not mean that every individual in this host of Midian was armed, any more than Exod. xiii, 18, means that every Israelite that went out of Egypt was armed with weapons of war.

**12. Like grasshoppers... as the sand by the sea side**—Examples of oriental hyperbole, as common among the modern Arabs as among the ancient Hebrews.

**13. I dreamed a dream**—Dreaming has ever been the subject of curious speculations, and the Scriptures afford us various and some wonderful specimens of dreams. Compare Gen. xx, 3; xxviii, 12; xxxi, 11, 24; xxxvii, 6-11; 1 Kings iii, 5. They were one medium of divine revelation. Num. xii, 6. The dream of this Midianite was a noticeable interposition of Divine Providence, and was designed to encourage Gideon. There may have been, and probably was, a natural psychological basis for the dream in the fears and

when Gideon was come, behold, *there was* a man that told a dream unto his fellow, and said, Behold, I dreamed a dream, and, <sup>e</sup>lo, a cake of barley bread tumbled into the host of Midian, and came unto a tent, and smote it that it fell, and overturned it, that the tent lay along. **14** And <sup>f</sup>his fellow answered and said, This *is* nothing else, save the sword of Gideon the son of Joash, a man of Israel: *for* <sup>g</sup>into his hand hath God delivered Midian, and all the host.

6. 5, 33; 8. 10. — <sup>h</sup> 1 Cor. 1. 27. — <sup>i</sup> Num. 22. 38.  
— <sup>j</sup> m Exod. 15. 14, 15; Josh. 2. 9, 24; 5. 1.

suspensions of this Midianite, for the assembling of over thirty thousand Israelites at the call of Gideon could hardly be kept a secret from the entire host of Midianites. **A cake of barley bread**—Apt symbol, in the conceptions of a nomad, for a cultivator of the soil whose life would seem to be all occupied in raising grain and baking bread. **Tumbled**—Rolled down the mountain like a wheel. **Unto a tent**—The tent of some Midianitish chieftain, which, in the mind of the dreamer, would be associated with nomadic habits of life, and therefore a symbol of his people's freedom, greatness, and power. **The tent lay along**—The different expressions which describe the overthrow of the tent are noticeable. The barley cake smites it so as to knock it down; it falls, then is turned over upwards (לְמַעַלָּה) from having the tent pins torn out of the ground, and, rolling over and over, finally falls out flat upon the earth. This was a significant image of the complete overthrow of the Midianitish power.

**14. This is nothing else, save the sword of Gideon**—This ready interpretation of the dream shows that Gideon's mustering of the thousands of Israel had already filled many of the Midianites with alarm and terror. So often, when the masses of a nation recognize no danger, the dark presentiment of approaching calamity throws its grim shadow over some anxious and restless spirits, which, though comparatively unknown, still yearn for the public weal. **Into his hand hath God delivered Midian**—"If Gideon had

**15** And it was so, when Gideon heard the telling of the dream, and <sup>2</sup>the interpretation thereof, that he worshipped, and returned into the host of Israel, and said, Arise; for the Lord hath delivered into your hand the host of Midian. **16** And he divided the three hundred men <sup>3</sup>into three companies, and he put <sup>4</sup>a trumpet in every man's hand, with empty pitchers, and <sup>5</sup>lamps within the pitchers. **17** And he said unto them, Look on me, and do likewise: and, behold, when I come to the outside of the camp, it shall be *that*, as I do, so shall ye do. **18** When I blow with a trumpet, I and all that *are* with me, then blow ye the trumpets also on every side of all the camp, and say, <sup>6</sup>*The sword of the Lord*, and of Gideon. **19** So Gideon, and the hundred men

that *were* with him, came unto the outside of the camp in the beginning of the middle watch; and they had but newly set the watch: and they blew the trumpets, and brake the pitchers that *were* in their hands. **20** And the three companies blew the trumpets, and brake the pitchers, and held the lamps in their left hands, and the trumpets in their right hands to blow *withal*: and they cried, The sword of the Lord, and of Gideon. **21** And they <sup>7</sup>stood every man in his place round about the camp: <sup>8</sup>and all the host ran, and cried, and fled. **22** And the three hundred <sup>9</sup>blew the trumpets, and <sup>10</sup>the Lord set <sup>11</sup>every man's sword against his fellow, even throughout all the host: and the host fled <sup>12</sup>to Beth-shittah in Zererath, *and* to the <sup>13</sup>bor-

<sup>2</sup>Heb. *the breaking thereof*.—<sup>3</sup>Heb. *trumpets in the hand of all of them*.—<sup>4</sup>Or, *fire-brands, or, torches*.—<sup>5</sup>1 Sam. 17. 47; 2 Chron. 20. 13, 17.

<sup>6</sup>Exod. 14. 13, 14; 3 Chron. 20. 17.—<sup>7</sup>2 Kings 7. 7.—<sup>8</sup>Josh. 6. 4, 16, 20; 2 Cor. 4. 7.—<sup>9</sup>Psa. 83. 9; Isa. 9. 4.—<sup>10</sup>1 Sam. 14. 20; 2 Chron. 20. 23.—<sup>11</sup>Or, *towards*.—<sup>12</sup>Heb. *lip*.

heard the dream only, and he and his servant had been left to interpret it themselves, it might have done him little service; but having the interpretation from the mouth of an enemy, it not only appeared to come from God, who has all men's hearts and tongues in his hand, but it was likewise an evidence that the enemy was quite dispirited, and that the name of Gideon was become so formidable to them that it disturbed their sleep."—*Henry*.

#### DEFEAT OF THE MIDIANITES, 15-25.

**15. He worshipped**—Lifted up his heart in devout thanksgiving for the signal favour. **Hath delivered**—So confident is he of victory that he speaks of the enemy as already defeated.

**16. Three companies**—So as to form three attacking columns, and thereby give them the semblance of a mighty host. **Empty pitchers**—Earthen jars, which served to hide the **lamps** or *torches* as they approached the enemy's camp, and by their noise when broken served to confuse and terrify the Midianites.

**19. The beginning of the middle watch**—At midnight. Anciently the Israelites seem to have divided the night into three watches—*evening, midnight, and morning watches*. Exod.

xiv, 24; 1 Sam. xi, 11. Later they adopted from the Romans the custom of four watches. Matt. xiv, 25; Mark vi, 48.

**20. Sword of the Lord**—In verse 18 the word *sword* is supplied from this passage. The battle cry as there given is, literally, *For Jehovah and for Gideon*. This cry, ringing out from the three companies on different sides of the camp, together with the sound of the trumpets and the crashing of the pitchers, and the sudden glare of three hundred torches in the midnight darkness, might well bewilder and confound an army just waking out of sleep.

**21. They stood**—They did not rush in among the Midianites, but kept their station on the outside of the camp, blowing their trumpets and leaving the enemy to fight in confusion among themselves.

**22. Every man's sword against his fellow**—Midianite slaughtered Midianite, so that the sword of the enemy did service for the Lord and for Gideon. **Beth-shittah**—Possibly the modern *Shutta*, between Jezreel and the Jordan. Near this the Midianites must have passed in their flight towards the Jordan. **Zererath**—Identical with *Zarthan*, (1 Kings vii, 46,) and *Zeredathai*. 2 Chron. iv, 17. It was situated in the Jordan valley, and not far from

der of Abel-meholah, unto Tabbath. **23** And the men of Israel gathered themselves together out of Naphtali, and out of Asher, and out of all Manasseh, and pursued after the Midianites. **24** And Gideon sent messengers throughout all 'mount Ephraim, saying, Come down against the Midianites, and take before them the waters unto Beth-barah and Jordan. Then all the men of Ephraim gathered themselves together, and 'took the waters unto 'Beth-barah and Jordan. **25** And

they took 'two princes of the Midianites, Oreb and Zeeb; and they slew Oreb upon 'the rock Oreb, and Zeeb they slew at the winepress of Zeeb, and pursued Midian, and brought the heads of Oreb and Zeeb to Gideon on the 'other side Jordan.

## CHAPTER VIII.

**A**ND 'the men of Ephraim said unto him, 'Why hast thou served us thus, that thou calledst us not, when thou wentest to fight with the

*t* Chap. 3. 27.—*u* Chap. 3. 28.—*v* John 1. 28.  
—*w* Chap. 8. 3; Psa. 83. 11.—*x* Isa. 10. 26.—*y* Chap. 8. 4.

*a* See chapter 12. 1; 2 Samuel 19. 41.—1 Heb. *What thing is this thou hast done unto us?*

Beth-shean, but its exact locality has not been found. The same must be said of **Abel-meholah** and **Tabbath**.

**23. Gathered... out of Naphtali... Asher... Manasseh**—Men out of these tribes might have been quickly summoned to the pursuit of the flying foe. Many of them, if not all, were probably the same as those whom Gideon had so recently sent to their homes Verse 8. "The cities given to Manasseh, on the west of the Jordan, were along the southern margin of Esdraelon, and on the hills above. Asher came up to Carmel, at the bottom of this plain, and a swift runner could reach them in an hour. A portion of Naphtali occupied the western shore of the lake of Tiberias, and could be reached in the same way and about the same time. It was possible, therefore, for them to receive the summons and respond to it."—*Thomson*.

**24. Sent messengers throughout all mount Ephraim**—The Ephraimites had not been summoned to the war, (compare chap. viii, 1,) but are now called upon to intercept the flight of the foe. **The waters unto Beth-barah**—The various mountain torrents and water-courses which the Midianites would have to cross in order to reach Beth-barah and the fords of the Jordan. Others understand the waters of the Jordan at Beth-barah. The site of *Beth-barah* is unknown.

**25. Oreb and Zeeb**—These names mean respectively the *raven* and the *wolf*, and were, perhaps, descriptive of the fierce character of these Midianitish

chieftains. They remind us of names common among chiefs of the American Indians. **Rock Oreb... winepress of Zeeb**—These places, now unknown, received their names from the slaughter of these two princes. The historian, writing some time after the places had received these names, very naturally speaks of them in this way. **Pursued Midian**—After beheading Oreb and Zeeb, the Ephraimites continued their pursuit and followed the Midianites, who had, in spite of them, forced their way to the other side of the Jordan. **Brought the heads... to Gideon on the other side Jordan**—That is, after Gideon had also crossed over to the other, or east, side of Jordan, they brought to him the heads of the slaughtered chiefs. Thus, as Bertheau and Keil show, the writer anticipates Gideon's crossing of the Jordan in order to say what was done with the heads, and to mention in the same connexion the anger of the Ephraimites. Accordingly, Gideon's crossing the Jordan, which is mentioned chap. viii, 4, took place before these heads were brought to him, and before that war of words occurred which the writer next proceeds to record. Chap. viii, 1-3.

## CHAPTER VIII.

ANGER OF THE EPHRAIMITES, 1-3.

**1. The men of Ephraim**—Those who had captured and slain Oreb and Zeeb. **Said**—This conversation occurred when the Ephraimites brought the heads of these princes to Gideon,



Midianites? And they did chide with him <sup>2</sup>sharply. **2** And he said unto them, What have I done now in comparison of you? *Is not the gleanings of the grapes of Ephraim better than the vintage of Abi-ezer?* **3** <sup>b</sup>God hath delivered into your hands the princes of Midian, Oreb and Zeeb: and what was I able to do in comparison of you? Then their <sup>c</sup>anger was abated toward him, when he had said that.

**4** And Gideon came to Jordan, *and* passed over, he, and the three hundred men that *were* with him, faint, yet pursuing *them*. **5** And he said unto the men of Succoth, Give, I pray you, loaves of bread unto the people that

<sup>2</sup> Heb. *strongly*.—<sup>b</sup> Chap. 7. 24, 25; Phil. 2. 3.

<sup>3</sup> Heb. *spirit*.—<sup>c</sup> Prov. 15. 1.—<sup>d</sup> Gen. 33. 17; Psa. 60. 6.

and after the latter had crossed the Jordan. Note, chap. vii. 25. **Chide with him sharply**—Fiercely and violently rebuked and blamed him. Theirs were the words of injured pride and jealousy. They felt that their tribe had been ignored and neglected in this war.

**2. Is not the gleanings**—Is not the slaughter of these two chieftains a greater glory than all that I have done? **The gleanings of the grapes of Ephraim**, here, means the victory which these Ephraimites had gained by destroying Oreb and Zeeb. So memorable was this victory that Isaiah alludes to it as an instance of utter defeat and ruin. Isa. x. 26. **The vintage of Abi-ezer** refers particularly to what Gideon and his three hundred had done. Gideon was an Abi-ezrite, and perhaps the three hundred were largely of the same family, who were the first to rally around him at the trumpet call. Chap. vi. 34. This attributing to the Ephraimites greater honour than he claimed for himself settled the quarrel at once. His soft answer turned away their wrath, and became a proverb.

#### PURSUIT AND DEFEAT OF ZEBAH AND ZALMUNNA, 4-12.

**4. Gideon came to Jordan**—This, in point of time, was before the heads of the captured princes had been brought to him. Note, chap. vii. 25. **Faint, yet pursuing**—"An expres-

follow me; for they *be* faint, and I am pursuing after Zebah and Zalmunna, kings of Midian. **6** And the princes of Succoth said, *Are the hands of Zebah and Zalmunna now in thine hand, that we should give bread unto thine army?* **7** And Gideon said, Therefore when the Lord hath delivered Zebah and Zalmunna into mine hand, *then I will* <sup>a</sup>tear your flesh with the thorns of the wilderness and with briers. **8** And he went up thence <sup>b</sup>to Penuel, and spake unto them likewise: and the men of Penuel answered him as the men of Succoth had answered *him*. **9** And he spake also unto the men of Penuel, saying, When I <sup>c</sup>come again in

<sup>a</sup> See 1 Kings 20. 11.—<sup>f</sup> See 1 Sam. 25. 11.—<sup>g</sup> Verse 16.—<sup>4</sup> Heb. *thresh*.—<sup>h</sup> Gen. 32. 30; 1 Kings 12. 25.—<sup>i</sup> 1 Kings 22. 27.

sive description of the union of exhaustion and energy, which has given the words a place in the religious feelings of mankind."—*Stunley*.

**5. Succoth**—A town of considerable size, as appears from its having seventy-seven princes and elders. Verse 14. It took its name from Jacob's having there put up *booths* (Heb., *succoth*) for himself and his cattle. Gen. xxxiii. 17. It was on the east of the Jordan, but its site has not been certainly identified with any modern town. **I am pursuing**—He was engaged in the Lord's work, and had reason to expect assistance from the towns through which he passed.

**7. I will tear your flesh**—I will *thresh* your flesh, that is, beat and lacerate, even unto death. **Thorns**—Which grew strong in the desert, and afforded a whip with which the keenest torment could be inflicted. **Briers**—The original word occurs here only, but without much doubt denotes some kind of prickly plant or shrub. Gesenius gives the meaning *threshing sledges*, but is followed by few scholars. Wilkinson relates that among the ancient Egyptians the parricide was sentenced to be lacerated with sharpened reeds, and, after being thrown on thorns, was burned to death.

**8. Penuel**—The place at the fords of the Jabbok (Zurka) where Jacob wrestled with the angel. Gen. xxxii. 30. Its site has not been identified.

peace. <sup>1</sup>I will break down this tower. **10** Now Zebah and Zalmunna were in Karkor, and their hosts with them, about fifteen thousand *men*, all that were left of <sup>1</sup>all the hosts of the children of the east: for there fell <sup>a</sup>a hundred and twenty thousand men that drew sword. **11** And Gideon went up by the way of them that dwelt in tents on the east of <sup>2</sup>Nobah and Jogbehah, and smote the host: for the host was <sup>3</sup>secure. **12** And when Zebah and Zalmunna fled, he pursued after them, and <sup>4</sup>took the two kings of Midian, Zebah and Zalmunna, and <sup>5</sup>discomfited all the host. **13** And Gideon the son of Joash returned from battle before the sun was

*k* Verse 17.—*l* Chap. 7. 12.—*5* Or, *a hundred and twenty thousand, every one drawing a sword*: chap. 20. 2, 15, 17, 25; 2 Kings 3. 26.—*m* Num. 32. 35, 42.

**10. Karkor**—A city or district some distance east of the Jordan, but now unknown. **Fifteen thousand**—The remnant of the one hundred and thirty-five thousand that had spread themselves like locusts in the plains of Israel. **A hundred and twenty thousand** had either killed themselves in the suicidal night encounter, (chap. viii, 22,) or had fallen before the victorious Israelites. No wonder this defeat of Midian was remembered long in Israel. Compare Psa. lxxxiii, 11; Isa. ix, 4, 10, 26.

**11. Way of them that dwelt in tents**—A section of that eastern desert thickly dotted with the tents of resident shepherds. **Nobah**—The more ancient name was Kenath, but, having been captured by the Manassite Nobah, it was afterwards called by his name. See at Num. xxxii, 42. It has been identified with the modern Kunnawat, far to the east of the Sea of Galilee. **Jogbehah**—No trace of this place has been found. **The host was secure**—Supposed themselves beyond pursuit, and out of the way of danger.

PUNISHMENT OF SUCCOTH AND PENEUEL,  
13-17.

**13. Before the sun was up**—Thus the Vulgate, Luther, and others. But most modern scholars take פְּנֵי הַשֶּׁמֶשׁ, here rendered *sun*, as a proper name, *Cheres*, and translate: *Gideon returned from*

*up*, **14** And caught a young man of the men of Succoth, and inquired of him: and he <sup>7</sup>described unto him the princes of Succoth, and the elders thereof, *even* threescore and seventeen men. **15** And he came unto the men of Succoth, and said, Behold Zebah and Zalmunna, with whom ye did <sup>9</sup>upbraid me, saying, *Are the hands of Zebah and Zalmunna now in thine hand, that we should give bread unto thy men that are weary?* **16** <sup>1</sup>And he took the elders of the city, and thorns of the wilderness, and briers, and with them he <sup>2</sup>taught the men of Succoth. **17** <sup>1</sup>And he beat down the tower of <sup>3</sup>Penuel, and slew the men of the city.

*n* Chap. 18. 27; 1 Thess. 5. 8.—*o* Psa. 83. 11.—*6* Heb. *terrified*.—*7* Heb. *writ*.—*p* Verse 6.—*q* Verse 7.—*8* Heb. *made to know*.—*r* Verse 9.—*s* 1 Kings 12. 25.

*the battle by the ascent of Cheres*. The ascent of Cheres was probably some mountain road, or pass, now unknown.

**14. Described unto him the princes**—Literally, *wrote for him the princes*. The young man probably gave him the names of the chiefs and elders in writing, and all other necessary information. **Threescore and seventeen men**—Succoth must have been an important city to have so many princes and elders.

**16. Taught the men**—Made them know his power, and their own guilt, in refusing him supplies. He gave them such a severe scourging, by means of the whips of thorns and briers, that the lesson of respect for God's chosen conqueror could thenceforth neither be misunderstood nor forgotten.

**17. Tower of Penuel**—Penuel seems to have been an important stronghold commanding the ordinary route of travel to the far East; hence this *tower*, which may have served the double purpose of a watchtower and a fortress. **Slew the men**—The men of Penuel seem to have heard of Gideon's dealing with the elders of Succoth, and had the folly to resist him. Hence their punishment with death, while the men of Succoth were only scourged. Some have thought the punishment of the men of Penuel and Succoth was much greater than the offence. But, according to the theocratic spirit of

18 Then said he unto Zebah and Zalmunna, What manner of men *were they* whom ye slew at Tabor? And they answered, As thou *art*, so *were* they; each one *resembled* the children of a king. 19 And he said, They *were* my brethren, *even* the sons of my mother: *as* the Lord liveth, if ye had saved them alive, I would not slay you. 20 And he said unto Jether, his first-born, *Up, and slay them.* But the youth drew not his sword: for he feared, because he *was* yet a youth. 21 Then Ze-

t Chap. 4. 6; Psa. 89. 12.—9 Heb. *according to the form, &c.*—u Josh. 10. 24.

that age, their offence could only be construed as treachery of heart and open contempt towards a divinely chosen judge and conqueror, and, by consequence, contempt of Jehovah himself, who was leading Israel on to victory; and in the Hebrew mind no punishment was too severe for such a crime against Jehovah and his people.

#### EXECUTION OF ZEBAH AND ZALMUNNA, 18-21.

18. **What manner of men**—What was their appearance and general bearing? **Whom ye slew at Tabor**—Here comes out a fact of which we have no other account—that these Midianitish kings had actually killed several of Gideon's own brothers. **Resembled the children of a king**—Stately and lordly in their movements and manner.

20. **Said unto Jether**—He would add to their disgrace by making them perish by the hand of a boy. They had dared to lift their hands against his kingly brethren, and now, as blood-avenger, he would have them perish with all possible ignominy and reproach. **He feared**—The youth was not used to such bloody work, and perhaps the threatening looks of the two captive kings terrified him.

21. **As the man . . . his strength**—As the boy is not a man, so he has not the strength to execute this order. **Ornaments**—Or, *little moons*; crescent-shaped ornaments, hung often, as here, upon the necks of camels, and also (compare verse 26; Isa. iii, 18) upon the necks of men and women.

bah and Zalmunna said, Rise thou, and fall upon us: for as the man *is*, so *is* his strength. And Gideon arose, and *slew* Zebah and Zalmunna, and took away the *ornaments* that *were* on their camels' necks.

22 Then the men of Israel said unto Gideon, Rule thou over us, both thou, and thy son, and thy son's son also: for thou hast delivered us from the hand of Midian. 23 And Gideon said unto them, I will not rule over you, neither shall my son rule over you:

v Psalm. 83. 11.—10 Or, *ornaments like the moon.*

#### CONCLUSION OF GIDEON'S HISTORY, 22-35.

22. **Rule thou over us**—Here we meet with the earliest indication of a general desire in Israel to have a king. The expression *rule thou*, not *reign thou*, might mean only the people's desire to have Gideon execute the office of judge among them; but the additional words, **thy son, and thy son's son**, clearly involve the idea of a hereditary monarchy. But, as Gideon rejected their proposal, there is no occasion to discuss what all the people may have meant by their request. This much is clear, that in that day of victory and deliverance Gideon's popularity was unbounded, and the enthusiasm and gratitude of the people towards him were shown by this proposal to settle the government of the nation on him and his family.

23. **The Lord shall rule over you**—Your king shall still be Jehovah, not Gideon. By choosing a Gideon or a Saul the nation would be choosing a human instead of a divine sovereign. The people were ever in danger of forgetting the Divine Author of all civil government, and especially so in times of popular excitement and enthusiasm, when the masses either seem, or assume to be, sovereign. At such times all should be reminded that there is a power higher than the civil ruler. It does not appear that Gideon, during the forty years of peace (verse 28) that followed this victory over Midian, performed any of the ordinary duties of a civil ruler. It is not said that he *judged Israel* at all, though the silence of the history must not be construed

"the Lord shall rule over you. **24** And Gideon said unto them, I would desire a request of you, that ye would give me every man the earrings of his prey. For they had golden earrings, because they were <sup>2</sup> Ishmaelites. **25** And they answered, We will willingly give them. And they spread a garment, and did cast therein every man the

earrings of his prey. **26** And the weight of the golden earrings that he requested was a thousand and seven hundred *shekels* of gold; besides ornaments, and <sup>11</sup> collars, and <sup>7</sup> purple raiment that was on the kings of Midian, and besides the chains that were about their camels' necks. **27** And Gideon made an ephod thereof, and

v 1 Samuel 8. 7; 10. 19; 12. 12.—x Genesis 25. 13; 37. 25, 28.

11 Or, *sweet jewels*.—y Ezek. 27. 7.—z Chap. 17. 5.

into evidence that he never did. He was raised up to deliver the nation from the yoke of Midian, and, having nobly accomplished that work, he retired to his native city and dwelt there till his death.

But whatever the form of a government—whether it be a nation miraculously led and instructed, like Israel under Moses, Joshua, or the Judges, or a monarchy like that erected in the days of Saul, or modern empires or republics—the Lord is still the Ruler. All civil governments must have their officers, and these may differ widely in their character and powers; but "the powers that be are ordained of God," and the civil ruler is "the minister of God." Rom. xiii, 1-6. This is a doctrine of the Old Testament as well as of the New, and it is therefore the duty of all civil governments to know and acknowledge their dependence on the Supreme Ruler.

**24. The earrings of his prey—**Rings worn either in the ears or nose. Large quantities of these and other ornaments were taken from the one hundred and twenty thousand (verse 10) who were left dead on the field of battle. **Because they were Ishmaelites—**Hence it appears that the Ishmaelites were noted for wearing ornaments of gold. And, according to Thomson, it is "still the custom for men among these Bedouin Ishmaelites to wear gold earrings. I have often seen them, and among certain of the tribes it is quite the fashion; but these gold earrings belonged in part, no doubt, to the women. Bedouin women not only have them in their ears, but also large rings are suspended from the nose." *Ishmaelites* was a name commonly given to the children of the East,

(chap. vii, 12,) and included Midianites. See Gen. xxxvii, 25, 28. Ishmael was the great tribe-father of many of those sons of the desert; and the great territorial extent of his descendants (compare Gen. xxv, 18) seems to have given the name Ishmaelites so extensive a usage.

**26. A thousand and seven hundred shekels of gold—**About seventy pounds, Troy weight. **Ornaments—**Note, verse 21. **Collars—**Rather, *pendants*; probably some sort of drops suspended from the earrings. **Purple raiment—**A costly article among the Orientals, and such as only the rich and great might wear. **Chains—**Neck ornaments or collars. "Even at the present day the Arabs are accustomed to ornament the necks of their camels with a band of cloth or leather, upon which small shells are strung in the form of a crescent. The sheiks add silver ornaments to these, which make a rich booty in time of war. The women in Oman spend considerable amounts in the purchase of silver ornaments, and their children are literally laden with them. I have sometimes counted fifteen earrings upon each side; and the head, breast, arms, and ankles are adorned with the same profusion."—*Wellsted in Keil*.

**27. Made an ephod thereof—**The ephod was a sacred garment to be worn by the High Priest. Its form is described in Exod. xxviii, 6-12, where see notes, and also note and cut at Matt. xxvi, 3. There is no sufficient reason to suppose that *ephod* may here mean an image or statue of an idol, (as Gesenius,) nor that Gideon established a new sanctuary at Ophrah, and made, besides the ephod, a graven image and teraphim, as did Micah, chap. xvii, 4, 5.

put it in his city, *even* "in Ophrah: and all Israel "went thither a whoring after it: which thing became "a snare unto Gideon, and to his house. **28** Thus was Midian subdued before the children of Israel, so that they lift-

*a* Chap. 6. 24. — *b* Psa. 106. 39. — *c* Deut. 7. 16. *d* Chap. 5. 31.

Gideon made out of the Midianite spoils a splendid ephod, every way, probably, resembling the high priest's ephod as described in Exod. xxviii, 6-12. It was probably worked or woven throughout with golden threads, and adorned with precious stones, and perhaps had also a breastplate attached to it with chains and rings, as had the high priest's ephod. See Exod. xxviii, 15-29. It is not necessary to suppose that the whole of the gold was used in making the ephod; for, besides the amount necessary for the garment itself, a sum sufficient for the payment of the labour and the purchase of the precious stones had also to be provided.

But what was Gideon's object in making this costly ephod? First of all, we think, he wished to distinguish his native city with the possession of this splendid garment, which would naturally be a wonder to the people, and draw admiring crowds to see it. He would thus, also, ostensibly consecrate the spoils of his great national victory to a religious object. Next to the ark of the covenant, the chief vestment of the high priest was ranked among the most sacred things connected with the worship of Israel. But we are not to suppose that Gideon meant to introduce idolatry into Israel, or set up this ephod as an object of worship. Keil's supposition has much to support it, "that Gideon himself put on the ephod, and wore it as a priest, when he wished to inquire and learn the will of the Lord. It is also possible that he sacrificed to the Lord upon the altar that was built at Ophrah. Chap. vi, 24. The germ of his error lay in the fact that the high-priesthood had probably lost its worth in the eyes of the people on account of the worthlessness of its representatives, so that they no longer regarded the high priest as the sole or

ed up their heads no more. "And the country was in quietness forty years in the days of Gideon. **29** And Jerubbaal the son of Joash went and dwelt in his own house. **30** And Gideon had "threescore and ten sons "of his

*e* Chap. 9. 2, 5. — *f* Heb. *going out of his thigh*.

principal medium of divine revelation; and therefore Gideon, to whom the Lord had manifested himself directly, as he had not to any judge or leader of the people since the time of Joshua, might suppose that he was not acting in violation of the law when he had an ephod made as a means for inquiring the will of the Lord. His sin, therefore, consisted chiefly in his invading the prerogatives of the Aaronic priesthood, drawing away the people from the one legitimate sanctuary, and thereby not only undermining the theocratic unity of Israel, but also giving an impetus to the relapse of the nation into the worship of Baal after his death." So, again, at a later period, the calf-worship established by Jeroboam was not designed to introduce idolatry, but for all that proved a snare to Israel. Note, 1 Kings xii, 26. **Put it in his city**—Kept it there as a trophy of his victory, and as a medium through which he vainly imagined he might inquire of the Lord. **All Israel went thither**—They were seduced by the evil example of the great deliverer. He who had grace and modesty to decline a crown and a throne corrupts a people by his foul private example. He will not rule the nation, but he invades the sacred prerogative of the priesthood. **A whoring**—A metaphor referring to the vile conduct of a faithless wife, who, having plighted her love and devotion to her husband, forgets or breaks her vows, and holds unlawful intercourse with other men. By this figure the sacred writers often depict the idolatries of Israel. **Became a snare**—A trap to take them unawares. They did not intend evil, but by wilful and open neglect of the law they fell into idolatry, as into a snare.

**30. Many wives**—So to the crime of sacrilege he added that of polygamy.

body begotten: for he had many wives.

**31** <sup>1</sup> And his concubine that was in Shechem, she also bare him a son, whose name he <sup>12</sup> called Abimelech.

**32** And Gideon the son of Joash died <sup>13</sup> in a good old age, and was buried in the sepulchre of Joash his father, <sup>14</sup> in Ophrah of the Abi-ezrites. **33** And it came to pass, <sup>15</sup> as soon as Gideon was dead, that the children of Israel turned

again, and <sup>16</sup> went a whoring after Baalim, <sup>17</sup> and made Baal-berith their god.

**34** And the children of Israel <sup>18</sup> remembered not the Lord their God, who had delivered them out of the hands of all their enemies on every side: **35** <sup>19</sup> Neither showed they kindness to the house of Jerubbaal, *namely*, Gideon, according to all the goodness which he had showed unto Israel.

<sup>f</sup> Chap. 2. 1. — <sup>13</sup> Heb. *set*. — <sup>g</sup> Gen. 25. 8; Job 5. 26. — <sup>h</sup> Verse 27; chap. 6. 24. — <sup>i</sup> Chap. 2. 19.

<sup>k</sup> Chap. 2. 17. — <sup>l</sup> Chap. 9. 4, 46. — <sup>m</sup> Ps. 78. 11, 42; 106. 13, 21. — <sup>n</sup> Chap. 9. 16-18; Eccles. 9. 14, 15.

**31. Whose name he called Abimelech.**—Literally, as margin, *he set his name*, from which expression Keil understands that Gideon gave his son this name, not at the time of his birth, but after he had grown up and shown such qualities as led to the expectation that he would be a *king's father*. The name and maternity of this son prepare us for the history contained in the next chapter.

**33. As soon as Gideon was dead**—Compare chap. ii, 19, note. Gideon's own example had been a snare to Israel; but in spite of all that, there was so much of uprightness and goodness in his character that he restrained the people from idolatry all his days. Here mark the downward tendency of a questionable example. False, and even evil, opinions and practices may be held by some great minds with apparent innocence and harmlessness, but prove the ruin of others who presume to follow in their steps. **Baal-berith**—The *covenant Baal*. The name indicates that these Israelites entered into covenant with Baal, just as Israel, under Moses, had entered into covenant with Jehovah. From chap. ix, 4, 46, we learn that there was at Shechem a temple or house for his worship. He thus became to them the most sacred of deities, the god in whose name they might solemnize their oaths, thus corresponding with the *Zeὺς ὁρκίος* of the Greeks, and the *Deus Fidius* of the Romans.

**35. Neither showed they kindness.**—They proved ungrateful as well as idolatrous. Instead of making one of Gideon's legitimate sons ruler, (verse 22,) they saw all these cruelly slaughtered, and chose their murderer,

an illegitimate son, to reign over them for three years. Chap. ix, 22. **Jerubbaal, namely, Gideon.**—The names should be written *Jerubbaal-Gideon*. The double name is here apparently used as a reflection on Israel's baseness in neglecting the memory of the distinguished *Baal-fighter*, to whom they owed so much. Note, chap. vi, 32.

Thus closes the history of Gideon, another of the mixed and mysterious characters of the age of the Judges. He is the first of the deliverers of Israel whose history is given as a detailed narrative. He possessed gentleness and grace of heart and manner, with a lofty heroism and nobleness of character. This was enhanced by his commanding and kingly form.

As the deliverer of Israel, following out the instructions of Jehovah, we see in him every thing to praise: as the retired warrior, peacefully living at his native city, and apparently refusing to exercise the ordinary office of judge, there is something about him that is at least strangely unambitious; and in his setting up the costly ephod in Ophrah, and allowing all Israel to go whoring after it, we discover that which resembles a Jeroboam-like attempt to establish a new and unauthorized form and place of worship in Israel; and in this he bears the censure of the sacred historian himself. Gideon was manifestly a great character, but not well balanced. "There is a sweetness and nobleness blended with his courage, such as lifts us into a higher region—something of the past greatness of Joshua, something of the future grace of David. But he was, as we should say, before his age. The attempt to establish a more settled form of govern-

## CHAPTER IX.

**A**ND Abimelech the son of Jerubbaal went to Shechem unto <sup>a</sup>his mother's brethren, and communed with them, and with all the family of the house of his mother's father, saying, <sup>b</sup>2 Speak, I pray you, in the ears of all the men of Shechem, <sup>c</sup>1 Whether ~~is~~ better for you, either that all the sons of Jerubbaal, *which are* <sup>d</sup>three-score and ten persons, reign over you, or that one reign over you? remember also that I

<sup>a</sup> Chap. 8. 31.—<sup>b</sup> 1 Heb. *What is good? whether*, &c.—<sup>c</sup> Chap. 8. 30.—<sup>d</sup> Gen. 29. 14.—<sup>e</sup> 2 Heb. *after*.—<sup>f</sup> Gen. 29. 15.—<sup>g</sup> Chap. 8. 33.

ment ended in disaster and crime. He himself remains as a character apart, faintly understood by others, imperfectly fulfilling his own ideas, staggering under a burden to which he was not equal."—*Stanley*.

The attempt of some expositors, ancient and modern, to make Gideon a type of Christ, is justly condemned by Dr. Clarke. It is farfetched and useless, and does more to confuse the sacred history than to explain it. The history of the Judges is manifestly designed, not to give us types of the Messiah, but rather to show up the lower and higher aspects of human character in the development of history. We see in this book the natural workings of humanity when confronted on the one side by the world, the flesh, and the devil, and on the other by the law and revelations of God. The conflict too often results in the victory of the flesh over the Spirit.

## CHAPTER IX.

## ABIMELECH'S USURPATION, 1-6.

1. **Abimelech**—Son of Gideon by his concubine, who lived in Shechem. Chap. viii. 31. His mother's family evidently possessed great influence in the city.

2. **All the men of Shechem**—Literally, *all the lords of Shechem*, that is, all the prominent citizens, whether Israelitish or Canaanitish. Comp. verse 28. Abimelech's usurpation was shrewdly planned and most skillfully executed. His address to the citizens of his native place was well adapted to win their hearts. The name of **Jerubbaal**, the

*am* <sup>a</sup>'your bone and your flesh. **3** And his mother's brethren spake of him in the ears of all the men of Shechem all these words; and their hearts inclined <sup>b</sup>to follow Abimelech; for they said, He *is* our <sup>c</sup>brother. **4** And they gave him three-score and ten *pieces* of silver out of the house of <sup>d</sup>'Baal-berith, where-with Abimelech hired <sup>e</sup>'vain and light persons, which followed him. **5** And he went unto his father's house <sup>f</sup>'at Ophrah, and <sup>g</sup>'slew his brethren the

<sup>f</sup> Chap. 11. 3; 2 Chron. 13. 7; Prov. 12. 11; Acts 17. 5.—<sup>g</sup> Chap. 6. 24.—<sup>h</sup> 2 Kings 11. 1, 2; 2 Chron. 21. 4; Matt. 2. 16, 20.

**Baal-fighter**, was alone calculated to rouse the animosity of the Shechemites, who were devoted to the worship of Baal, and had a house erected to his honour. Verse 4. Then, the notion of being ruled by seventy kings instead of one would be anything but agreeable; and though there may have been no evidence that the seventy sons of Jerubbaal aspired to reign, it might have been thought wise to provide against such a contingency. But what most swayed their minds was Abimelech's significant reminder, **I am your bone and your flesh**. His mother's family stood high in Shechem, and her son seemed, therefore, to be a brother of them all.

4. **They gave him**—As a tribute to royalty, and to enable him to hire a body-guard and provide himself with the emblems of royalty. **Threescore and ten pieces of silver**—Silver shekels are probably meant, and this number would amount to about forty dollars. **House of Baal-berith**—The edifice or temple which the Shechemites had built for the worship of this heathen deity. Great treasure was usually laid up in such temples, and not unfrequently applied to political purposes. Compare 1 Kings xv, 18. The treasures of Baal were thought to be well appropriated to the use of him who essayed to destroy the sons of Jerubbaal, the Baal-fighter. There was one piece of silver to each of the seventy sons of the Baal-destroyer. **Vain and light persons**—Loose and desperate characters, who were alike ready for the lowest meanness and the darkest crimes.

sons of Jerubbaal, *being* threescore and ten persons, upon one stone: notwithstanding, yet Jotham the youngest son of Jerubbaal was left; for he hid himself. 6 And all the men of Shechem gathered together, and all the

8 Or, *by the oak of the pillar*; see Josh. 24. 26.

5. **Upon one stone**—That is, he made his brethren prisoners, and then led them out, and subjected them to a formal execution all at one place and time. Perhaps the place of execution was the rock where the angel had revealed himself to Gideon. Chap. vi, 20. This massacre, says Keil, was “a bloody omen of the kingdom of the ten tribes, which was afterwards founded at Shechem by Jeroboam, in which one dynasty overthrew another, and generally sought to establish its power by exterminating the whole family of the dynasty that had been overthrown. Even in Judah, Athaliah, the worshipper of Baal, sought to usurp the government by exterminating the whole of the descendants of her son. 2 Kings xi. Such fratricides have also occurred in quite recent times in the Mohammedan countries of the East.” Abimelech has the unenviable distinction of giving the first example of that barbarous system of state policy.

6. **House of Millo**—It seems best to understand *Millo* here, as in 2 Sam. v, 9, as the name of the principal fortress of the city, and identical with the *tower of Shechem*, mentioned verses 46, 47, 49. It was, perhaps, situated on Mount Gerizim, where it would command the city of Shechem. On the summit of Gerizim Robinson found the remains of an ancient fortress. The word *Millo* (מִלּוֹ) comes from מָלַא, *to fill*, and naturally designates a rampart filled in with earth or stones. The company or family of armed men who held possession of this citadel were a most important part of the population, and it would not be wise to inaugurate a new king without their presence and coöperation. **Plain of the pillar**—Rather, *oak of the pillar*, probably the famous oak under which Joshua set up the great stone for a witness in Israel. Josh. xxiv, 26. The word מִצֵּב, trans-

lated *pillar*, literally means, *any thing placed or set up*, and might designate either a monument or a military station. We may as well adhere to the English version, *pillar*. This oak was distinguished by a monumental pillar under it or near to it, and might itself have been a monumental tree that had, as we have suggested above, been standing there since the days of Joshua. It would have been a most natural spot to convene such an assembly as that which gathered to make Abimelech king.

4 Deut. 11. 29; 27. 12; Josh. 8. 33; John 4. 20.

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#### JOTHAM'S PARABLE, 7-21.

The following beautiful apologue, commonly called the parable of Jotham, is rather a *fable* than a parable. The parable moves in the higher realm of spiritual thought. Its imagery is always taken from real life, and its narrative that which may have been objectively true, and often has its parallel in the history of man. See note, Matt. xiii, 3. The fable is based on imaginary actions of irrational creatures or inanimate things, and can therefore never be true to actual life. It deals with talking trees and beasts, imagery which all know has no foundation in fact, but which may still serve a useful purpose in setting forth most suggestive and valuable lessons for the people. Such a fable is this discourse of Jotham, the oldest and one of the best apologues in the world.

7. **Mount Gerizim**—The steep mountain that overhangs Shechem on the south. See note and cuts at Josh. viii, 30. **Lifted up his voice**—This discourse of Jotham seems to have been uttered to the same assembly that had gathered to make Abimelech king, and on the very day of the inauguration. Verse 19. “Several lofty precipices of Gerizim literally overhang the city, any one of which would au-



cried, and said unto them, Harken unto me, ye men of Shechem, that God may hearken unto you. 8 <sup>1</sup> The trees went forth *on a time* to anoint a king over them; and they said unto the olive

2 Kings 14. 9. — *l* Chap. 8. 22, 23. — *m* Ps. 104. 15.

swer his purpose. Nor would it be difficult to be heard, as every body knows who has listened to the public crier of villages on Lebanon. Indeed, the people in these mountainous countries are able, from long practice, so to pitch their voices as to be heard distinctly at distances almost incredible. They talk with persons across enormous wadies, and give the most minute directions, which are perfectly understood; and in doing this they seem to speak very little louder than their usual tone of conversation."—*Thomson*. On the acoustics of the Shechem valley see note on Josh. viii. 33. **That God may hearken unto you**—He addresses the Shechemites as one having divine authority, and evidently under divine inspiration.

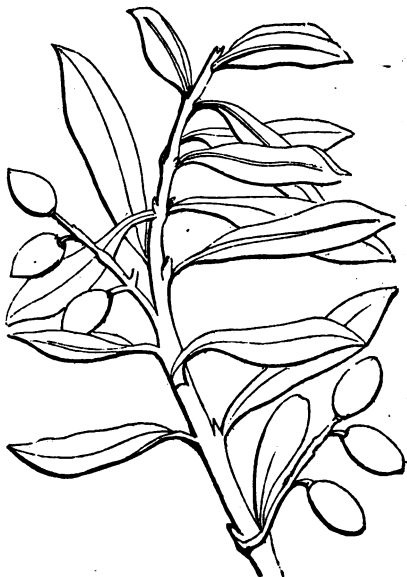
8. **The trees**—According to Dr. Thomson, the olive, the fig, the vine, and the bramble are the trees which most abound in the neighbourhood of Shechem. **To anoint a king**—There had as yet been no king in Israel, but the custom of anointing kings for their office was familiar to the people, and Abimelech had probably just now been inducted into royalty in this way before this same assembly. **The olive**—One of the most highly valued and extensively cultivated trees of Palestine.

9. **My fatness**—A reference to the olive oil, which was manufactured and used in great quantities among the ancients. The *fatness* of the olive, and its chief value, was its oil. **Honour God and man**—God was honoured by the fatness of the olive in its use for light in his sanctuary. (Exod. xxvii. 20,) and for the holy offerings and rites of his house. Exod. xxix. 23, 40. Man was honoured

tree, <sup>1</sup> Reign thou over us. 9 But the olive tree said unto them, Should I leave my fatness, <sup>m</sup> wherewith by me they honour God and man, and <sup>o</sup> go to be promoted over the trees? 10 And

4 Heb. *go up and down for other trees*.

by it in its various domestic uses, and especially by its use in anointing prophets, priests, and kings. **To be promoted over the trees**—Better, *to wave over the trees*. The Hebrew verb *יָרַח*, *to wave, to reel*, is often used of the staggering motion of a drunken man, and also of a wandering person, *going up and down*, as the margin has it, and might aptly characterize a king like Abimelech, who reels and wanders to and fro among the people, and is no benefit to any one. Jotham may have meant, in the use of this word, to throw a contemptuous gibe at Abimelech. But the word is here in keeping with the imagery of trees; and the waving of one tree over another is a beautiful image of royal supremacy and power



BRANCH OF THE OLIVE.

the trees said to the fig tree, Come thou, *and reign over us.* **11** But the fig tree said unto them, Should I forsake my sweetness, and my good fruit, and go to be promoted over the trees? **12** Then

*n* Num. 15. 5, 7; Psa.

said the trees unto the vine, Come thou, *and reign over us.* **13** And the vine said unto them, Should I leave my wine, "which cheereth God and man, and go to be promoted over the trees?"

104. 15; Prov. 31. 6.



BRANCH OF THE FIG TREE.

**11. The fig tree**—Another of the excellent and highly valued trees of Palestine, the **sweetness** of whose good fruit is proverbial.

**13. The vine**—Palestine has ever been celebrated for the luxuriant growth, abundance, and excellence of its grape-vines, and also for the immense clusters of grapes which they produced. Compare what is said of the clusters of Eshcol, Num. xiii, 23. The sap of the vine is sometimes used in the East as medicine; its ripe fruit, both fresh and in its dried state as raisins, is highly esteemed; but its chief use was for the production of **wine**. **Which cheereth God and**

**man**—Wine was largely used in the sacred services of Jehovah, being poured out as a drink offering to him. Comp. Exod. xxix, 40; Lev. xxiii, 13; Num. xv, 5. In this sense, like the olive-oil, it might be said to cheer and honour Him. So, too, libations of wine were offered in the heathen sacrifices. From its exhilarating qualities, wine was also said to gladden the heart of man. Psa. civ, 15; Prov. xxxi, 6. It was used as a common and highly esteemed beverage among the Israelites, and it is



VINE BRANCH

14 Then said all the trees unto the <sup>a</sup>bramble, Come thou, *and* reign over us. 15 And the bramble said unto the

5 Or, *thistle*.—o Isa. 30. 2; Dan. 4. 12; Hosea

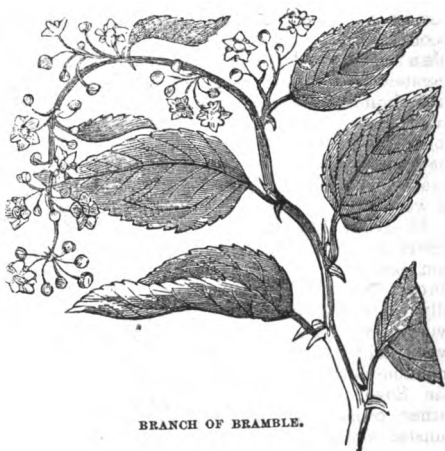
often spoken of in Scripture as one of God's blessings, just as are corn and oil, and milk and honey. Its moderate use seems never to have been regarded dangerous or evil, though drunkenness is everywhere condemned. The importance of the modern "wine question," and zeal for the doctrine of *total abstinence*, must not run us into false expositions of Scripture, or lead us to conceal or to evade the facts of sacred history. Customs and circumstances now seem clearly to make it a duty of Christians to abstain totally from wine; and self-denial, in whatever form it may serve to promote the cause of morality and religion, becomes always the bounden duty of the man of God. But abstinence and self-denial in this respect are always to be urged on the ground of Christian expediency, not of specific scriptural command.

14. **All the trees**—Not one of *all the trees* was willing to be king, but *all* were willing that the bramble should rule over them—a striking reflection on the Shechemites. { We understand Gideon and his sons, under the refusal of royalty, (chap. viii, 23,) to be represented by the olive and the vine, and Abimelech by the bramble. The bramble does not refuse to be king. Jotham sarcastically makes the bramble invite them to come under his shade, as an image of the felicity? of the Shechemites if they have done well in their choice. But if, as he believes, they have done wickedly, their bramble will prove a torch to burn their very cedars of Lebanon, the tallest of the Shechemite nobility. } **The bramble**—The word *אֲדָמָה*, *atud*, occurs elsewhere only in Ps. lvi. 9, where it

trees, If in truth ye anoint me king over you, *then* come *and* put your trust in my <sup>a</sup>shadow; and if not, <sup>b</sup>let fire

14. 7.—p Verse 20; Num. 21. 28; Ezek. 19. 14.

is rendered *thorns*, and Gen. i, 10, where it is rendered as a proper name. "It is generally thought to denote the *southern buckthorn*, a brier bush indigenous in Egypt and Syria, shooting up from the root in many branches, (ten to fifteen feet high,) armed with spines, and bearing leaves resembling those of the olive, but light coloured and more slender, with little whitish blossoms that eventually produce small, black, bitter berries. The Arabs still call it *atud*. Rauwolf found it growing at Jerusalem."—*M'Clintock and Strong's Cyclopædia*. From this same bush it is sup-



BRANCH OF BRAMBLE.

posed the Saviour's crown of thorns was made. Compare note on Matt. xxvii, 29.

#### 15. Put your trust in my shadow

—The bramble has no shadow worthy of the name, and the language here is a biting irony upon those who had chosen a worthless man for a king. A thorn bush give shade and protection to the olive or the fig tree! As well might one expect to gather grapes of thorns or figs of thistles. **Let fire**

come out of the bramble, and devour the cedars of Lebanon. **16** Now therefore, if ye have done truly and sincerely, in that ye have made Abimelech king, and if ye have dealt well with Jerubbaal and his house, and have done unto him according to the deserving of his hands: **17** (For my father fought for you, and adventured his life far, and delivered you out of the hand of Midian: **18** And ye are risen up against my father's house this day, and have slain his sons, threescore and ten persons, upon one stone, and have made Abimelech, the son of his maidservant, king over the men of Shechem, because

*q* 2 Kings 14. 9; Psa. 104. 16; Isa. 2. 13; 37. 24; Ezek. 31. 3.—*r* Chap. 8. 35.—*s* Heb. *cast his life*.—*t* Verses 5, 6.—*u* Isa. 8. 6; Phil. 3. 3; James 4. 16.

**come out of the bramble**—Thorn-bushes are commonly used for fuel in the East. They easily catch fire and soon burn out, and yet they may kindle a fire that will burn and destroy the greatest of trees, even the noble **cedars of Lebanon**. So a weak and worthless ruler may provoke civil discords, or incur foreign wars, which in their fiery progress swallow up and devour the brave, the virtuous, and the noble. So it was in the case of Abimelech.

**16. Now therefore**—Jotham proceeds to apply his fable, so that no one can possibly fail to see and feel its force. **Truly and sincerely**—Literally, *in truth and integrity*. These words, repeated again in verse 19, when taken in connection with the mention of the debt of gratitude which the Shechemites owed to Jotham's father, contain a most scornful and caustic rebuke for all the men of Shechem, and implied, as surely as he spake by inspiration, that their lack of truth and integrity would bring upon them swift destruction.

**20. Devour Abimelech**—The application transcends the fable itself. Not only shall Abimelech, the accursed bramble, kindle a fire to the destruction of many lords of Shechem, but also fires of revengeful judgment shall come out in fury from the latter, and devour Abimelech himself. All this, as the subsequent history shows, was a true prophecy. See verses 49–57.

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he is your brother: **19** If ye then have dealt truly and sincerely with Jerubbaal and with his house this day, then rejoice ye in Abimelech, and let him also rejoice in you: **20** But if not, let fire come out from Abimelech, and devour the men of Shechem, and the house of Millo; and let fire come out from the men of Shechem, and from the house of Millo, and devour Abimelech. **21** And Jotham ran away, and fled, and went to Beer, and dwelt there, for fear of Abimelech his brother. **22** When Abimelech had reigned three years over Israel, **23** Then God sent an evil spirit between Abim-

*u* Verses 15, 56, 57; Psa. 21. 9, 10; 140. 10.—*v* 2 Sam. 20. 14.—*w* 1 Sam. 16. 14; 18. 9, 10; see 1 Kings 12. 15; 22. 22; 2 Chron. 10. 15; 18. 19, &c.—*x* Isa. 19. 2, 14.

**21. Jotham ran away**—After such a burning application of his fable he knew that his only safety was in flight. The precipice from the top of which he spoke enabled him to get the start of any who might be disposed to pursue him. **Beer**—The locality of this town is uncertain. There was a place of this name east of the Dead Sea, in the confines of Moab, where the Israelites were encamped, (Num. xxi, 16,) and possibly this was the very spot to which Jotham fled. Some identify it with *Beeroth*, the modern *el-Birh*, seven miles north of Jerusalem. Josh. ix, 17. **Dwelt there**—Probably in obscurity and sorrow. Nothing more is heard of him in Scripture. Thus many of earth's noblest natures, like the lone desert flower, are doomed to pine in obscurity and neglect.

DOWNFALL OF ABIMELECH, 22–57.

**22. Three years**—So long a time it seems **all Israel**, not merely the men of Shechem, were content that the miserable Abimelech should rule over them. He probably confined himself to Shechem and the tribes of Israel contiguous, and his rule was but a weak specimen of royalty, with which most of the twelve tribes lightly concerned themselves. This abortive effort after a monarchy seems to have satisfied the Israelites until the days of Samuel.

**23. God sent an evil spirit**—Not merely "permitted jealousies to take

O. T.

elech and the men of Shechem; and the men of Shechem <sup>2</sup>dealt treacherously with Abimelech: **24** <sup>1</sup>That the cruelty *done* to the threescore and ten sons of Jerubbaal might come, and their blood be laid, upon Abimelech their brother, which slew them, and upon the men of Shechem, which <sup>2</sup>aided him in the killing of his brethren. **25** And the men of Shechem set <sup>1</sup>liers in wait for him in the top of the mountains, and they robbed all that came along

<sup>a</sup> Isa. 33. 1.—<sup>y</sup> 1 Kings 2. 32; Esther 9. 25; Psal. 7. 16; Matt. 23. 35, 36.—<sup>7</sup> Heb. *strengthened his hands to kill.*

place, which produced factions, but actually sent, or permitted to go, a personal evil demon, to generate discords among the Shechemites and thus bring judgment on them for their wickedness. The Scriptures everywhere recognise a kingdom of darkness, as well as a kingdom of light; and it is contrary to reason and experience, as well as Scripture, to assume the impossibility of personal evil spirits having influence over the human soul. But these powers of darkness are held in check, and their agency is circumscribed, by the mightier power of God, who sometimes sends them, as a huntsman sends his dog after the game, by unbinding their powers and letting them loose to their own route. See note on Mark v, 13. The evil spirit that troubled Saul came by permission and command of God. (1 Sam. xvi, 14,) and even Satan goes forth to afflict pious Job by permission of Jehovah. Job i, 12; ii, 6. **Dealt treacherously**—The very men who had been so ready to make Abimelech king are the first to seek his overthrow.

**25. Liers in wait for him**—Ambushed warriors, who watched particularly for an opportunity of assassinating the king when he should chance to pass out of the city, but meantime **robbed all that came along... by them**, innocent travellers, and thus brought the government itself into disrepute; for the people would feel that a worthless king was the occasion of the troubles. **It was told Abimelech**—And it seems he at once took measures to put down the banditti, but be-

that way by them; and it was told Abimelech. **26** And Gaal the son of Ebed came with his brethren, and went over to Shechem: and the men of Shechem put their confidence in him. **27** And they went out into the fields, and gathered their vineyards, and trode *the grapes*, and made <sup>2</sup>merry, and went into <sup>2</sup>the house of their god, and did eat and drink, and cursed Abimelech. **28** And Gaal the son of Ebed said, <sup>b</sup> Who *is* Abimelech, and who *is* She-

<sup>z</sup> Josh. 8. 4; Prov. 1. 11, 12.—<sup>8</sup> Or, *songs*; see Isa. 16. 9, 10; Jer. 23. 30.—<sup>a</sup> Verse 4.—<sup>b</sup> 1 Sam. 25. 10; 1 Kings 12. 16.

fore he had moved far the matter assumed the proportions of a fierce rebellion.

**26. Put their confidence in him**—Entrusted him with the command of the rebellion, which he was but too ready to accept. Gaal seems to have been, as Keil expresses it, a sort of "knight-errant, who went about the country **with his brethren**, that is, as captain of a company of freebooters, and was welcomed in Shechem, because the Shechemites, who were dissatisfied with the rule of Abimelech, hoped to find in him a man who would be able to render them good service in their revolt from Abimelech."

**27. Went out into the fields**—To gather the vintage, as the context shows. **Made merry**—Rather, *made a thanksgiving festival*, as was the common custom at the time of the harvest. **House of their god**—The temple of Baal-berith. Verse 4. They honoured their god with thanksgivings similar to those which the law prescribed for the praise of Jehovah. Lev. xix, 24.

**28. Who is Abimelech**—A most contemptuous question, implying that Abimelech was unworthy of respect. Compare 1 Sam. xxv, 10. **Who is Shechem**—Shechem is not here opposed to Abimelech, as many commentators have supposed—that is, How contemptible is Abimelech on the one hand, and how noble is Shechem on the other!—for both words have the same grammatical and logical construction; but *Shechem* is to be understood of that part of the citizens of the place who were loyal to the king,

chem, that we should serve him? *is* not *he* the son of Jerubbaal? and Zebul his officer? serve the men of Hamor the father of Shechem: for why should we serve him? **29** And *‘would to God* these people were under my hand! then would I remove Abimelech. And he said to Abimelech, *‘Increase* thine army, and come out. **30** And when Zebul the ruler of the city heard the words of Gaal the son of Ebed, his anger was kindled. **31** And he sent messengers unto Abimelech *‘privily*, saying, Behold, Gaal the son of Ebed and his brethren be come to Shechem; and, behold, they fortify the city against thee. **32** Now therefore up *‘by* night, thou and the people that is with thee, and lie in wait in the field: **33** And it

*c* Gen. 34. 2, 6.—*d* 2 Sam. 15. 4; Psa. 10. 8.—*e* 2 Kings 18. 23; Isa. 36. 8, 9.—*f* Or, *hot*.—*g* Heb. *craftily*, or, *to Tormah*.

and obedient to the authority of Zebul, the governor of the city. Among these were probably many of Abimelech's kindred, for "the house of his mother's father" had evidently no little influence in Shechem, (note, verse 1,) and they would naturally be opposed to this insurrection against the rule of their brother. Verse 3. Zebul, the governor, was opposed to the rebellion, for his anger was kindled when he heard of what Gaal had said and done, (verse 30,) and with him, doubtless, many of the Shechemites sympathized. So to the question, **Who is Abimelech?** corresponds the answer, **Son of Jerubbaal;** and to **Who is Shechem?** corresponds, **Zebul his officer,** involving, of course, all the Shechemites who sympathized with Zebul and were loyal to Abimelech. The antithesis is between Abimelech and this part of the Shechemites on the one hand, and the **we**, with whom Gaal identifies himself, on the other. These latter are called **the men of Hamor the father of Shechem**, that is, descendants of that ancient and noble prince who had founded the city, and called it Shechem, after the name of his son. Gen. xxxiii, 19. It is altogether probable that a remnant of that ancient Hivite family still abode in Shechem, and might, with much plausibility, assume to be patri- cians of that capital of their fathers.

shall be, *that* in the morning, as soon as the sun is up, thou shalt rise early, and set upon the city: and, behold, *when* he and the people that *is* with him come out against thee, then mayest thou do to them *‘as* thou shalt find occasion. **34** And Abimelech rose up, and all the people that *were* with him, by night, and they laid wait against Shechem in four companies. **35** And Gaal the son of Ebed went out, and stood in the entering of the gate of the city: and Abimelech rose up, and the people that *were* with him, from lying in wait. **36** And when Gaal saw the people, he said to Zebul, Behold, there come people down from the top of the mountains. And Zebul said unto him, Thou *‘seest* the shadow of the mountains as

*f* Job 24. 14, 17; Psa. 86. 4; Prov. 1. 11, 16.—*g* Heb. *as thy hand shall find*, 1 Sam. 10. 7. 25. 8; Eccles. 9. 10.—*h* Ezek. 7. 7; Mark 8. 24.

**Why should** the descendants of such a family **serve** the son of the hated Baul-fighter, the destroyer of their idols?

**29. Under my hand**—The boastful language of one who yearns for political power. Compare 2 Sam. xv, 4. **Increase thine army**—The noisy swaggerer, heated with wine, and still more intoxicated with the thirst for power, boldly challenges Abimelech to battle.

**31. Sent messengers unto Abimelech**—Who was dwelling at Arumah. Verse 41. **Privily**—Literally, *in deceit*; that is, so as to deceive and blind Gaal, who might have been led to infer from his silence that Zebul would not oppose him in his war with the king. **They fortify the city against thee**—Rather, according to Gesenius and Keil, *they urge on, or stir up, the city against thee*.

**34. Four companies**—So as to attack the city at different points.

**36. Shadow of the mountains**—Zebul speaks to him *in deceit*; that is, for the purpose of deceiving him, just as he had sent to Abimelech. Verse 31. He wishes to gain time for Abimelech, and pretends that the advancing forces are but the moving shadows of the heights of Ebal, which in the early morning always spread themselves upon the landscape of Shechem.

*if they were men.* **37** And Gaal spake again and said, See, there come people down by the <sup>12</sup>middle of the land, and another company come along by the plain of <sup>13</sup>Meonenim. **38** Then said Zebul unto him, Where <sup>is</sup> now thy mouth, wherewith thou <sup>14</sup>saidst, Who <sup>is</sup> Abimelech, that we should serve him? <sup>is</sup> not this the people that thou hast despised? go out, I pray now, and fight with them. **39** And Gaal went out before the men of Shechem, and fought with Abimelech. **40** And Abimelech chased him, and he fled before him, and many were overthrown *and* wounded, *even* unto the entering of the gate. **41** And Abimelech dwelt at Arumah: and Zebul thrust out Gaal and his brethren, that they should not dwell in Shechem. **42** And

it came to pass on the morrow, that the people went out into the field; and they told Abimelech. **43** And he took the people, and divided them into three companies, and laid wait in the field, and looked, and, behold, the people *were* come forth out of the city; and he rose up against them, and smote them. **44** And Abimelech, and the company that *was* with him, rushed forward, and stood in the entering of the gate of the city: and the two *other* companies ran upon all *the people* that *were* in the fields, and slew them. **45** And Abimelech fought against the city all that day; and <sup>15</sup>he took the city, and slew the people that *was* therein, and <sup>16</sup>beat down the city, and sowed it with salt. **46** And when all the men of the tower of Shechem heard *that* they entered into a hold

12 Heb. *navel*.—13 Or, *the regards of times*, Deut. 18. 14.—<sup>14</sup> Verses 28, 29.

1 Kings 20. 18, 21, 30.—<sup>15</sup> Verse 20.—<sup>16</sup> Deut. 29. 23; 1 Kings 12. 26; 2 Kings 3. 25.

**37. Middle of the land**—Rather, *height of the land*, some neighbouring summit. **The plain of Meonenim**—Rather, *By the way of the oak of the magicians*, a place (no longer known) in the vicinity of Shechem, that was probably noted as a favourite haunt of diviners and soothsayers.

**38. Thy mouth**—Zebul now suddenly flings off the mask, and upbraids Gaal for his recent swaggering and his present apparent cowardice, and provokes him to go forth to the battle, in which he is miserably defeated.

**39. Gaal went out before the men of Shechem**—It must have been a hasty gathering and a hurried advance, so that they were ill prepared to meet Abimelech.

**41. Arumah**—A city evidently near to Shechem, but now unknown. Van de Velde proposes to identify it with the ruin *El-ormah*, on the brow of a mountain southeast of Shechem. To this place Abimelech retired after the fight before the gates of Shechem. **Zebul thrust out Gaal**—By taking advantage of his defeat and confusion. After his failure to defend them, the people opposed to Abimelech would not care to have Gaal dwell in Shechem.

**42. On the morrow**—After the thrusting out of Gaal. **The people went out into the field**—Apparently

to attend to their agricultural pursuits. They seem to have thought the war was over, and Abimelech had retreated to some place far away. "Notwithstanding their treasonable practices, they think the matter is now settled, and that Abimelech is content with the banishment of Gaal. They have forgotten, to their own hurt, what Jotham told them. The thorn-bush emits fire, and consumes those who despise it."—*Cassel*. **They told Abimelech**—Probably Zebul again sent messengers to carry the information. Compare verse 31.

**45. Sowed it with salt**—A symbolical act denoting the utter desolation of the city, as if henceforth it were to become a barren desert. Note on Matt. v. 13. This terrible massacre of the people and destruction of the city was one part of the fulfilment of Jotham's prophecy. Verse 20. By it Abimelech sought to punish the rebellious tendencies which were becoming so manifest among some of his subjects, doubtless in the hope of deterring others.

**46. Men of the tower**—These were the same as *the house of Millo*. Verses 6, 20. Fire had already come out from Abimelech and devoured the men of Shechem, but the lords of the castle are yet more literally to feel its burnings. **A hold**—צִירָה, *a pit, a cel-*

of the house<sup>m</sup> of the god Berith. **47** And it was told Abimelech, that all the men of the tower of Shechem were gathered together. **48** And Abimelech gat him up to mount <sup>a</sup> Zalmon, he and all the people that *were* with him; and Abimelech took an axe in his hand, and cut down a bough from the trees, and took it, and laid *it* on his shoulder, and said unto the people that *were* with him, What ye have seen <sup>14</sup> me do, make haste, *and do as I have done*. **49** And all the people likewise cut down every man his bough, and followed Abimelech, and put *them* to the hold, and set the hold on fire upon them; so that all the men of the tower of Shechem died also, about a thousand men and women. **50** Then went Abimelech to Thebez, and encamped against Thebez, and took it. **51** But there was a strong tower within the city, and thither fled all the men and women, and all they of

the city, and shut *it* to them, and gat them up to the top of the tower. **52** And Abimelech came unto the tower, and fought against it, and went hard unto the door of the tower to burn it with fire. **53** And a certain woman <sup>a</sup> cast a piece of a millstone upon Abimelech's head, and <sup>15</sup> *all-to* brake his skull. **54** Then <sup>b</sup> he called hastily unto the young man his armourbearer, and said unto him, Draw thy sword, and slay me, that men say not of me, A woman slew him. And his young man thrust him through, and he died. **55** And when the men of Israel saw that Abimelech was dead, they departed every man unto his place. **56** <sup>c</sup> Thus God rendered the wickedness of Abimelech, which he did unto his father, in slaying his seventy brethren: **57** And all the evil of the men of Shechem did God render upon their heads: and upon them came <sup>d</sup> the curse of Jotham the son of Jerubbaal.

<sup>m</sup> Chap. 8. 33. — <sup>n</sup> Ps. 68. 14. — <sup>14</sup> Heb. *I have done*. — <sup>o</sup> 2 Sam. 11. 21; 20. 21; Job 31. 3.

<sup>15</sup> Or, *altogether*. — <sup>p</sup> 1 Sam. 31. 4. — <sup>q</sup> Verse 24; Job 31. 3; Ps. 94. 23; Prov. 5. 22. — <sup>r</sup> Verse 20.

*kur*, a hole for concealment, a deep covered place. (*Fürst, Lex.*) The word occurs again only at 1 Sam. xiii. 6. The lords of the tower of Shechem, feeling no longer secure in their citadel, fled for refuge into a covered hold in the sanctuary of their god, but fire came out from Abimelech and devoured them even there.

**48. Mount Zalmon**—A wooded hill near Shechem, but now unknown. Many suppose it referred to again in the much disputed passage, Ps. lxxviii. 14, where it is wrongly spelled *Salmon*. **Took an axe**—Literally, *took the axes*; but the allusion is to the axes which the people also took, after the example of their leader.

**49. Set the hold on fire upon them**—Burned down the house of Baal-berith, so that those who had fled for refuge into its cellars and secret holds perished under its falling ruins. Some, doubtless, were burned, others suffocated by the smoke of the green wood, while others were crushed under falling beams.

**50. To Thebez**—Where another insurrection had broken out. The site of Thebez is marked by the modern village *Tubas*, about ten miles northeast of Shechem.

**51. A strong tower within the city**—Unwalled cities and villages were often provided with such a strong tower or castle, to which the inhabitants resorted in time of danger. Walled cities, too, sometimes had a tower built in the wall.

**53. All-to brake his skull**—Better, *and she brake his skull*. The phrase *all-to* was used by some of the old English authors in the sense of *entirely*, but is now obsolete.

**54. A woman slew him**—This was reckoned a terrible disgrace to a warrior. Like his next successor in Israelitish royalty, (1 Sam. xxxi. 4,) he implored his armour-bearer to despatch him; but he did not thereby escape the dreaded ignominy, for the manner of his death was written in history, and long after familiarly associated with his memory. 2 Sam. xi. 21. And thus was ultimately fulfilled the prophetic curse of Jotham.

"Much more beautiful is the otherwise tragical death of Saul. His attendant, influenced by reverence, refuses to kill him, and finally follows him in voluntary death. The songs of David celebrate Saul's memory; but Abimelech's epitaph is his brother Jotham's curse."—*Cassell*.



## CHAPTER X.

**A**ND after Abimelech there <sup>a</sup>arose to defend Israel Tola the son of Puah, the son of Dodo, a man of Issachar; and he dwelt in Shamir in mount Ephraim. **2** And he judged Israel twenty and three years, and died, and was buried in Shamir. **3** And after

a Chap. 2, 16.—1 Or, *deliver*; Heb. *save*.  
b Gen. 31, 4, 8; Num. 32, 29.

## CHAPTER X.

## TOLA AND JAIR, 1-5.

**1. There arose**—In the providence of God. **To defend**—Rather, *to save Israel*. No particular acts of Tola are recorded, but only the general statement (verse 2) that he judged Israel twenty three years. Hence it has been a question among the commentators, How did Tola save Israel? There is no record of any new oppressions, or of any special dangers. But the chief difficulty comes from assuming that there was no sense in which he might have saved Israel unless they had been in bondage to some foreign foe. He might have saved them from civil discords and fearful feuds by his wise and prudent judgments. He may have saved them from foreign invasions by a timely and prudent caution. We should also remember that the silence of Scripture respecting an individual is not sufficient ground for assuming that he did so mighty works. Tola was raised up *to defend* Israel; that is, for the purpose of defeuding or saving them in case any difficulty or danger came; and perhaps an important part of his labour was to save or reclaim the people from the idolatry into which they had fallen after the death of Gideon. **A man of Issachar**—One of that tribe by birth. **Dwelt in Shamir**—The site of Shamir has not been satisfactorily identified. "It is singular that this judge, a man of Issachar, should have taken up his official residence out of his own tribe. We may account for it by supposing that the Plain of Esdraelon, which formed the greater part of the territory of Issachar, was overrun, as in Gideon's time, by the Canaanites or other marauders, of whose incursions nothing whatever is told us, (though

him arose Jair, a <sup>b</sup>Gileadite, and judged Israel twenty and two years. **4** And he had thirty sons that <sup>c</sup>rode on thirty ass colts, and they had thirty cities, <sup>d</sup>which are called <sup>e</sup>Havoth-jair unto this day, which <sup>f</sup>are in the land of Gilead. **5** And Jair died, and was buried in Camon.

c Chap. 5, 10; 12, 14.—d Deut. 3, 14.—2 Or,  
*The villages of Jair*, Num. 32, 41.

their existence is certain,) driving Tola to the more secure mountains of Ephraim. Or, as Manasseh had certain cities out of Issachar allotted to him, so Issachar, on the other hand, may have possessed some towns in the mountains of Ephraim."—*Grove, in Smith's Bib. Dict.* Others have supposed that at this city in the mountains of Ephraim he was more accessible to the various tribes, and could thus more conveniently judge Israel.

**3. Jair, a Gileadite**—That is, a native or resident of Gilead, the mountainous country east of the Jordan. On the silence of Scripture respecting the particulars of his life the same may be said as of Tola, in verse 1.

**4. Thirty sons...thirty ass colts...thirty cities**—These facts are mentioned to show the power, dignity, and wealth of the house of Jair. **Havoth-jair**—That is, *villages of Jair*. These villages, possessed by Jair's sons, were called after their father's name even at the time when the Book of Judges was written. They probably comprised the same "towns" which Jair, the son of Manasseh, took in the days of Moses, (Num. xxxii, 41; Deut. iii, 14,) and called by this very name. Their number may have been increased so as to furnish one for each of the *thirty sons* of this Gileadite judge. This name was not now given them for the first time, but was a bringing into use again of an old name which had, perhaps, become partially forgotten.

**5. Camon**—This was, probably, one of the thirty cities mentioned above, but its exact situation is now unknown. Possibly it is represented by the modern Reimun, a few miles northwest of Jerash. Though little is said of Tola and Jair's life, the fact of their death and the place of their burial are carefully noted.

**6** And <sup>a</sup>the children of Israel did evil again in the sight of the LORD, and served Baalim, and Ashtaroth, and the gods of Syria, and the gods of <sup>b</sup>Zidon, and the gods of Moab, and the gods of the children of Ammon, and the gods of the Philistines, and forsook the LORD, and served not him. **7** And the anger of the LORD was hot against Israel, and he <sup>1</sup>sold them into the hands of the Philistines, and into the hands of the children of Ammon. **8** And that year they vexed and <sup>3</sup>oppressed the

<sup>e</sup> Chap. 2. 11; 3. 7; 4. 1; 6. 1. — <sup>f</sup> Chap. 2. 13. <sup>g</sup> Chap. 2. 12. — <sup>h</sup> 1 Kings 11. 33; Psa. 106. 36.

#### PHILISTINE AND AMMONITE OPPRESSION, 6-9.

**6. Did evil again**—This apostasy, as appears from what follows respecting the number of false gods they worshipped, was of a most aggravating character. **Baalim, and Ashtaroth**—See note on chap. ii, 13. **Gods of Syria**—These are nowhere in Scripture mentioned by name. **Gods of Zidon**—The peculiar forms of the Baal and Asherah worship as practiced among the Phenicians. Compare 1 Kings xi, 33. This worship was, in its principles, common among several of the surrounding nations, but each nation seems to have given it some peculiar modification of its own. **Gods of Moab**—Among whom Chemosh was the principal deity. Num. xxi, 29; 1 Kings xi, 33. **Gods of . . . Ammon**—Particularly the abominable Moloch, the fire-god, to whom human sacrifices were offered. 1 Kings xi, 7. **Gods of the Philistines**—Dagon, the fish-god. Compare chap. xvi, 23. Here we have the mention of seven classes of gods to whose worship Israel had turned, thus filling up the measure of a sevenfold idolatry. This seems more execrable still when we compare with it the seven deliverances of Jehovah mentioned in verses 11 and 12. They had seemed to choose a new idol for every deliverance.

**7. Anger of the Lord**—Note, chap. ii, 14. **Philistines . . . Ammon**—They had felt the oppression of these foes before, but had been graciously delivered. See on chap. iii, 31.

**8 Vexed and oppressed**—Liter-

children of Israel: eighteen years, all the children of Israel that <sup>were</sup> on the other side Jordan in the land of the Amorites, which <sup>is</sup> in Gilead. **9** Moreover the children of Ammon passed over Jordan to fight also against Judah, and against Benjamin, and against the house of Ephraim; so that Israel was sore distressed.

**10** <sup>a</sup> And the children of Israel cried unto the LORD, saying, We have sinned against thee, both because we have forsaken our God, and also served Baalim.

<sup>i</sup> Chap. 2. 14; 1 Sam. 12. 9. — <sup>3</sup> Heb. *crushed*. <sup>k</sup> 1 Sam. 12. 10; Psa. 106. 43, 44; 107. 13, 19.

ally, *broken and crushed*. Henry forcibly suggests that with the Philistines on one side and the Ammonites on the other, Israel was miserably crushed as between two millstones. **That year . . . eighteen years**—The oppression commenced *that very year* in which they were sold into the hands of their enemies, and continued *eighteen years*; not, as some say, *that year* completed *eighteen years* of oppression. The bitterness of the oppression was enhanced by the fact that it came not on gradually, but a breaking and crushing tyranny over them began with the very first year of their subjection. **Israel . . . on the other side Jordan**—So this oppression distressed especially the tribes east of the Jordan. **Land of the Amorites**—Which Israel had formerly taken from their king, Sihon. See at Num. xxi, 21-32. "**Gilead**, being a more precise epithet for the land of the Amorites, is here used in a wider sense to denote the whole of the country east of the Jordan, so far as it had been taken from the Amorites and occupied by the Israelites, as in Num. xxxii, 29; Josh. xxii, 9."—*Keil*.

#### ISRAEL'S REPENTANCE AND HUMILIATION, 10-16.

**10. Israel cried**—But it seems to have been only a half-hearted repentance. They did not put away their idols, and their confession was inspired by a terror of their enemies, not by a genuine abhorrence of idolatry and desire to return to the Lord. Not until after Jehovah refused to deliver them in that state did they thoroughly repent.

**11** And the Lord said unto the children of Israel, *Did not I deliver you* 'from the Egyptians, and "from the Amorites, \*from the children of Ammon, \*and from the Philistines?

l Exod. 14. 30.—m Num. 21. 21, 24, 25.  
n Chap. 3. 12, 13.—o Chap. 8. 31.

**11. The Lord said**—How the Lord spake on this occasion we are not told, and the question can only be a subject of conjecture. Some have thought he spake by a prophet; others, by some sublime theophany. Keil thinks the answer was given in front of the tabernacle at Shiloh, where the people had assembled to call on the Lord, and came either through the high priest, or by an inward voice which aroused in their consciences the memory of the Lord's gracious acts and their ingratitude and apostasy. **From the Egyptians**—By all the miracles of the exodus from that house of bondage, minutely described in the first fourteen chapters of Exodus. **Amorites**—In the days of Moses. Num. xxi, 21–32. **Ammon**—Who joined with Moab in the oppression from which Ehud delivered Israel. Chap. iii, 13. **Philistines**—In the days of Shamgar. Chap. iii, 31.

**12. The Zidonians**—Who probably joined with Jabin and other northern Canaanites against Israel, but were defeated by Barak. Chap. v, 19. **Amalekites**—From these ancient foes they had been repeatedly delivered in the days of Moses, and Ehud, and Gideon. Compare Exod. xvii, 13; chap. iii, 13; vi, 3. **Maonites**—The Hebrew is *Maon*, but, like *Amalek*, it here denotes a people, not a place. We have no record elsewhere of any oppressors of Israel bearing this name; hence the Septuagint reads *Midian*, and this reading Ewald and Keil follow. It is urged that unless we adopt this reading no mention at all is made of the terrible oppression of Midian. But it may be replied, No mention is made of the Moabite oppression, which lasted eighteen years. Chap. iii, 14. The sacred writer does not profess to give an exhaustive history; but, true to the spirit of the Old Testament theocratic history, he selects just seven deliverances of

**12** \*The Zidonians also, \*and the Amalekites, and the Maonites, 'did oppress you; and ye cried to me, and I delivered you out of their hand. **13** \*Yet ye have forsaken me, and served other

p Chap. 5. 19.—q Chap. 6. 3.—r Psa. 106. 42, 43.—s Deut. 32. 15; Jer. 2. 13.

Israel, in apparent allusion to the seven classes of false gods mentioned in verse 6, where see note. In such an instance it is not ours to say what he ought to have written, and what omitted.

The Maonites may be included under "the children of the East," chap. vi, 3. "Traces of the name *Maon* are found in several localities. It is given to a town in the south of Judah, (Josh. xv, 55,) now identified with the ruins of Tell Main. It is given to the bleak and hilly pasture lands which extend away to the southward of the town of Maon. 1 Sam. xxiii, 25. Jeremiah (xlviii, 23) mentions *Beth-meon*, which may be the same as *Beth-baal-meon* of Josh. xiii, 17, and *Baal-meon* of Num. xxxii, 38, and would thus be identical with the ruins of *Main*, three miles south of Heshbon. Still another Maon is mentioned, 2 Chron. xxvi, 7. It is probable that all these names indicate the presence of an ancient and powerful nomad tribe, whose earliest settlements were in the vale of Sodom, and with the Amalekites who dwelt in the wilderness south of Palestine."—Porter.

**13. I will deliver you no more**—But it appears in the following history that he did deliver them, even again and again. Was God therefore false to his word? By no means. This, like all other similar declarations of Jehovah, is to be regarded as conditional. "This he tells them," says Henry, "not only as what he might do, but as what he would do, if they rested in a mere confession of what they had done amiss, and did not put away their idols and amend for the future." So it is always with the divine threatenings or promises. Both "the goodness and severity of God" are conditioned on the responsible actions of man. Note, Rom. xi, 22.

gods: wherefore I will deliver you no more. **14** Go and 'cry unto the gods which ye have chosen; let them deliver you in the time of your tribulation. **15** And the children of Israel said unto the LORD, We have sinned: "do thou unto us whatsoever 'seemeth good unto thee; deliver us only, we pray thee, this day. **16** 'And they put away the

*†* Deut. 32. 37, 38; 2 Kings 8. 13; Jer. 2. 28.—*†* 1 Sam. 3. 18; 2 Sam. 15. 26.—*†* Heb. *is good in thine eyes*.—*†* 2 Chron. 7. 14; 15. 8; Jer. 18. 7, 8.

**14. Cry unto the gods**—A bitter and taunting irony. Thus Divine Wisdom deals with the rebellious and profane. It laughs at their calamity and mocks when their fear cometh. Prov. i. 26.

**15. We have sinned**—Now their repentance becomes deeper and profounder. They had before (verse 10) confessed their sins, but had not forsaken them. Now, brought into deep humiliation by the divine threat, (verse 13.) they are ready to do or receive **whatsoever seemeth good unto Jehovah**.

**16. Put away the strange gods**—They no longer repented in words only, by a mere confession of their guilt, but proceeded to bring forth fruit worthy of repentance. So in every genuine conversion there must be added to confession an earnest revolt and turning away from the old sins. **His soul was grieved**—Literally, *was shortened*; that is, thrilled with the most intense emotions of distress and anxiety. Compare the similar sense of the verb קָצַר, in chap. xvi. 16;

Num. xxi. 4; Job xxi. 4; Zech. xi. 8. This text shows that Jehovah's nature is profoundly emotional, which fact, instead of detracting from our reverence of him, should serve to give us a more affecting view of the divine character. See notes on chap. ii. 14, 18, and 1 Sam. xv. 11.

#### PREPARATIONS FOR WAR, 17, 18.

These two verses serve as an introduction to the history of Jephthah, and ought not to have been separated from it by a division of chapters. Chapter xi should have begun here.

\*strange gods from among them, and served the LORD: and "his soul "was grieved for the misery of Israel.

**17** Then the children of Ammon were 'gathered together, and encamped in Gilead. And the children of Israel assembled themselves together, and encamped in 'Mizpeh. **18** And the people and princes of Gilead said one to

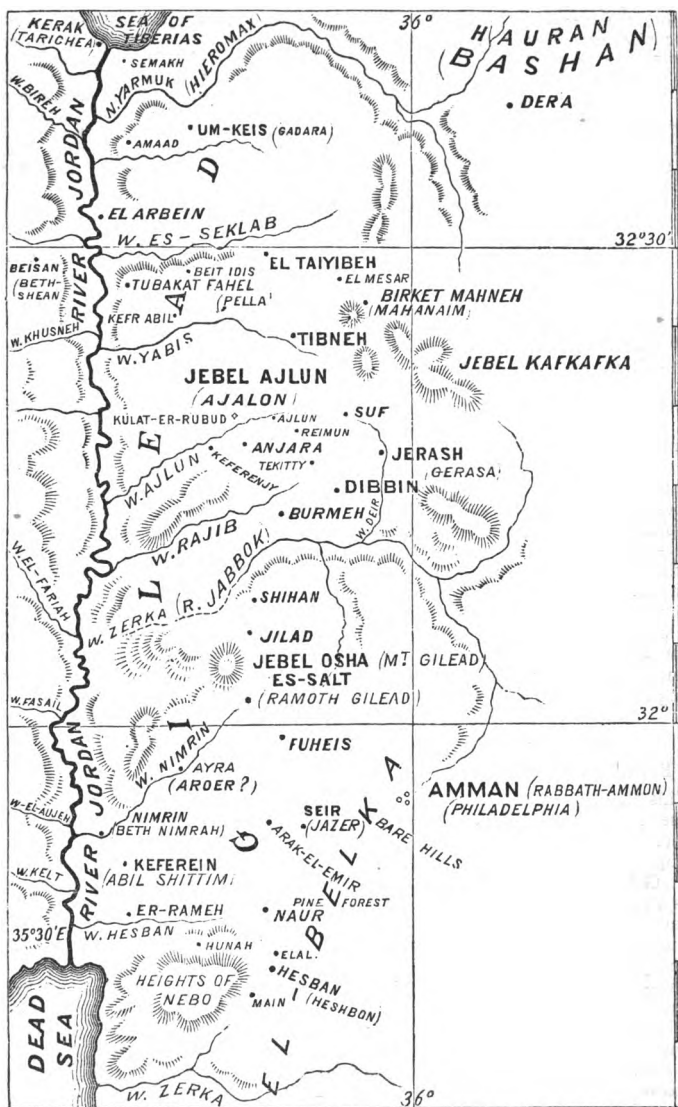
*5* Heb. *gods of strangers*.—*†* Ps. 106. 44, 45; Isa. 63. 9.—*†* Heb. *was shortened*.—*†* Heb. *cried together*.—*†* Gen. 31. 49; chap. 11. 11, 30.

**17. Were gathered together**—Literally, *let themselves be called together*. Clarke's rendering, *they cried against Israel*, is not allowable. **Gilead**

—The mountainous tract of country on the east of the Jordan, extending from the northern end of the Dead Sea to the Sea of Galilee. In what particular part of this region the Ammonites encamped is not said, but probably at the southern base of Mount Gilead, (Jebel Osha,) or between that place and Rabbah, their capital. This whole region was wrested from the Ammonites and ruled by Jephthah. See map, page 234.

**Mizpeh**—Probably identical with *Mizpeh of Gilead*, (chap. ii. 29,) and the Ramoth-mizpeh of Josh. xiii. 26, near or at the modern es-Salt. It was the great gathering place of the Israelites east of the Jordan. "About three miles northwest of es-Salt is the highest peak east of the Jordan, commanding one of the widest and most interesting views in the country. Its top is broad and flat, and would form a fine gathering place for a nation of warriors. On its northern slope is an ancient ruin called Jiliad. It is probable that this is the true site of Mizpeh of Gilead, the gathering-place of the eastern tribes. Mizpeh was situated close to the frontier of the Ammonites, and apparently near their capital, Rabbath, (chap. xi. 29;) consequently it must have been on the south side of the Jabbok, and could not have been identical, as some have thought, with the Mizpeh where Jacob and Laban met. Gen. xxxi. 49."—Porter.

**18. The people and princes of Gilead**—The English version adds *and*, but it should be omitted. *Princes* is in apposition with *people*. The people spoke on this occasion in the persons



MAP OF MODERN GILEAD.

another, What man *is he* that will begin to fight against the children of Ammon? he shall be head over all the inhabitants of Gilead.

## CHAPTER XI.

**N**OW Jephthah the Gileadite was <sup>a</sup>a mighty man of valour, and he was the son of <sup>a</sup>a harlot: and Gilead begat Jephthah. **2** And Gilead's wife bare him sons; and his wife's sons grew up, and they thrust out Jephthah, and

<sup>v</sup> Chap. 11. 8, 11.—<sup>a</sup> Heb. 11. 82.—<sup>b</sup> Chap. 6. 12; 2 Kings 5. 1.—1 Heb. *a woman a harlot*.

of their representatives, the princes or chief men. **The people of Gilead** here means the Israelitish tribes that dwelt in Gilead. **What man is he**—The object of Israel's gathering at Mizpeh evidently was to choose a leader, and to prepare to defend themselves against their oppressors. The gathering of the Ammonites in Gilead (verse 17) prompted to this. Far down the slopes of Gilead, plainly visible from Mizpeh, were the camps of the enemy, all ready, apparently, to proceed to battle. That gathering of the hated foe seemed ominous of further oppressions and woes, and, exasperated over past and present afflictions, they resolved to **fight against the children of Ammon**. The result of that conflict is brought out in the next chapter.

## CHAPTER XI.

## ELECTION OF JEPHTHAH, 1-11.

This chapter should have begun with verse 17 of the preceding chapter, where the history of Jephthah properly begins.

**1. Gileadite**—Like Jair, Jephthah was a native of the land of Gilead, and, what is noticeable also, his father's name was *Gilead*. He was probably a descendant of Gilead, the grandson of Manasseh. Num. xxvi. 29. We see no sufficient reason to take *Gilead* here as the name of the country, or a tribal name used in place of an unknown personal name. **A mighty man of valour**—Distinguished for great physical strength, skill in the use of arms, and boldness of character.

**2. They thrust out Jephthah**—

said unto him, Thou shalt not inherit in our father's house; for thou *art* the son of a strange woman. **3** Then Jephthah fled <sup>a</sup>from his brethren, and dwelt in the land of Tob: and there were gathered <sup>a</sup>vain men to Jephthah, and went out with him. **4** And it came to pass <sup>a</sup>in process of time, that the children of Ammon made war against Israel. **5** And it was so, that when the children of Ammon made war against Israel, the elders of Gilead

<sup>2</sup> Heb. *from the face*.—<sup>c</sup> Chap. 9. 4; 1 Sam. 22. 2.—<sup>3</sup> Heb. *after days*.

Their father, Gilead, was a man of wealth and power, and they were unwilling that **the son of a strange woman** and a **harlot** should share with them the paternal inheritance. Compare Gen. xxi. 10; xxv. 6. The law placed a bastard on the same footing with an Ammonite or a Moabite. Deut. xxiii. 2, 3. Neither could enter the congregation of the Lord until the tenth generation. Mark that he who by the law was placed in the same category with the Ammonites was called to be the conqueror of those incestuous sons of Lot. **Strange woman**—Hebrew, *another woman*. "*Other* is here to be taken in a bad sense, as in the expression *other gods*. As those are spurious gods, so *another woman* is a spurious wife."—*Cassel*.

**3. Fled**—Violence and abuse were apparently used in thrusting him out. **Land of Tob**—A district lying north-east of Gilead, and apparently between the Syrians and Ammonites. Compare 2 Sam. x. 6. It has not been identified with any modern name. **Vain men**—Loose and desperate characters like those whom Abimelech made his friends. Chapter ix. 4. These eastern deserts were the common resort of such characters. See note on 2 Sam. xiii. 37. Jephthah's mode of life during this period has been aptly compared to that of David when he fled from the court of Saul, and gathered round him a company of lawless characters, (1 Sam. xxii. 2,) and also to that of a Scottish border chieftain in the Middle Ages, and that of Robin Hood in England.

**5. Elders of Gilead went**—These were doubtless delegates from the as-

went to 'fetch Jephthah out of the land of Tob: **6** And they said unto Jephthah, Come, and be our captain, that we may fight with the children of Ammon. **7** And Jephthah said unto the elders of Gilead, 'Did not ye hate me, and expel me out of my father's house? and why are ye come unto me now when ye are in distress? **8** 'And the elders of Gilead said unto Jephthah, Therefore we 'turn again to thee now, that thou mayest go with us, and fight against the children of Ammon, and be 'our head over all the inhabitants of Gilead. **9** And Jephthah said unto the elders of Gilead, If ye bring me home again to fight against the children of Ammon, and the LORD deliver

*d* 1 Sam. 10. 27; *Psa.* 118. 22, 23; *Acts* 7. 35, 39; *1 Cor.* 1. 27, 29.—*e* Gen. 26. 27.—*f* Chap. 10. 18.—*g* Luke 17. 4.—*h* Chap. 10. 18.

sembly of *princes of Gilead*, mentioned chap. x, 18. There the question was raised, Who shall be our leader against Ammon? and this verse shows that their choice had fallen on Jephthah. His fame as a bold and warlike chieftain was doubtless the reason of this choice.

**7. Did not ye hate me**—Jephthah treats all the Gileadites as partakers in the abuse and violence which expelled him from his father's house. Probably the act of Gilead's sons in thrusting out Jephthah was generally approved by the elders, for in the next verse they seem to acknowledge their wrong.

**8. Therefore**—Inasmuch as we did thee wrong, **we turn again to thee** how to repair, as far as possible, that wrong by electing thee **our head**, that is, our captain and chief.

**9. Shall I be your head**—Better to make this a positive declaration, *I will be your head*; for the response of the elders in the next verse is not so much an answer to a question, as an expression of submission to Jephthah's will.

**10. The Lord be witness**—A solemn oath and covenant. **According to thy words**—We will accede to thy wish. See on verse 9.

**11. The people made him head and captain**—The elders made the choice, and the people confirmed it by a public election. The distinction be-

them before me, shall I be your head? **10** And the elders of Gilead said unto Jephthah, 'The LORD 'be witness between us, if we do not so according to thy words. **11** Then Jephthah went with the elders of Gilead, and the people made him 'head and captain over them: and Jephthah uttered all his words 'before the LORD in Mizpeh.

**12** And Jephthah sent messengers unto the king of the children of Ammon, saying, What hast thou to do with me, that thou art come against me to fight in my land? **13** And the king of the children of Ammon answered unto the messengers of Jephthah, 'Because Israel took away my land, when they came up out of Egypt, from Arnon

*d* Jer. 42. 5.—*4* Heb. *be the hearer between us*.—*e* Verse 8.—*f* Chap. 10. 17; 20. 1; 1 Sam. 10. 17; 11. 15.—*m* Num. 21. 24-26.

tween *head* and *captain*, if any, is that between civil and military leader and chief. The people chose him to be not only their leader in this war with Ammon, but their judge and ruler after the war was over. **Jephthah uttered all his words**—Publicly stated the terms and conditions on which he accepted his new position, and the vows and oaths by which both he and the people bound themselves to be governed. **Before the Lord**—Not before the ark, for that was at Shiloh; but by a solemn appeal to Jehovah as witness of the vows they all took upon themselves. This whole transaction was done as if all realized that they were in the very presence of Jehovah. On **Mizpeh** see note, chap. x, 17.

#### JEPHTHAH'S MESSAGE TO AMMON, 12-28.

**12. Sent messengers**—He would know the ground and reasons on which the Ammonites pretended to wage war with Israel. "This is highly interesting, because it shows that even in that age a cause for war was judged necessary—no one being supposed to war without provocation."—*Kitto*. **Me... my land**—The messengers speak in the name of the nation, as represented by the chosen leader.

**13. Israel took away my land**—This was probably in a certain sense true, for, according to Josh. xiii, 24, 25,

even unto "Jabbok, and unto Jordan: now therefore restore those *lands again* peaceably. **14** And Jephthah sent messengers again unto the king of the children of Ammon: **15** And said unto him, Thus saith Jephthah, "Israel took not away the land of Moab, nor the land of the children of Ammon: **16** But when Israel came up from Egypt, and "walked through the wilderness unto the Red Sea, and "came to Kadesh; **17** Then "Israel sent messengers unto the king of Edom, saying, Let me, I pray thee, pass through thy land: "but the king of Edom would not hearken *thereto*. And in like manner they sent unto the king of Moab; but he would not *consent*: and Israel "abode in Kadesh. **18** Then they went along through the wilderness, and "compassed the land of Edom, and the land of Moab, and "came by the east side of the land of Moab, "and pitched on the other side of Arnon, but came not within

*n* Gen. 32. 22.—*o* Deut. 2. 9, 19.—*p* Num. 14. 25; Deut. 1. 40; Josh. 5. 6.—*q* Num. 13. 26; 20. 1; Deut. 1. 46.—*r* Num. 20. 14.—*s* Num. 20. 18, 21.—*t* Num. 20. 1.—*u* Num. 21. 4; Deut. 2. 1-3.—*v* Num. 21. 11.

Moses gave to the tribe of Gad *half the land of the children of Ammon*; and though Israel captured the land **from Arnon even unto Jabbok**, not of Moab nor of Ammon, but of Sihon, king of the Amorites, yet Sihon had previously fought against the king of Moab, and taken all his land out of his hand. See Num. xxi, 24-26. So, though Israel strictly observed the divine order (Deut. ii, 9, 19) not to disturb Moab or Ammon, they took from the Amorites lands which seem to have anciently belonged to those descendants of Lot. Israel was not to blame for conquering these lands of Sihon, and fairly owned them by the right of conquest, yet both Ammonites and Moabites might feel that they were the ancient owners. But having neglected their claim for three hundred years, (verse 26,) it was idle for them to urge it now.

**15. Israel took not**—Israel took the land in question not of Ammonites or Moabites, but of Sihon, king of the Amorites, and therefore with previous owners they had nothing to do. Jephthah's messengers proceed to state the real facts in the case. For the facts

the border of Moab: for Arnon *was* the border of Moab. **19** And "Israel sent messengers unto Sihon king of the Amorites, the king of Heshbon; and Israel said unto him, "Let us pass, we pray thee, through thy land into my place. **20** "But Sihon trusted not Israel to pass through his coast: but Sihon gathered all his people together, and pitched in Jahaz, and fought against Israel. **21** And the Lord God of Israel delivered Sihon and all his people into the hand of Israel, and they "smote them: so Israel possessed all the land of the Amorites, the inhabitants of that country. **22** And they possessed "all the coasts of the Amorites, from Arnon even unto Jabbok, and from the wilderness even unto Jordan. **23** So now the Lord God of Israel hath dispossessed the Amorites from before his people Israel, and shouldst thou possess it? **24** Wilt thou not possess that which "Chemosh thy god giveth thee

*w* Num. 21. 13; 22. 34.—*x* Num. 21. 21; Deut. 2. 26.—*y* Num. 21. 22; Deut. 2. 27.—*z* Num. 21. 23; Deut. 2. 32.—*a* Num. 21. 24, 25; Deut. 2. 33, 34.—*b* Deut. 2. 36.—*c* Num. 21. 29; 1 Kings ii. 7; Jer. 48. 7.

which they state, see the passages referred to in the margin. This whole message of Jephthah is a most primitive and honest piece of diplomacy, and a weighty argument for the antiquity and genuineness of the Pentateuch.

**17 In like manner they sent unto the king of Moab**—This fact is not recorded in the Pentateuch along with the other facts here mentioned, for it was a matter of comparatively little moment with Moses to record the refusal of Moab after he had mentioned that of Edom, but it was important for the purpose of Jephthah's argument.

Some have wondered why so much is here said about Moab in a message to the king of Ammon; but it should be noticed that as Jephthah, who really represented only the eastern tribes of Israel, speaks as the representative of all Israel, so the king of Ammon represents the children of Lot.

**23. Shouldst thou possess it**—Is it right for thee to seize upon possessions which our God has so signally given to us?

**24. Wilt thou not**—The thought involved in the previous verse is here



to possess? So whosoever <sup>a</sup>the Lord our God shall drive out from before us, them will we possess. **25** And now *art* thou any thing better than <sup>a</sup>Balak the son of Zippor, king of Moab? did he ever strive against Israel, or did he ever fight against them, **26** While Israel dwelt in <sup>a</sup>Heshbon and her towns, and in <sup>a</sup>Aroer and her towns, and in all the cities that *be* along by the coasts of Arnon, three hundred years? why therefore did ye not recover *them* within that time? **27** Wherefore I

<sup>d</sup> Deut. 9. 4, 5; 18. 12; Josh. 8. 10.—<sup>e</sup> Num. 22. 2; see Josh. 24. 9.—<sup>f</sup> Num. 21. 25.—<sup>g</sup> Deut. 2. 36.—<sup>h</sup> Gen. 18. 25.

expanded in a sort of *argumentum ad hominem*. You yourselves, it is urged, would most earnestly insist on possessing that which your god had given into your hands; and shall not we do the same? **Chemosh**—The great deity of the Moabites and Ammonites. "Jewish tradition affirms that he was worshipped under the symbol of a black star; and Maimonides states that his worshippers went bareheaded, and abstained from the use of garments sewn together by the needle. The black star, the connexion with Arabian idolatry, and the fact that Chemosh is coupled with Moloch, favour the theory that he had some analogy with the planet Saturn."—*Kitto's Cyclopædia*. He is here spoken of as a local and national deity, but it is not necessary to assume that Jephthah himself believed in his real existence and divinity. He speaks with respect, however, of the religion of his foe, and this fact, together with the recent existence of Ammonitish idolatry in Israel, (chap. x, 6,) affords some ground to believe that there was still among the Israelites too much reverence for the gods of the heathen. { **The Lord**—Jehovah. Note the antithesis, *Chemosh thy god—Jehovah our God*. The Ammonites held both to be national deities. The more ignorant Israelites always inclined to the same view; the well-taught Israelite recognised that Jehovah was indeed the national God, but also God over all; and the truly pious held him to be sole God, all else being "a lie." }

**25. Better than Balak**—Hast thou

have not sinned against thee, but thou doest me wrong to war against me: the Lord <sup>a</sup>the Judge <sup>b</sup>be judge this day between the children of Israel and the children of Ammon. **28** Howbeit the king of the children of Ammon hearkened not unto the words of Jephthah which he sent him.

**29** Then <sup>a</sup>the Spirit of the Lord came upon Jephthah, and he passed over Gilead, and Manasseh, and passed over Mizpeh of Gilead, and from Mizpeh of Gilead he passed over *unto* the

<sup>i</sup> Gen. 16. 5; 31. 53; 1 Sam. 24. 12, 15.—<sup>k</sup> Chap. 8. 10; Num. 11. 25; 1 Sam. 10. 10; 1 Chron. 12. 18.

any better claim on these lands than Balak? **The...king of Moab** had even a better title to the lands than Ammon, for from him the greater part of them had been taken by the Amorites, (Num. xxi, 26;) and the fact that he did not **strive against Israel** to recover his lost possessions was further evidence of the futility of Ammon's claim.

**26. Three hundred years**—This of all others was the most overwhelming refutation of Ammon's claims. The peaceful possession of a country for such a period was of itself an all-sufficient title to possession—a "statute of limitations:" "for," says Le Clerc, "if there be no rule respecting time, and long possession is of no value, nothing could ever be safely possessed by any people, nor would there ever be an end of wars and dissensions."

**JEPHTHAH'S VICTORY AND VOW, 29-40.**

**29. Then the Spirit of the Lord came upon Jephthah**—He was roused and fired for his warlike work by an extraordinary supernatural influence from on high. But this must not be imagined identical with the New Testament gift of the Holy Ghost, and thence twisted to show that Jephthah's rash vow was uttered under divine inspiration, and therefore pleasing in the sight of God. Note, chap. iii, 10. **Passed over Gilead and Manasseh** for the purpose of collecting troops and necessities for the war. *Gilead* and *Manasseh* are here to be taken as a name for the territory of the trans-Jordanic tribes. **Mizpeh of Gilead**—See note

children of Ammon. **30** And Jephthah <sup>1</sup>vowed a vow unto the Lord, and said, If thou shalt without fail deliver the children of Ammon into mine hands, **31** Then it shall be, that

<sup>1</sup> Genesis 28. 20; 1 Sam. 1. 11.—<sup>5</sup> Hebrew, *that which cometh forth, which shall come forth.*

on chap. x, 17. Having collected his warriors, Jephthah **passed over** the lofty eminence on which Mizpeh was situated, and soon came to the border of **the children of Ammon**, between whom and himself the Lord was to decide that day. Verse 27. From the heights of Mizpeh the whole camp of the enemy was visible, spread over the beautiful knolls of the undulating plateau towards Rabbah. The sight fired the soul of Jephthah, and led him to utter his rash vow.

**30. Vowed a vow unto the Lord**—Bound himself by a strong oath and solemn appeal to Jehovah. So Jacob did at Bethel, (Gen. xxviii, 20,) and Hannah at the tabernacle. 1 Sam. i, 11. Although vows were not commanded in the Old Testament, they were often taken, and the law made provision for different kinds of vows. They might be pleasing or displeasing to God, according to their real character. A rash vow could never be pleasing to God, though it might be excusable from the ignorance of him that vowed.

It is not to be assumed that Jephthah uttered this vow under divine inspiration. The Spirit of the Lord came upon him, and quickened him with energy and heroism to go and conquer Ammon, but not to make this vow. It is to be noted that no sacred writer commends Jephthah's vow.

**31. Whatsoever cometh forth of the doors of my house to meet me**—Rather, *whosoever comes forth*. It is hardly possible to avoid the conviction that Jephthah had a human being in his mind. For what else could he expect to come out of the doors of his house to meet him? Surely not a cow, nor a sheep, nor a goat, nor a herd of these animals, for their place was not in his house, or else, as Hengstenberg remarks, "the house of the Gileadite

<sup>5</sup> whatsoever cometh forth of the doors of my house to meet me when I return in peace from the children of Ammon, <sup>m</sup> shall surely be the Lord's, <sup>n</sup> and I will offer it up for a burnt offering.

<sup>m</sup> See Lev. 27. 2, 3, &c.; 1 Sam. 1. 11, 29; 2. 18.—<sup>n</sup> Or, *or I will offer it*, &c.—<sup>n</sup> Psa. 66. 13; see Lev. 27. 11, 12.

chieftain must have been a kind of Noah's Ark—cattle and men in one room, going out and in at the same door, stall-fed alike—a thing surely not to be seriously thought of. Every thing that we know of the arrangements of houses among the Hebrews is against it." And surely not a dog, or any unclean animal. No animal, clean or unclean, would be dignified with such lofty emphasis, for "how strange it would be," says Pfeiffer, "if some great prince or general should say, 'O God, if thou wilt grant me this victory, the first calf that comes to meet me shall be thine!'" If he meant to offer an animal, would he not have selected the best of his flocks, and have offered, not a single victim, and the first he found, but many sacrifices? Every feature of the passage indicates that Jephthah consciously vowed the sacrifice of a human being, and the tremendous force and awful solemnity of the vow appear in the very fact that not a common but an uncommon offering is pledged, and the victim is to be taken from the members of his own household. And as the most loving and affectionate would be likely to be the first to come and meet him, he hazards even that contingency, holding nothing back, but leaving it, as it were, for the Lord to select the victim. **When I return in peace**—Having conquered the enemy, and thus secured a lasting peace. **Shall surely be the Lord's, and I will offer it up for a burnt offering**—Some have construed this passage so as to give the suffix pronoun *it* or *him* (הוּ) a dative sense, and refer it to the Lord. Thus, *I will offer HIM* (that is, to Jehovah) *a burnt offering*. In this case the vow is made to contemplate two distinct things, (1) a person to be consecrated to Jehovah, and (2) the additional offering of a

**32** So Jephthah passed over unto the children of Ammon to fight against

burnt sacrifice. But such a construction would be a solecism in Hebrew. Were the sense dative, as above indicated, לְ, *to him*, would have been used, for the suffix to the verb is always the accusative. In 2 Kings iii, 27, where it is said the king of Moab took his son and *offered him a burnt offering upon the wall*, we have precisely the same construction. Compare also 1 Sam. vii, 9. This explanation must therefore be rejected as critically untenable.

The marginal reading, *OR I will offer*, etc., is also untenable. According to this reading the import of the vow would be, as Kimchi and others have paraphrased it, "I will offer it for a burnt offering if it be fit for such a purpose, or, if not fit, I will consecrate it to the Lord." But every passage in which Vav (ו) is supposed to be used disjunctively is capable of a different explanation. The notion that the Hebrew language is so destitute of connecting particles that Vav must be often used in a disjunctive sense is an almost inexcusable blunder, especially when it is brought to bear on the simple and positive phraseology of Jephthah's vow. It does not appear that this vow was uttered in the heat of battle or in a moment of confusion. If Jephthah contemplated divers methods of fulfilling it, the Hebrew language did not lack words by which to express precisely his intention. If he meant to say *or*, there was the proper disjunctive וְ, which is used more than a hundred times in the Old Testament in the sense of *or*.

Another attempt to escape the obvious import of the vow is to take the word זֶבַח, *burnt offering*, in a figurative or spiritual sense. But such a deep spiritual sense of burnt offerings as this passage would involve was alien to the age of the Judges, and no passage in the whole Old Testament can be found where the word in question has such a meaning. Every passage cited in Heugstenberg's essay on this subject

them; and the Lord delivered them into his hands. **33** And he smote them

fails most signally to help his argument. Hos. xiv, 2; Ps. xl, 7-9; li, 17; cxix, 108. Take, for instance, the passage oftenest quoted, Ps. li, 16, 17, where the spiritual idea of sacrifices in general is expressed, and the sacrifice of a broken and contrite heart, so far from being identified with *burnt offering*, is put in direct opposition to it. The whole attempt to put a figurative or spiritual sense upon the word זֶבַח, especially in our text, is a manifest striving after something which the Scriptures nowhere offer, and a prodigious effort to get rid of the common meaning of an oft-recurring word.

It follows, then, that the only translation of this verse that will bear the test of criticism is substantially the following: "Whosoever comes forth from the doors of my house to meet me, when I return in peace from the sons of Ammon, shall be for Jehovah, and I will offer him for a burnt offering." The last sentence is not tautological nor superfluous, but exegetical of what immediately precedes, and shows the manner in which he meant to consecrate to the Lord the first person that came to meet him on his return home. So the language of Jephthah's vow, according to the only defensible meaning of the words, clearly involved a human sacrifice.

**32. The Lord delivered them into his hands**—The time was full for judgment to break upon the idolatrous Ammonites, and Jephthah was the chosen instrument for this work. The penitence and reformation in Israel, and the prayers for help that touched Jehovah's heart, (chap. x, 15, 16,) soon brought them this great deliverance. Strangely have some thought that deliverance came because of Jephthah's vow, or as a token of the divine approval of that pious act. As if his vow, at best of doubtful morality, moved God more than the reformation, prayers, and public interests of all Israel! As well might one argue that Saul's rash oath (1 Sam. xiv, 24) brought victory to Is-

from Aroer, even till thou come to <sup>o</sup> Minnith, *even* twenty cities, and unto <sup>o</sup> the plain of the vineyards, with a very great slaughter. Thus the children of Ammon were subdued before the children of Israel. **34** And Jephthah came to <sup>o</sup> Mizpeh unto his house, and, behold, <sup>o</sup> his daughter came out to meet him with timbrels and with dances: and she *was his* only child; <sup>o</sup> beside her he had neither son nor daughter. **35** And it came to pass, when he saw her, that

<sup>o</sup> Ezek. 27. 17.—<sup>o</sup> Or, *Abel*.—<sup>p</sup> Chap. 10. 17; verse 11.—<sup>q</sup> Exod. 15. 20; 1 Sam. 13. 6; Psa. 68. 25; Jer. 31. 4.—<sup>r</sup> Or, *he had not of his own either son or daughter*. Heb. *of himself*.

rael's arms that day when Jonathan of fended. { Yet Jehovah may hear a prayer, clothed in mistaken form, coming from a reverent heart. Jephthah had the faith of Abraham, willing to sacrifice his child, *under the sincere supposition that it was Jehovah's will*. So that he was worthily written in the glorious roll of Heb. xi. }

**33. Aroer**—See at Josh. xiii, 25. **Minnith**—A place that was noted for its wheat, (Ezek. xxvii, 17;) but its exact site is unknown. **Plain of the vineyards**—This is a literal translation of a Hebrew proper name—*Abel-keramim*—so called, probably, because of its vineyards. The place is mentioned by Eusebius as lying six miles from Rabbah, and was still rich in vineyards in his day.

For want of precise details of the battle, and from uncertainty as to the exact sites of Aroer and Minnith, we find it impossible to trace the course of Jephthah's victory. We most naturally suppose that from the height of Mount Gilead he marched southward and encountered the Ammonites near Aroer, somewhere between Jordan and Rabbah, probably at Ayra on the Wady Nimrin. Here he put them to flight, and chased them towards the south and east, probably capturing Rabbah, their capital, among the **twenty cities** which fell into his hands by this great victory. See the map of Gilead, page 234.

**34. His daughter came...with timbrels and with dances**—She had, doubtless, heard from some swift messenger of her father's victory, and of his approach towards home, and with

he <sup>o</sup> rent his clothes, and said, Alas, my daughter! thou hast brought me very low, and thou art one of them that trouble me: for I <sup>o</sup> have opened my mouth unto the Lord, and 'I cannot go back. **36** And she said unto him, My father, *if* thou hast opened thy mouth unto the Lord, <sup>o</sup> do to me according to that which has proceeded out of thy mouth; forasmuch as <sup>o</sup> the Lord hath taken vengeance for thee of thine enemies, *even* of the children of Ammon.

<sup>r</sup> Gen. 37. 29, 34.—<sup>s</sup> Eccles. 5. 2.—<sup>t</sup> Num. 30. 2; Psa. 15. 4; Eccles. 5. 4, 5.—<sup>u</sup> Num. 30. 2.—<sup>v</sup> 2 Sam. 18. 19, 31; Acts 20. 24; Rom. 16. 4; Phil. 2. 30.

a band of her young female companions she went forth to celebrate the great triumph over Ammon. Such celebrations of victory were a common custom in Israel. See marginal reference. **Only child**—This fact is here emphasized to explain the intensity of Jephthah's agony, which is described in the next verse.

**35. Rent his clothes**—A sign of intense agony and grief. He had, probably, hoped to meet first some other less cherished member of his family. **Thou hast brought me very low**—The idea here is, that of one bent down under the pressure of an almost crushing burden. **One of them that trouble me**—Literally, *thou art among my troublers*; that is, like one whose work is to give me trouble and anguish. To sacrifice her is to end his family, since he had no other child. Verse 34. **I cannot go back**—They who took upon themselves a solemn oath were expected to keep their word, (Num. xxx, 2;) but he who swore to some one's hurt was under condemnation if he did not change, (Psa. xv, 4,) and the law (Lev. xvii) provided for the redemption of singular vows.

**36. My father**—Her submission and devotion were in the highest degree touching and beautiful. **Forasmuch as the Lord hath taken vengeance for thee**—Here was a point of view from which hers would be a sublime and enviable death. It was dying for her father, her country, and her God. inasmuch as her memory would be associated sublimely with one of Israel's greatest national triumphs.

**37** And she said unto her father, Let this thing be done for me: let me alone two months, that I may go up and down upon the mountains, and bewail my virginity, I and my fellows. **38** And he said, Go. And he sent her away for

9 Hebrew, *go and go down*.—*u* 1 Sam. 1. 6;

**37. Bewail my virginity**—Mark, not to bewail her death, for that, by itself considered, might be regarded as a glorious end. Die she must, sooner or later, and no more honourable death could ever be her lot. But she would bewail that which gave her death its only woful pang, and was to her far worse than death itself; a thing above all others deplorable in the estimation of that age and race—the fact that, in the flower of youthful womanhood, she must close life without a husband and without a child, leaving no heir to her father's house. It is difficult for us, with our loose attachments to the coming ages, and familiar with the modern prevalent lack of interest in posterity, and the noticeable desire among multitudes of females to remain childless, to appreciate the depth of feeling on this subject among the Hebrew women. A husbandless and childless state was a reproach to any marriageable female. Keil makes a misleading assertion when he says, "To mourn one's virginity does not mean to mourn because one has to die a virgin, but because one has to live and remain a virgin." More truly should it be said, that the expression has as much respect to the past as to the future, but contemplates not specially life or death, but *the fact of virginity*. Could Jephthah's daughter only have perpetuated her father's house and name; could it only have been that sons and daughters survived her, to take away her reproach among women, there would have been no pang in her death.

But why, some ask, if she was doomed to death, did she not rather spend those **two months** at home, and enjoy all the comfort she could during the short respite of her life? To one thus appointed to death, we answer, home affords no soul comforts, and

two months: and she went with her companions, and bewailed her virginity upon the mountains. **39** And it came to pass at the end of two months, that she returned unto her father who did with her according to his vow

Luke 1. 25.—*a* Verse 31; 1 Sam. 1. 22, 24; 2. 18.

earth's festal scenes and sociality no pleasure. It is not human, under such circumstances, to find entertainment in the common joys of home. Far more congenial to the feelings of the dying maiden would be the mountain solitudes than any thing her father's house could furnish. Then, also, the two months were asked, not for one more round of pleasures, but for mourning her virginity; and for that purpose the solitudes of the mountains, not the peopled town, with the presence of men, were appropriate.

But if, on the other hand, she knew she was to live and remain a virgin, and be shut up in seclusion for the rest of life, what sense or object in taking those two months to mourn? And in what sense would she be more really consecrated to celibacy *after* than *during* the two months of sorrow? Much more natural, as we conceive, would it have been for her, in that case, to have said: Let me stay at home, and enjoy the scenes of common life yet a month or two, since I must give all after-life to tears and solitude.

**39. Did with her according to his vow**—Literally, *Did to her his vow which he had vowed*. This plain and positive statement throws us back for the meaning of Jephthah's act to verse 31, where the language of his vow is carefully recorded. Whatever act his vow contemplated, that certainly he did. Nothing more, nothing less. He devoutly kept his word. He had opened his mouth unto the Lord, and, notwithstanding all his anguish, he went not back from his solemn oath. So, according to the previous exposition of his language, we can understand nothing else than that he offered her for a burnt offering unto the Lord. **And she knew no man**—This fact the sacred writer adds as that alone which, in the estimation of that age,

which he had vowed: and she knew no man. And it was a <sup>10</sup> custom in Israel, **40** *That the daughters of Israel*

10 Or, ordinance.—11 Heb. *from year to*

was the sting of death to the heroic maiden. It is very natural that those expositors who seek to show that Jephthah's daughter was not put to death at all, should regard these words as indicating the manner in which he fulfilled his vow. Why else, they ask, is this fact of her virginity again mentioned? If she was sacrificed, they affirm, the record would have been: "He did to her his vow which he had vowed, and offered her for a burnt offering." Such an addition, we reply, was not necessary, and, after the full and careful statement of his vow in verse 31, would have been superfluous. But if, as we have shown above, and as most modern scholars are constrained to admit, he contemplated a human sacrifice, and if, instead of offering her as a burnt offering, he devoted her to a life of celibacy, then plainly he did not according to his vow which he had vowed, but contrary to it; and the mere addition, *she knew no man*, would be a most inexplicably strange way of informing us that Jephthah failed to keep his word. The sacred historian uses no needless word, nor does he attempt to picture the sad spectacle of the sacrifice; but he records, not as the manner in which Jephthah fulfilled his vow, but as the most fearful knell that, in the ears of her father and companions, sounded over that daughter's funeral pile, and sent its lingering echo into the after-times—*she knew no man*. **It was a custom in Israel**—What was a custom in Israel? For fathers to sacrifice daughters, after the example of Jephthah? This no one will pretend. To offer human sacrifices to Jehovah? No; for such a custom never prevailed to any considerable extent in Israel, and least of all was it occasioned by Jephthah's example. To consecrate young maidens to perpetual virginity? There is not a particle of evidence that such a custom prevailed after this time more than before, and no certain evidence that it was

went <sup>11</sup> yearly <sup>12</sup> to lament the daughter of Jephthah the Gileadite four days in a year.

year.—12 Or, to talk with, chap. 5. 11.

ever a custom in Israel. On the contrary, the whole tendency of Hebrew laws and civilization was against a forced celibacy on the part of either sex.—What custom, then, sprang up in Israel on this occasion? Clearly, the custom described in the next verse, of the yearly celebration of Jephthah's daughter. The Hebrew is, *She became a custom in Israel*; that is, her heroism and sublime submission to be sacrificed made such an impression on the daughters of Israel that they instituted a yearly celebration of her memory.

**40. Went yearly**—Went, probably, into the solitudes of the mountains. Those that lived near Mizpeh would naturally go to the same mountains where Jephthah's daughter had bewailed her virginity. **To lament the daughter of Jephthah**—So all the ancient versions, but, doubtless, incorrectly. The word is better rendered *rehearse*, as in chap. v, 11; that is, *to commemorate, to celebrate, to praise*. After her death they ceased to bewail her virginity, and only celebrated the sublime heroism which led her, as she and they conceived, to die for God, her country, and her sire. Before her death she and her friends went to the mountains and bewailed all that they thought lamentable in her lot; and two months were deemed enough to mourn the dark side of her history, and that mourning they would have before her death, so that afterwards they need speak only of the bright side, and commemorate her lofty devotion.

It has been sometimes asked: "If she were really put to death, is it not strange that the fact of her death is not once spoken of?" The fact of her death, we answer, is sufficiently indicated in the statement, "He did to her his vow which he had vowed;" and as for the silence of the other parts of Scripture on this subject, that is no more strange than its silence on a hundred other things. With more

show of reason may we ask, How is it, if she were not slain, that we have no mention of her subsequent life? The marginal reading, *to talk with*, is certainly untenable. It was natural for the daughters of Israel to go yearly and celebrate the sublime devotion and lofty heroism that haloed around the memory of the saintly maiden; but if she were still alive, it is inexplicably strange that no intimation of that fact is given.

Another exposition of Jephthah's vow, at war with that presented in the foregoing notes, has largely prevailed among both Jews and Christians. It maintains that the maiden was not put to death at all, but was consecrated to a life of celibacy. Most of the arguments by which it is supported, and the objections and difficulties which it raises against our exposition, have been as fully met and answered in the foregoing notes as the limits of this work will allow. For more full and thorough discussion of the subject the reader is referred to the author's article in the *Methodist Quarterly Review* for April, 1873. It remains for us to notice in this place the arguments and objections which, for the sake of unity and clearness, we omitted to notice above.

The great objection against the literal interpretation is, that the offering of a human sacrifice was incompatible with Jephthah's faith, piety, and knowledge of the law. But how is this to be shown? It is alleged that an inspired writer of the New Testament, in Heb. xi, 32, *commends Jephthah's faith*. But be it noted that he does not commend Jephthah's *vow*. Mark his words: "The time would fail me to tell of Gideon, and Barak, and Samson, and Jephthah; David also, and Samuel, and the prophets." What parts or acts of their lives, now, shall we suppose this verse commends? All they ever did, or said, or were? Then must we include Barak's cowardice, and Gideon's idolatry and polygamy, and Samson's lewdness with Delilah, and David's lies, and adultery, and murder of Uriah! The six verses following, through which the writer

to the Hebrews goes on to specify particular instances of faith, which distinguished those ancient worthies, contain no allusion which can with any rational probability be made to mean the consecration of one's daughter to perpetual celibacy. Did it ever occur to the advocates of this consecration theory that for a father to doom his daughter, in the bloom of her youthful beauty, to a life of seclusion and celibacy, and thus rob her of the honour and joys of Hebrew womanhood, could scarcely be the ground of an apostle's commendation? The faith which the inspired writer praises in the ancient worthies is not to be confounded with all the acts which, because of ignorance, may have sometimes sprung from their faith. It is well to observe that the faith of the harlot Rahab, extolled by the same sacred writer, was compatible with what the ethics of the New Testament would pronounce a life of shame and an act of falsehood. Jephthah's vow, as we view it, was an act at once of mighty faith and fearful ignorance. Our Christian instinct revolts both from the vow and the fulfilling of it. But we must not ignore and deny the spirit of exalted faith and piety from which his action sprang. The correctness of one's doctrinal opinions is no sure criterion of his heart's faith in God. The Lord Jesus found among the Gentiles a faith unparalleled in Israel.

But the main strength of the consecration hypothesis lies in the supposition that a judge in Israel must needs have been acquainted with the law against human sacrifices, (Lev. xviii, 21; xx, 2; Deut. xii, 31; xviii, 10.) But let it be observed that this is only a *supposition*; it has no positive evidence to support it, and may be opposed by considerations which make the very contrary supposition much more probable. First, the fact, which the Book of Judges makes no secret, that that was a lawless and degenerate period of Hebrew history. "Every man did that which was right in his own eyes." Chap. xvii, 6; xxi, 25; ii, 16-19. Then consider Jephthah's early

exile from his father's house, and the fact that about the time of his expulsion the multiplied idolatry described in chapter x, 6, must have been at its height in Israel. They had even gone so far as to serve "the gods of Moab and the gods of the children of Ammon." To what extent they worshipped Chemosh and Moloch we are not told; but let the impartial student of history judge whether it is safe to affirm, that while they shamefully apostatized from the Lord and openly served those gods whose most signal honour was a human sacrifice, they could never, even in a single instance, be supposed to have shown them such signal honour. And how natural for the youthful Gileadite, under all the circumstances of his lot, to suppose that the substance and method of religion were about the same among all the nations; and, since human sacrifices were offered by some, and he had possibly known of instances even in Israel, they entered into and helped to form his notions of what would be most specially noble and pleasing in the sight of God. What supposable opportunities did his wild border life afford him for becoming acquainted with the law of Moses? If there was great ignorance of the law in the very heart of Israel, and near to Shiloh, the seat of the tabernacle, what greater ignorance must have prevailed far off on the border of Ammon! These considerations lead us to conclude that, so far from being absurd or impossible, it was both natural and probable that Jephthah's knowledge of the law was exceedingly meagre and confused, and that the savage discipline of his border life, often in contact with the Ammonites, had led him to suppose that the sacrifice of a human being was the noblest possible offering to God.

The hypothesis of Bush demands a passing notice. He supposes that during the two months' mourning the affair became notorious throughout the land, and the subject of great lamentation and discussion. He imagines that when the vow passed Jephthah's lips it had more of the character of a devote-

ment (*cherem*, Lev. xxvii, 28) than of a vow, (*neder*,) but that he was subsequently instructed by the priests that a burnt offering was incompatible with the nature of a devoted thing, "and that the law having made no provision for the latter being substituted for the former, he was even, according to the very terms of his vow, rightly understood, not only released, but prohibited from performing it. Accordingly, he conceives that Jephthah executed his vow by devoting his daughter to perpetual celibacy—"a mode of execution which did not, in the first instance, enter his thoughts." The one and all-sufficient answer to this hypothesis is that from beginning to end it is a tissue of conjectures, and can claim no support from the sacred narrative. It may do for poets and romancers to weave such fancies around the facts of Scripture, but not for a commentator sagely to give us such conjectures for exposition.

Some have been puzzled to know by whose hand Jephthah's daughter could have been sacrificed. It would have been unlawful, they urge, for Jephthah to have done it, for he was not a priest, and the priests at Shiloh would surely have not polluted the tabernacle with a human sacrifice. This difficulty is all imaginary. A reference to chap. vi, 19, 20, 26, 27, and xiii, 19, will show that in that age it was no uncommon thing for persons to offer sacrifices without the aid of priests, and at places far from the tabernacle. And a man who, like Jephthah, thought that a human sacrifice would be pleasing to God, would not be likely to scruple over forms; and to suppose that between the time he was made judge and the time he performed his vow he must have become acquainted with the regulations of the Levitical priesthood, is to suppose what has no evidence in Scripture. The same remarks will apply to the objection that none but a *male* victim could be offered in sacrifice, according to the law. Is it assumed, then, that Jephthah might have legally offered his son, if he had had one?

Finally, it is said that our exposition enables the opponents of a divine



## CHAPTER XII.

**A**ND the men of Ephraim gathered themselves together, and went northward, and said unto Jephthah, Wherefore passedst thou over to fight against the children of Ammon, and didst not call us to go with thee? we will burn thine house upon thee with fire. **2** And Jephthah said unto them, I and my people were at great strife with the children of Ammon; and

when I called you, ye delivered me not out of their hands. **3** And when I saw that ye delivered me not, I put my life in my hands, and passed over against the children of Ammon, and the Lord delivered them into my hand: wherefore then are ye come up unto me this day, to fight against me? **4** Then Jephthah gathered together all the men of Gilead, and fought with Ephraim; and the men of Gilead smote

*a* See chap. 8. 1.—1 Heb. *were called*.

*b* 1 Sam. 19. 5; 28. 21; Job 13. 14; Psa. 119. 109; Rom. 16. 4; Rev. 12. 11.

revelation to urge a capital objection against the morality of the Bible. But how is this possible when the Bible nowhere approves or sanctions Jephthah's vow? Must we accept as sanctioned of God every action in Bible history that is not specifically condemned by some sacred writer? Or will it be pretended that the Bible anywhere sanctions human sacrifices? Amazingly shallow are they who presume to oppugn divine revelation with such logic, or they who seriously fear the attacks of such objectors. We shudder at Jephthah's ignorance and superstition, and revolt from his bloody deed: but with the daughters of Israel, who lived in that darkest of historic ages, we cannot but commemorate the mighty faith and zeal of Jephthah, and the sublime devotion of his daughter.

## CHAPTER XII.

## EPHRAIM'S JEALOUSY AND DEFEAT, 1-6.

Ephraim's ambition and jealousy towards other tribes had burst out once before, in the days of Gideon, (chap. viii, 1-3,) but the soft answer of that heroic judge prevented then a rupture between the men of that tribe and the divinely chosen judge. But in Jephthah the men of Ephraim find a man of different mettle, and a character less placable than Gideon. His stern and resolute spirit smites the head of Ephraim's jealousy, and thus for a long time silences that factious element in Israel. At a later period, however, Ephraim's irrepressible pride and ambition broke out again, and led to the secession of the ten tribes and the Assyrian exile.

**1. The men of Ephraim**—The warriors of that tribe. **Gathered themselves together**—Were summoned by their leaders to muster for battle. The warriors gathered from this single tribe were more than forty-two thousand. Verse 6. They meant to make a great demonstration in Israel, and show Jephthah and the eastern tribes how powerful they were. It was passionate ambition and jealousy taking up arms for self-gratification. **Went northward**—So the ancient versions; but the better rendering is, *went over to Zaphon*. Zaphon was a city in the tribe of Gad. See at Josh. xiii, 27.

**2. When I called you**—Jephthah speaks in the name and as representative of the eastern tribes. These tribes were the ones specially afflicted by Ammon, and when they could no longer endure the oppression they resolved on fight. See chap. x, 17, 18. Then they looked for a leader; and then it doubtless was they appealed to the western tribes, and especially to Ephraim, to come and save them from their bitter foes. Jephthah himself, too, when collecting his forces to go against the Ammonites, probably called on them to come and help in the war. Keil thinks the Ephraimites probably refused their co-operation because the eastern tribes had appointed Jephthah as commander without consulting them. The designed brevity of the history led to the necessary omission of many minor facts and details.

**4. The men of Gilead smote Ephraim**—This was the first actual tribal war, and was brought about by a rash tribal jealousy. Ephraim was

Ephraim, because they said, Ye Gileadites *are* fugitives of Ephraim among the Ephraimites, *and* among the Manassites. **5** And the Gileadites took the *4* passages of Jordan before the Ephraimites: and it was *so*, when those Ephraimites which were escaped said, Let me go over, that the men of Gilead said unto him, *Art thou an Ephraimite?* If he said, *Nay*; **6** Then said they unto him, Say now

c See 1 Samuel 25. 10; Psalm 78. 9.—d Joshua 22. 11; chap. 3. 28; 7. 24.

in every sense to blame. **Because they said**—That is, the men of Ephraim said. **Fugitives of Ephraim**—This taunting charge from the men of Ephraim is given as a further reason why the victorious Gileadites dealt so severely with the Ephraimites who fell into their hands. To the rash arrogance of their language, as given in verse 1, they also added this insult to those who rallied to the support of Jephthah. **Among the Ephraimites, and among the Manassites**—The meaning of Ephraim's insulting charge will be seen by regarding it as an allusion to Jephthah's early history. He was an outlaw and fugitive from the tribe of Manasseh, (chap. xi, 1-3,) and for most of his life had been the leader of a band of border ruffians, who resorted to him from various tribes. The men of Ephraim would insinuate that all who followed Jephthah were of this class, and now, by making him judge in Israel, they meant to settle down among the ancient and honoured tribes of Ephraim and Manasseh, and thus monopolize the dominion of all Israel. Thus the words **Ye Gileadites** are equivalent to Jephthah's clique of ruffians. Another rendering of this passage is, *Fugitives of Ephraim are ye; Gilead is in the midst of Ephraim and in the midst of Manasseh*. The meaning then would be, that Jephthah's warriors were fugitives from the Ephraimites, and a set of rebels wishing to form a rival government on the east of Jordan, and pretending to be Gileadites. But Gilead, the true descendants of Manasseh's grandson, (Num. xxvi, 29,) Ephraim urges, is altogether swallowed up in the great tribes of Manasseh and Ephraim, which join each other

**2** Shibboleth: and he said Sibboleth: for he could not frame to pronounce *it* right. Then they took him, and slew him at the passages of Jordan: and there fell at that time of the Ephraimites forty and two thousand.

**7** And Jephthah judged Israel six years. Then died Jephthah the Gileadite, and was buried in *one of* the cities of Gilead.

2 Which signifieth *a stream*, or, *flood*; Psa. 69. 2, 15; Isa. 27. 12.

in the centre of Israel on the west of the Jordan.

**5. Took the passages of Jordan**—Compare marginal reference. **Before the Ephraimites**—Or, *towards Ephraim*, that is, towards the territory of that tribe. Across these fords would the defeated and retreating Ephraimites seek to make their escape from the land of Gilead.

**6. Shibboleth . . . sibboleth**—The word means *a stream*, and the slight difference of pronunciation between Ephraimites and Gileadites here casually mentioned, shows that dialectic modifications of the Hebrew language had begun to manifest themselves between the tribes that were separated by the Jordan. It is impossible to decide which is the earlier or more correct pronunciation. The word has become the symbol of needless religious strifes, for "many a party watchword, many a theological test," says Stanley, "has had no better origin than this difference of pronunciation between the two rough tribes."—**There fell . . . forty and two thousand**—A bloody raid! Thus pride went before destruction.

#### JEPHTHAH'S DEATH, 7.

**7. Judged Israel six years**—His dominion, probably, never extended to the west of the Jordan. The elders of Gilead had made him their "head and captain," (chap. xi, 11,) and after his victory over the Ammonites, and his defeat of the Ephraimite invasion, he seems to have been content to rule over the inhabitants of Gilead. **Buried in one of the cities of Gilead**—From this indefiniteness about the place of his burial, compared with the fact that the burial of Abimelech is not

8 And after him Ibzan of \*Beth-lehem judged Israel. 9 And he had thirty sons, and thirty daughters, *whom* he sent abroad, and took in thirty daughters from abroad for his sons. And he judged Israel seven years. 10 Then died Ibzan, and was buried at Beth-le-

e Gen. 35. 19; 1 Sam. 16. 1;

mentioned at all, Wordsworth infers that a dark shadow hung over the name and memory of Jephthah. But he seems to have been honoured and respected among the eastern tribes, though we have no record of his making any efforts to lead back his people to the first principles of the theocracy, from which they had greatly departed. The eastern tribes still felt themselves to be of Israel, and never lost that feeling; but their isolation from the western tribes, causing the dialectic variation noticed verse 6, and their remoteness from the tabernacle, whereby they were cut off in a great measure from the practice of the divine worship, greatly weakened the ties of nationality. Jephthah's offering, too, of a human sacrifice, taken in connexion with the fact that it seems not to have occasioned any feelings of horror among the people, creates the belief that they had become generally ignorant of the requirements of their own law, and estranged from the principles of Moses.

{ Our impression of Jephthah's character is reverent. Driven by wrong from home and country, he wrought for himself a heroic name that made the chiefs of eastern Israel realize him to be their only hope. Recalled by their repentance, he, like Camillus, forgave all, and returned to his native home and altars. The dark vow that shades his character was an act of mistaken piety; yet his very fidelity to his vow shows it to have been a profoundly conscientious piety. At the same time it furnishes, in the self-devoting response of the daughter, one of the most touching strokes of pathos in all history. His diplomacy was as honest as his chivalry was brave. No shadow but his mistaken vow rests upon this heroic chief. }

hem. 11 And after him Elon, a Zebulonite, judged Israel; and he judged Israel ten years. 12 And Elon the Zebulonite died, and was buried in Aijalon in the country of Zebulun. 13 And after him Abdon the son of Hillel, a Pirathonite, judged Israel.

Micah 5. 2; Matt. 2. 1.

IBZAN, ELON, AND ABDON, 8-15.

8. **Ibzan of Beth-lehem**—Nothing is said by which we can certainly know whether the Beth-lehem of Judah or that of Zebulun (Josh. xix, 15) is meant. From the absence of the addition *Judah*, (compare chap. xvii, 7,) and the fact that the next judge was also a Zebulonite, most commentators suppose that the Beth-lehem of Zebulun is meant. The notion that Ibzan was identical with Boaz, the second husband of Ruth and father of Obed, has nothing but a distant resemblance in the names to support it, and has very much against it.

9. **Thirty sons, and thirty daughters**—This fact alone would make him great in Israel, and might have been one reason of his being elected judge. Notice that the daughters were **sent abroad** to find homes in Israel, but the sons remained at home to inherit the paternal estate. Notice, also, how complete a contrast between Ibzan's family fortunes and those of Jephthah.

11. **Elon . . . judged Israel ten years**—But we have no record of his particular acts. See note on chap. x, 1.

12. **Aijalon**—Supposed by Van de Velde to have been at the modern Jalun, about fifteen miles east of Akka. This was really in the territory of Naphtali, but so near the border as to be popularly called **in the country of Zebulun**.

13. **A Pirathonite**—A native and resident of Pirathon, a city in the tribe of Ephraim, the modern Ferata, about six miles southwest of Shechem. In verse 15 it is described as being **in the mount of the Amalekites**, from which we infer that a colony of this people had early settled on this hill, and given it its most common name. Hence Ephraim's root was in Amalek. See note on chap. v, 14.

**14** And he had forty sons and thirty nephews, that rode on threescore and ten ass colts: and he judged Israel eight years. **15** And Abdon the son of Hillel the Pirathonite died, and was buried in Pirathon in the land of Ephraim, in the mount of the Amalekites.

## CHAPTER XIII.

**A**ND the children of Israel did evil again in the sight of the Lord; and the Lord delivered them

3 Heb. sons' sons.—f Chap. 5. 10; 10. 4.—g Chap. 3. 13, 27; 5. 14.—1 Heb. added to command, &c.—a Chap. 2. 11; 3. 7; 4. 1; 6. 1; 10. 6.

**14. Thirty nephews**—Rather, *grandsons*. His family greatness was much like that of Ibzan and of Jair. Forty sons and thirty grandsons, seventy in all, made up a perfect number, and was of itself a fact worth recording. **Threescore and ten ass colts**—One for each child. Compare notes on chap. v, 10, and x, 4.

## CHAPTER XIII.

## PHILISTINE OPPRESSION, 1.

**1. The Philistines**—From the narrative of the Ammonite oppression, and Jephthah's rule in eastern Palestine or Gilead, the historian now passes to the extreme west—the Shephelah, or maritime plain of Philistia—and introduces us to a nation of warriors that gave Israel more trouble than they had hitherto experienced from any heathen power. These warlike foes have been frequently mentioned before, (see note on Josh. xiii, 2,) but here they appear for the first time as having dominion over Israel. For this dominion they had doubtless been aiming many years, and they had met with at least one check from the heroic Shamgar. Chap. iii 31. But the successful invasions of northern and eastern powers, and Israel's many misfortunes, gave them marked advantages for extending their conquests over the southern tribes. **Forty years**—This period seems to have included the twenty years of Samson's judgeship, (chap. xv, 20;) at least the Philistine power was not fully broken in his day, but only greatly weakened. These foes maintained

into the hand of the Philistines forty years.

**2** And there was a certain man of Zorah, of the family of the Danites, whose name was Manoah; and his wife was barren, and bare not. **3** And the angel of the Lord appeared unto the woman, and said unto her, Behold now, thou art barren, and bearest not: but thou shalt conceive, and bear a son. **4** Now therefore beware, I pray thee, and drink not wine nor strong drink,

b 1 Sam. 12. 9.—c Josh. 19. 41.—d Chap. 6. 12; Luke 1. 11, 13, 28, 31.—e Verse 14; Num. 6. 2, 3; Luke 1. 15.

their rule, with only occasional breaks, till the time of Samuel. It was a most memorable period in the history of the chosen people. The tribe of Judah lost all spirit, and quietly succumbed, (chap. xv, 11;) and long before the night of oppression ceased, the ark of God was captured, and the sanctuary at Shiloh made desolate.

## SAMSON'S BIRTH, 2-25.

**2. Zorah**—Identified by Dr. Robinson with the modern Surah, which is situated on a high conical hill about thirteen miles west of Jerusalem, and overlooking the Wady Surar. It was first assigned to Judah, (Josh. xv, 33,) but afterwards to Dan. Josh. xix, 41. **Family of the Danites**—This expression is used interchangeably with *tribe of the Danites*. Compare chap. xviii, 1, 2, 11, 30. **Manoah**—"A person of such great virtue," says Josephus, "that he had few men his equals, and, without dispute, the principal person of his country. He had a wife celebrated for her beauty, and excelling her contemporaries."

**3. The angel of the Lord**—See note on chap. vi, 11. This Angel of the covenant himself performed the mission, so like that which Gabriel afterwards was sent to fulfil, (Luke i, 26,) when the woman was Mary, and the child to be born was the Wonderful, (Isa. ix, 6,) even the incarnation of Him who now appeared as a mysterious theophany.

**4. Drink not wine**—The mother of the mighty Nazarite must herself be a Nazarite for the time.

and eat not any unclean *thing*: **5** For, lo, thou shalt conceive and bear a son; and no 'razor shall come on his head: for the child shall be 'a Nazarite unto God from the womb: and he shall 'begin to deliver Israel out of the hands of the Philistines. **6** Then the woman came and told her husband, saying, 'A man of God came unto me, and his 'countenance *was* like the countenance of an angel of God, very terrible: but I 'asked him not whence he *was*, neither told he me his name: **7** But he said unto me, Behold, thou shalt conceive, and bear a son; and now drink no wine nor strong drink, neither eat any unclean *thing*: for the child shall be a Nazarite to God from the womb to the day of his death. **8** Then Manoah en-

treated the LORD, and said, O my Lord, let the man of God which thou didst send come again unto us, and 'teach us what we shall do unto the child that shall be born. **9** And God 'hearkened to the voice of Manoah; and the angel of God came again unto the woman as she sat in the field: but Manoah her husband *was* not with her. **10** And the woman made haste, and ran, and showed her husband, and said unto him, Behold, 'the man hath appeared unto me, that came unto me the *other* day. **11** And Manoah arose, and went after his wife, and came to the man, and said unto him, *Art* thou the man that spakest unto the woman? And he said, *I am*. **12** And Manoah said, Now let thy words come to pass. 'How shall

<sup>f</sup>Num. 6. 5: 1 Sam. 1. 11.—<sup>g</sup>Num. 6. 2.—<sup>h</sup>See 1 Sam. 7. 13: 2 Sam. 8. 1: 1 Chron. 18. 1.—<sup>i</sup>Deut. 33. 1: 1 Sam. 2. 27: 9. 6: 1 Kings 17. 24.—<sup>k</sup>Matt. 28. 3: Luke 9. 29: Acts 6. 15.

<sup>l</sup>Verses 17, 18.—<sup>m</sup>Job 34. 32: Prov. 3. 5, 6: Acts 9. 6.—<sup>n</sup>Psa. 65. 2: Matt. 7. 7, 11.—<sup>o</sup>John 4. 28, 29.—<sup>p</sup>Heb. *What shall be the manner of thee, &c.*

**5. A Nazarite unto God from the womb**—For the law concerning Nazarites, see Num. vi, 1–21. The key to the divine side of Samson's history is to be found in this Nazarite condition. Unless we keep this earnest and solemn background of his life-consecration to Jehovah in view, his buffoonery and lewdness, and even his mere feats of strength, would seem strange and inexplicable when detailed with such elaborate fulness. From the theocratic standpoint Samson was a sacred character, a great national hero; and his consecration as a Nazarite from the womb, together with his agency in delivering Israel from the Philistine yoke, is the great redeeming fact and feature of his romantic life. See note at end of chap. xvi. **He shall begin to deliver Israel**—But he was not to complete that deliverance. His giant feats of valour were but to weaken the Philistines' power over Israel, and prepare the way for that more pure and spotless Nazarite, Samuel, who should complete that work of national salvation. 1 Sam. vii, 13.

**6. A man of God**—The human form he bore led her to mistake the Angel for a prophet, and yet she thought that he was more than human. **Very terrible**—Majestic. His presence was such as to command a holy fear.

**8. Manoah entreated**—His faith, like Gideon's, demands a repetition of wonders.

**9. As she sat in the field**—Pausing to rest, perhaps, as she was going or returning from some fountain to draw water. Dr. Robinson observed near the fountain of Zorah several women, "toiling upwards towards the village, each with her jar of water on her head. The village, the fountain, the fields, the mountains, and the females bearing water, all," says he, "transported us back to ancient times, when in all probability the mother of Samson often in like manner visited the fountain, and toiled homeward with her jar of water."

**12. Manoah said**—Manoah's words are not correctly rendered in our English version, but should read, *Now thy words shall come to pass; what shall be the manner of the child and his work?* The former sentence has the relation of a protasis to the following, as, When thy words come to pass, what shall be, etc.? By the *manner* and *work* of the child, Manoah meant both their manner and work towards their son, as expressed in the English version, and also his manner and work towards them and Israel. The Angel answers so far as their work is concerned, but leaves it for the future to tell the rest.

we order the child, and <sup>1</sup>how shall we do unto him? **13** And the angel of the Lord said unto Manoah, Of all that I said unto the woman let her beware. **14** She may not eat of any *thing* that cometh of the vine, <sup>2</sup>neither let her drink wine or strong drink, nor eat any unclean *thing*: all that I commanded her let her observe. **15** And Manoah said unto the angel of the Lord, I pray thee, let us detain thee, until we shall have made ready a kid <sup>3</sup>for thee. **16** And the angel of the Lord said unto Manoah, Though thou detain me, I will not eat of thy bread: and if thou wilt offer a burnt offering, thou must offer it unto the Lord. For Manoah knew not that he *was* an angel of the Lord. **17** And Manoah said unto the angel of the Lord, What *is* thy name, that when thy sayings come to pass we may do thee honour? **18** And the an-

<sup>3</sup> Or, what shall he do? Heb. what shall be his work?—<sup>2</sup>p Verse 4.—<sup>1</sup>q Gen. 18. 5; chap. 6. 18.—<sup>4</sup>Heb. before thee.—<sup>5</sup>r Gen. 32. 29.—<sup>5</sup>Or, wonderful, Isa. 9. 6.—<sup>6</sup>s Chap. 6. 19, 20.

**15. Let us detain thee**—Manoah would observe those rites of oriental hospitality by attention to which Abraham entertained angels unawares. Gen. xviii, 1-8.

**16. I will not eat of thy bread**—But the same Angel did eat of the food (Gen. xviii, 8) which Abraham prepared; why not do the same with Manoah? Abraham, we may answer, was "heir of the world," (Rom. iv, 13,) and a far more important person in the history of the Old Covenant than Manoah, and so with him the Jehovah-Angel might well come into closer fellowship than with other saints. **For Manoah knew not**—This statement is given as a reason for the Angel's suggestion that Manoah might, perhaps, now appropriately offer a burnt offering to Jehovah. He does not tell him that he is the Angel Jehovah, but he powerfully suggests that thought to the mind of Manoah, and thus leads the latter to inquire after his name.

**18. Why askest thou thus after my name**—Not a rebuke, but one of those profound questions which lead a man to look into the depths of his heart, and read its inner motions. It was designed to lead Manoah to ponder thoroughly, then and afterwards, the several facts in this memorable theophany.

gel of the Lord said unto him, <sup>1</sup>Why askest thou thus after my name, seeing it *is* <sup>2</sup>secret? **19** So Manoah took a kid with a meat offering, <sup>3</sup>and offered *it* upon a rock unto the Lord: and *the* angel did wondrously; and Manoah and his wife looked on. **20** For it came to pass, <sup>4</sup>when the flame went up toward heaven from off the altar, that the angel of the Lord ascended in the flame of the altar: and Manoah and his wife looked on *it*, and <sup>5</sup>fell on their faces to the ground. **21** But the angel of the Lord did no more appear to Manoah and to his wife. <sup>6</sup>Then Manoah knew that he *was* an angel of the Lord. **22** And Manoah said unto his wife, <sup>7</sup>We shall surely die, because we have seen God. **23** But his wife said unto him, If the Lord were pleased to kill us, <sup>8</sup>he would not have received a burnt offering and a meat offering at our

<sup>1</sup> 2 Kings 2. 11; Psa. 47. 5.—<sup>2</sup>u Lev. 9. 24; 1 Chron. 21. 16; Ezek. 1. 28; Matt. 17. 6.—<sup>3</sup>x Chap. 6. 22.—<sup>4</sup>w Gen. 32. 30; Exod. 33. 20; Deut. 5. 26; chap. 6. 22.—<sup>5</sup>x Gen. 4. 4, 5; Psa. 86. 17.

**Seeing it is secret**—Rather, *and it is Wonderful*. It is the adjective form of the same word which in Isa. ix, 6 is rendered *Wonderful*. There is a deep significance beneath this word, involving the marvellous person, character, and works of Him who in the fulness of times "was made flesh and dwelt among us... the glory of the only-begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth." John i, 14.

**19. Manoah took a kid**—Here notice another instance of a person offering a burnt-offering with his own hands, and far from the tabernacle. **Offered it upon a rock**—As Gideon offered his kid and unleavened cakes. Chap. vi, 20. **Did wondrously**—His acts accorded with his name. The great miracle was his ascension in the flame of the altar; by which sublime manifestation he overwhelmed Manoah and his wife with a sudden conviction of his divine essence and glory. This conviction only deepened and became more permanent with the lapse of time, and the fact that the Angel no more appeared.

**22. We shall surely die**—Compare note on chap. vi, 22.

**23. If the Lord were pleased to kill us**—Reason and faith united. In the heart of the wife develop into a noble

hands, neither would he have <sup>7</sup> showed us all these *things*, nor would as at this time have told us *such things* as these. **24** And the woman bare a son, and called his name <sup>8</sup> Samson: and <sup>9</sup> the child grew, and the Lord blessed him. **25** <sup>10</sup> And the Spirit of the Lord began to move him at times in <sup>11</sup> the camp of Dan <sup>12</sup> between Zorah and Eshtaol.

## CHAPTER XIV.

**AND** Samson went down <sup>13</sup> to Tim-

<sup>a</sup> *Psalm 25. 14; Prov. 8. 32.—<sup>b</sup> Heb. 11. 32.—<sup>c</sup> 1 Sam. 3. 19; Luke 1. 80; 2. 52.—<sup>d</sup> Chap. 3. 10; 1 Sam. 11. 6; Matt. 4. 1.—<sup>e</sup> Heb. Mahaneh-dan, as chap. 18. 12.—<sup>f</sup> Josh. 13. 33; chap. 18. 11.*

and devout trust, and triumph over the fears and trembling of the husband. The essential element of her faith and reason was identical with that which led the apostle to write: "He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?" Rom. viii, 32.

**24. Samson**—The name signifies, according to Josephus, *one that is strong*. Some have doubted this signification, because the root *shemesh* means the sun; but Fürst shows that from the sense of *being bright, shining*, comes easily the metaphorical sense of *being distinguished, strong*. Hence the name indicates a distinguished hero. **The Lord blessed him**—By endowing him with remarkable physical powers, and thus preparing him for the great mission of his life—to begin to deliver Israel from the oppression of the Philistines. Verse 5.

**25. Spirit of the Lord began to move him**—Literally, *began to strike him*; that is, to urge or impel him to perform marvellous feats of strength. He may have rent many a lion in his youthful days, and such feats had as much to do in developing his faith in God, and preparing him to smite the Philistines, as David's smiting of the lion and the bear had in preparing him to cope with Goliath. 1 Sam. xvii, 37. **Camp of Dan**—In chap. xviii, 12, the word is rendered as a proper name, *Mahaneh-Dan*. It was the district belonging to the Danites lying between **Zorah and Eshtaol**. This latter place has not been clearly identified with any

nath, and <sup>14</sup> saw a woman in Timnath of the daughters of the Philistines. **2** And he came up, and told his father and his mother, and said, I have seen a woman in Timnath of the daughters of the Philistines: now therefore <sup>15</sup> get her for me to wife. **3** Then his father and his mother said unto him, *Is there* never a woman among the daughters of <sup>16</sup> thy brethren, or among all my people, that thou goest to take a wife of the <sup>17</sup> uncircumcised Philistines? And Samson said

<sup>a</sup> *Genesis 33. 13; Joshua 15. 10.—<sup>b</sup> Genesis 34. 2.—<sup>c</sup> Genesis 21. 21; 34. 4.—<sup>d</sup> Genesis 24. 3, 4.—<sup>e</sup> Genesis 34. 14; Exodus 34. 16; Deuteronomy 7. 8.*

modern site, but probably lay between Zorah and Kirjath-jearim. Compare chap. xviii, 12, and Josh. xv, 33.

## CHAPTER XIV.

SAMSON'S MARRIAGE AND RIDDLE,  
1-20.

"Samson keeps his vow of abstinence from intoxication," says Ewald, "but is all the weaker and wilder with regard to the love of women, as if he could here make up for the want of freedom elsewhere; and by a singular sport of chance, or, rather, by the secret revenge of a heart warped by the vow, his love is always excited by women of that very race which the vow urges him to combat with all the might of his arm, and on whose men the weight of his own strength always falls at the right time."

**1. Went down to Timnath**—About five miles southwest from Zorah, and identical with the modern Tibneh. To reach it from Zorah one has to "descend through wild rocky gorges, just where one would expect to find a lion in those days, when wild beasts were far more common than at present."—*Thomson*.

**2. Get her for me to wife**—Proposals for marriage were made by parents at the request of their sons, (Gen. xxxiv, 4, 8,) and hence must Samson's parents go down with him to Timnath.

**3. Daughters of thy brethren**—That is, women of the tribe of the Danites. **All my people**—All Israel, in distinction from the tribe of Dan. **A wife of the uncircumcised**—The law forbade marriages with Canaanitish

unto his father, Get her for me; for <sup>1</sup> she pleaseth me well. **4** But his father and his mother knew not that it *was* <sup>1</sup> of the Lord, that he sought an occasion against

<sup>1</sup> Heb. *she is right in mine eyes.*—*f* Josh. 11. 20; 1 Kings 12. 15; 2 Kings 6. 33; 2 Chron.

women. (Exod. xxxiv, 16; Deut. vii, 3,) and therefore the opposition of Samson's parents to his marriage was well founded. The Philistines are not usually classified with the Canaanitish tribes, but in respect to Israel and the law they were aliens and idolaters. Compare Josh. xiii, 3. **She pleaseth me well**—Literally, *She is righteous in my eyes.* Samson saw in her no evil, no wrong.

**4. It was of the Lord**—Our historian is writing SACRED history, and he marks everywhere the working of Divine Providence. Samson was raised up of God to begin to deliver Israel, and therefore every event of his life that was associated with that work was providentially ordered. **That he sought an occasion**—Not that Samson had a foreknowledge of what would be the outcome of this marriage, and purposely sought this woman to wife that he might find some opportunity of working mischief and ruin among the Philistines; but that the Lord overruled all these events for the purpose of weakening the Philistines' power. Samson evidently had some suspicion or impression that the marriage would lead to great results. He at least recognised, as his parents did not, the hand of God in the matter, and he felt assured that his love for the woman, and her righteousness in his eyes, were providential indications that in marrying her he was boldly entering on the great mission of his life. But how the matter would terminate neither he nor his parents then knew. **Against the Philistines**—Rather, *From the Philistines.* The provoking and responsible occasion for Samson to injure the Philistines was to be on their side, not on his. **For at that time**—This sentence is added as the general reason why the Lord was providentially preparing the way to weaken and overthrow the Philistine dominion over Israel.

the Philistines: for at that time <sup>1</sup> the Philistines had dominion over Israel. **5** Then went Samson down, and his father and his mother, to Timnath, and

Icles 10. 15; 22. 7; 25. 20.—*Chapter* 13. 1; Deuteronomy 28. 48.

{ The theory of the Old Testament language in regard to God's providence seems to be this: *Whatever act of man, however free or wicked, contributes to the higher scheme of Jehovah's purpose, and so, though divinely disapproved, is divinely recognised, and wrought into the series of events, is roughly said to be of the Lord, and his act and doing.* The old Hebrew age had not yet attempted to draw the metaphysical line between God's will and God's non-prevention of those sins which are necessarily to be admitted into that system of free-agency from which the highest good shall accrue. Those sins, therefore, which are seen by the inspired writer to *adjust into the high scheme of God*, and to bring out his intended results, are, in lump, attributed to him. They are not *his* by approval, by decree, by direct production, nor by fore-ordination; but are only indiscriminately said to be *his*, because, foreseen by him, they are simply *non-prevented*, and woven into his complex plan for bringing out the highest good. This is not rightly called a Hebraism in the sense of a Hebrew idiom; but it is a Hebraism in the sense of being a Hebrew style of thought and expression. The Hebrew knew, indeed, that Jehovah was absolutely holy, and men's sins were wicked, but had never fully adjusted the relation between the two. A later age, when moral thought becomes more defined, raises the question of God's exact collision with sin, and draws the discriminating line. See notes on Matt. xi, 25; Acts ii, 23, and iv, 28; and introductory note to Rom. ix. }

**5. Then went Samson down, and his father and his mother**—He overcame their scruples, and they accordingly accompanied him to Timnath to consummate the betrothal. The laws and customs of the age required the parents of the bridegroom to be parties in negotiating the marriage of a son,



came to the vineyards of Timnath : and,

2 Hebrew, *in*

and for this purpose must Samson's parents go down with him to the residence of the desired maiden. **The vineyards of Timnath**—"There were then vineyards belonging to Timnath," says Thomson, "as there now are in all these hamlets along the base of the hills and upon the mountain sides. These vineyards are very often far out from the villages, climbing up rough wadies and wild cliffs." **A young lion roared against him**--His parents seem to have been in advance. "At present lions do not exist in Palestine, though they are said to be found in the desert on the road to Egypt. They abound on the banks of the Euphrates between Bussorah and Bagdad, and in the marshes and jungles near the rivers of Babylonia. But though they have now disappeared from Palestine, they must in ancient times have been numerous. The names Lebaoth, (Josh. xv. 32,) Beth-lebaoth, (Josh. xix. 6,) Arieah, (2 Kings xv. 25,) and Laish, (Judg. xviii. 7,) were probably derived from the presence of lions, and point to the fact that they were at one time common. The strength, courage, and ferocity of the lion are proverbial. The terrible roar of the lion is expressed in Hebrew by four different words, between which the following distinction appears to be maintained: *shaag* (here and Psalm xxii. 13; civ. 21; Amos iii. 4) denotes the roar of the lion while seeking his prey; *naham* (Isa. v. 29) expresses the cry which he utters when he seizes his victim; *hagah* (Isa. xxxi. 4) the growl with which he defies any attempt to snatch the prey from his teeth; while *naar* is descriptive of the cry of the young lions. Jer. li. 38."—*Smith's Bible Dictionary*.

A recent ingenious attempt (in "Scribner's Monthly" for July, 1871) to explain away the common and traditional sense of this passage, and to give a new solution of Samson's riddle, demands, perhaps, a notice here. It asserts that Samson rent no *young lion*, but smashed or demolished a *winepress*, and renders this sentence, "Behold, the

behold, a young lion roared <sup>2</sup> against meeting him.

lion-cup called loudly to invite him." It affirms that כפּוֹר, *young lion*, is meant for כפּוֹר, a cup, and that cup of lions means a winepress, which was made of hewn stone and resembled a great cup or goblet, and was hence called cup of lions, or lion-cup. The roaring (נאָר) is explained of the raging of wine when it is red in the cup. Samson being a Nazarite, wine was his enemy, and when he heard it raging, and saw it giving its colour in the mammoth cup, he treated it as a tempting foe, and rent the winepress to fragments. It is also claimed that מַכּוֹת, in verse 8

means properly a ruin, or heap, and is applicable to a broken winepress, but not to the dead carcass of a lion; and גוֹיִת, rendered carcass in the same verse, is, when we leave out the *matres lectionis* ו and י, the same word (גֵּית) which is rendered winepress in chap. vi. 11. Further, it is argued that a broken winepress would be a tempting receptacle for bees, while a dead carcass would be repulsive; and that by destroying this property of the Philistines he was injuring the enemies of his people and thus fulfilling his mission, while the rending of a lion would have been no act of destruction against the Philistines, but a blessing, in thus ridding their vineyards of dangerous beasts. The writer finally gives the following solution of the riddle: Out of the winepress, which consumes or eats grapes by the million, came forth wine, one of the three leading meats of the Bible, (corn, wine, and oil;) and out of the strong (or the lion-cup, capable of overcoming the mightiest potentates of the earth) came forth sweetness, (or the honey Samson had taken out of the ruins of the winepress.)

To all this it may be easily replied

1. The changing of כפּוֹר into כפּוֹר is wholly arbitrary, and opens the way to such unbounded license in criticism as is not to be accepted unless for weightier reasons than this expositor has offered.
2. To speak of a winepress roaring to

him. **6** And <sup>h</sup>the Spirit of the Lord came mightily upon him, and he rent him as he would have rent a kid, and *he had* nothing in his hand: but he told not his father or his mother what he had done. **7** And he went down, and

h Chap. 3. 10; 13. 25; 1 Sam. 11. 6.

*meet one*, is, to say the least, a very strange expression, and a use of Hebrew that has no parallel in the Bible. **רָעַע** is often used of the roaring of the lion, but never of the fermentation of grapes, or the raging of strong drink. **3.** The rent carcass of a lion may be as appropriately called a *ruin* (**רָעַע**) as a smashed winepress, or the fallen trunk of a tree, (Ezek. xxxi, 13,) or the misfortunes of the wicked, Prov. xxix, 16. **4.** To omit the two letters **ו** and **י** from the word **וַיִּתֵּן**, in which they each have the full power of a consonant, and thus make the word **תֵּן**, is to set at defiance all sound principles of criticism. To omit or ignore the so-called *matres lectionis*, or assume that they are nowhere consonants, is violently to change the orthography of perhaps a tenth or more of all the words in the Hebrew language. **5.** The notion that bees would not have entered a lion's carcass is sufficiently refuted in our note on verse 8; and the idea that Samson, when suddenly attacked by a lion, would have paused to reflect whether he would injure or bless the Philistines by rending it, may be safely passed over without further notice. **6.** Finally, this new solution of Samson's riddle is less apt and clear than the traditional one, and is of too little worth to justify such a laboured effort and such arbitrary criticism as must be undertaken to make it even plausible. We should add, that, contrary to the evident import of verse 17, which says that Samson told his wife the riddle, and she explained it to the Philistines, this new exposition assumes that Samson, by a play on words, (like *lion-cup* and *lion-cub*.) deceived his wife, and so his thirty companions never correctly solved his riddle. In this case he surely should have demanded of them the thirty changes of garments,

talked with the woman; and she pleased Samson well. **8** And after a time he returned to <sup>1</sup>take her, and he turned aside to see the carcass of the lion: and, behold, *there was* a swarm of bees and honey in the carcass of the lion. **9** And

i Gen. 29. 21; Matt. 1. 20.

and not have succumbed to their treachery and fraud.

**6. Spirit of the Lord came mightily upon him**—A remarkable supernatural quickening and strengthening of his physical powers, which enabled him to perform a feat beyond the measure of his ordinary strength. Observe that here the expression does not imply any great sanctity or moral purity in Samson, and is therefore not to be confounded with the New Testament gift of the Holy Ghost.

**7. Talked with the woman**—He had only *seen* her before, (verse 1,) but found no opportunity to *talk with* her till the betrothal was arranged by his parents.

**8. After a time he returned to take her**—That is, to consummate the marriage. Several months, often a year, elapsed between the betrothal and the wedding. **A swarm of bees and honey in the carcass of the lion**—"This, it must be confessed," says Dr. Thomson, "is an extraordinary occurrence. The word for bees is the Arabic for *hornets*, and these we know are very fond of flesh, and devour it with the greatest avidity. I have myself seen a swarm of hornets build their comb in the skull of a dead camel, and this would incline me to believe that it was really our *debabir*—*hornets*—that had settled in the carcass of Samson's lion, if it were known that they manufactured honey enough to meet the demands of the story. However, we find that not long after this bees were so abundant in a wood at no great distance from this spot that the honey dropped down from the trees on the ground, (1 Sam. xiv, 26;) and I have explored densely-wooded gorges on Hermon and southern Lebanon where wild bees are still found, both in trees and in clefts of the rocks. It keeps up the verisimilitude of the narrative that

\* he took thereof in his hands, and went on eating, and came to his father and mother, and he gave them, and they did eat: but he told not them that he had taken the honey out of the carcass of the lion. **10** So his father went down

to 1 Sam. 14. 25, 30; Prov. 25. 16.—1 Gen. 29. 22;

these are just the places where wild beasts still abound, and though bees ordinarily avoid dead carcasses, it is possible that they on this occasion selected that of the lion for their hive." Rosenmüller in his "Bible Archæology" says: "In the desert of Arabia the heat of a sultry season will often dry up all the moisture of men or camels that have fallen dead, within twenty-four hours of their decease, without their passing into a state of decomposition and putrefaction, so that they remain for a long time like mummies, without change and without stench." In such a case it would be very possible and likely that a swarm of bees would take up their abode in what more resembled a crust of rock than a decayed carcass. Or we may suppose that the carcass had become a dry and naked skeleton, and that some sort of wild bees had formed their nest and combs within it. On this point we may well add the weighty testimony of Dr. Kitto: "In the East, vultures and insects, particularly numerous swarms of ants—and these abound in vineyards—will, in an astonishingly short time, clean completely out all the soft parts of any carcass, leaving the skeleton entire, covered by its integuments, for, the flesh having been picked out, the skin would not be rent and destroyed. All the softer parts being thus removed, the bones and skin will rapidly be deprived of all their moisture by the heat of the sun; and the skeleton, covered over with the dry parchment into which the skin has been turned, becomes a sweet and very convenient habitation, in which a swarm of bees would be very likely to settle, especially in a secluded spot, among the shrub-like vines. In the East, bees establish themselves in situations little thought of by us: many wild swarms, being left to find homes for themselves,

unto the woman: and Samson <sup>1</sup>made there a feast; for so used the young men to do. **11** And it came to pass, when they saw him, that they brought thirty companions to be with him. **12** And Samson said unto them, I will now

Ecclesiastes 10. 19; Matt. 22. 2, 4; John 2. 1, 10.

fix in any hollow which seems to them suited to their wants."

**9. Came to his father and mother**—His parents seem to have accompanied him down to Timnath this second time in order to be present at the wedding feast. **He told them not**—He perhaps at once conceived the riddle he would propound, and for that reason kept it secret from his parents. But also he might have thought that his approach to the dead carcass was a violation of his Nazarite purity, and he might better keep it to himself; or he may have thought that his parents would regard the honey as unclean if they knew whence he had taken it.

**10. Samson made there a feast**—The marriage feast lasted seven days, (Gen. xxix. 27,) at the close of which the bridegroom led his bride in joyful procession from her father's house to his own, or to the house of his father. Samson probably held his feast at the house of a friend or acquaintance in Timnath, for as the sexes did not feast together, and the nuptials were not completed till the close of the seventh day, the feast of the bridegroom would not have been held in the house of the bride's father. Had his own residence been in Timnath, Samson would have made his feast at home; but as Zorah was some five miles away, it only remained for him to hire a house for his feast, or else use the house of some friend.

**11. When they saw him**—That is, when the bride's parents and relatives saw him. Bush and others think these words indicate that they saw in Samson's stature and bearing something that aroused their suspicions, and told them he was a man to be watched, and they therefore brought thirty companions more, for the purpose of setting so many spies about him rather than for showing him respect or honour. But

\* put forth a riddle unto you : if ye can certainly declare it me \* within the seven days of the feast, and find it out, then I will give you thirty \* sheets and thirty \* change of garments : 13 But if ye cannot declare it me, then shall ye give me thirty sheets and thirty change of garments. And they said unto him, Put forth thy riddle, that we may hear it.

m 1 Kings 10. 1; Ezek. 17. 2; Luke 14. 7.  
n Gen. 29. 27.—3 Or, *shirts*.

the phrase **to be with him** hardly harmonizes with such a thought, and the joviality and good cheer of their intercourse is against it. The parents and friends of the bride had seen Samson before, and had there been any thing suspicious about his stature and countenance they would have discovered it before this time. The verse merely means that when they saw him make his appearance with his parents in Timnath, to celebrate the wedding feast, they proceeded at once to do their part in furnishing him guests.

**12. I will now put forth a riddle unto you**—Literally, *I will twist you a knot*. The custom of telling riddles at banquets for the purpose of entertainment was an ancient custom, and is often mentioned or alluded to by Greek writers. **Within the seven days**—That is, within the rest of the seven days which now remained of the feast. See notes on verses 14 and 17. Probably the amusement of telling and guessing riddles had been going on for several days of the feast before Samson proposed this one. **Thirty sheets**—One for each guest. *Sheets* is not a proper rendering of the Hebrew word, but *shirts*, as in the margin. They were under-garments woven of fine linen, and probably very costly. **Change of garments**—Costly dresses, which were frequently changed on festal occasions. Compare Gen. xlv, 22; 2 Kings v, 5. The prize of such inner and outer garments was therefore worth contending for.

**14. Out of the eater came forth meat, And out of the strong came forth sweetness.**

Riddles were generally put in a poetical form, and so here the two  
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**14** And he said unto them, Out of the eater came forth meat, and out of the strong came forth sweetness. And they could not in three days expound the riddle. **15** And it came to pass on the seventh day, that they said unto Samson's wife, Entice thy husband, that he may declare unto us the riddle, lest we burn thee and thy father's house

o Gen. 45. 22; 2 Kings 5. 22.—p Chap. 16. 5.  
q Chap. 15. 6.

parts of the riddle are made to form a distich. Out of the carcass of a lion, a ravenous and devouring beast, Samson had taken food which both he and his parents had eaten; and out of the strong beast, for the lion is a symbol of strength, had he taken the sweet honey. One would not look into the body of the strong lion to find sweetness. This was a riddle which surpassed the ordinary powers of man to solve, for the facts on which it was built were unknown to any one but Samson. To solve it would be like interpreting Nebuchadnezzar's dream when the dream itself was not made known. **Could not in three days expound**—Probably the three remaining days of the feast, for very possibly the riddle was not proposed till the third or fourth day of the feast. Keil thinks they occupied themselves three days in trying to find the solution, and after that let the matter rest till the seventh day.

**15. On the seventh day**—Not of the week, (as Bush,) but of the feast. It was not till the last day of the feast that, feeling their case was hopeless, they went to the barbarous extreme of threatening to burn her and her father's house with fire. It is probable, as Keil remarks, that "the woman had already come to Samson every day with her entreaties, from simple curiosity; but Samson resisted them until the seventh day, when she became more urgent than ever in consequence of this threat of the Philistines." It is probable, too, that they had, without any threat, asked her before the seventh day to find out for them the meaning of the riddle. **Entice thy husband**—Persuade him; induce him. **That he may declare . . the riddle**—Evidently  
O. T.

with fire: have ye called us 'to take that we have? *is it not so?* **16** And Samson's wife wept before him, and said, 'Thou dost but hate me, and lovest me not: thou hast put forth a riddle unto the children of my people, and hast not told *it* me. And he said unto her, Behold, I have not told *it* my father nor my mother, and shall I tell *it* thee? **17** And she wept before him 'the seven days, while their feast lasted: and it came to pass on the seventh

day, that he told her, because 'she lay sore upon him: and she told the riddle to the children of her people. **18** And the men of the city said unto him on the seventh day before the sun went down, What *is* sweeter than honey? and what *is* stronger than a lion? And he said unto them, If ye had not ploughed with my heifer, ye had not found out my riddle. **19** And 'the Spirit of the Lord came upon him, and he went down to Ashkelon, and slew thirty men of them,

4 Heb. *to possess us*, or, *to impoverish us?*  
—r Chap. 16. 15.—5 Or, the rest of the seven

days, &c.—a Job 2. 9; Prov. 7. 21; Luke 11. 8;  
18. 4, 5.—t Chap. 3. 10; 13. 25.

their meaning was, that she should persuade Samson to tell her the solution of the riddle, and then that she should privately make it known unto them. **Have ye called us to take that we have**—Literally, *Is it to make us poor ye have called us?* Do you intend to rob us of our property, that you and your father are leagued together to make us the victims of Samson?

**16. I have not told it my father nor my mother**—A thing kept secret from one's parents is, with the Orientals, a thing not to be told in other ears, or, at least, very rarely. "The greatest proof of confidence," says Roberts, "is to say, I have told you what I have not revealed to my father. In proof of the great affection one has for another, it is said, He has told things to him that he would not have related to his parents. 'My friend, do tell me the secret.' 'Tell you? Yes, when I have told my parents.'"

**17. She wept... the seven days**—That is, the rest of the seven days after he put forth the riddle, and **while their feast lasted**. See notes on verses 14 and 15. "Samson's wife was a weak and wicked woman, who had no real love for her husband, and this is certainly common enough at the present day. Wives are procured now as then by the intervention of parents, and without any of that personal attachment between the parties which we deem essential. They are also very often ready to enter into any treacherous conspiracy against their husbands by which they can gain some desired advantage for themselves or their friends. Indeed, there are very many husbands

in this country who neither will nor dare trust their wives. And yet these distrusted but cunning wives have wonderful power over their husbands. "By their arts and their *importunity* they carry their points, often to the utter and obvious ruin of their husbands. It is not at all contrary to present experience, therefore, that Samson's wife should conspire against him in the matter of the riddle, nor that she should succeed in teasing him out of the secret."—*Thomson*.

**18. Men of the city**—The thirty companions mentioned in verse 11. **Before the sun went down**—Just in time to save themselves the mulct.

**What is sweeter than honey? And what is stronger than a lion?**

They answer thus sententiously, and by a distich similar to that in which he propounded the riddle. It was not necessary that they utter particulars, but only say so much as to assure him that they knew his riddle. Their triumph had been gained at such pains that they seem to have sought to make their answer poignant, in order to irritate Samson. **Ploughed with my heifer**—A proverbial expression implying the illegal use of that which was not their own. The expression was, indeed, not a delicate or chaste one, but does not charge, as some have thought, lewd and criminal intercourse between Samson's wife and his thirty companions.

**19. Ashkelon**—Some twenty-five miles distant to the southwest. **Slew thirty men of them**—That is, men of Ashkelon. He would not stain his hands with the blood of the citizens of

and took their <sup>a</sup> spoil, and gave change of garments unto them which expounded the riddle. And his anger was kindled, and he went up to his father's house. **20** But Samson's wife <sup>a</sup> was given to his companion, whom he had used as <sup>a</sup> his friend.

## CHAPTER XV.

**B**UT it came to pass within a while after, in the time of wheat har-

6 Or, *apparel*.—<sup>a</sup> Chap. 15. 2.—<sup>c</sup> John 3. 29.  
<sup>a</sup> Gen. 38. 17; Luke 15. 29.—<sup>b</sup> Chap. 14. 20.

Timnath, but goes far off to take his spoil; yet will he make Philistine blood pay for this Philistine treachery. His whole object in going to Ashkelon to get his spoils is not clear. To justify this wholesale murder by any standard of New Testament morality is idle and absurd. **His anger was kindled**—He doubtless felt that he did well to be angry, and his slaughter of the thirty men of Ashkelon is to be regarded largely as a fearful revenge, by which he would awe and terrify the Timnathites who had treated him so treacherously. The changes of garments which he paid them he probably flung at their feet all stained with human blood, and in a spell of ferocious indignation at their perfidy left them, and **went up to his father's house at Zorah**.

**20. To his companion**—One of the "thirty." "To treason she adds infidelity. Meanness of disposition gives birth to every thing that is bad. It can neither love nor be faithful; but least of all can it comprehend such a man as Samson was."—*Cassel*. **Whom he had used as his friend**—Used most confidentially of the thirty, and had intrusted the most delicate matters to his hand. The one who was used for this purpose is called in the New Testament the *friend of the bridegroom*. John iii, 29. The father of Samson's wife understood from his anger that he utterly hated her, (chap. xv, 2,) and renounced all claim to her; but, instead of apologizing, or trying to turn away his wrath, he gave another exhibition of Philistine perfidy by giving her to a rival, and so made the breach utterly irreparable. Here notice how low was this Philistine's notion of the sanctity of marriage.

vest, that Samson visited his wife with a <sup>a</sup> kid; and he said, I will go in to my wife into the chamber. But her father would not suffer him to go in. **2** And her father said, I verily thought that thou hadst utterly <sup>b</sup> hated her; therefore I gave her to thy companion: *is not her younger sister fairer than she?* <sup>c</sup> take her, I pray thee, instead of her. **3** And Samson said concerning them, <sup>d</sup> Now

<sup>1</sup> Heb. *let her be thine*.—<sup>2</sup> Or, *None shall I be blameless from the Philistines, though, &c.*

## CHAPTER XV.

BURNING OF THE PHILISTINES' CORN,  
1-5.

"Samson's disposition was too noble to cherish anger long. Only small souls bear grudges; but great natures measure others by themselves. Because they have forgotten the wrong that was done them, they think that others are no longer mindful of the wrong they have done. Kindly disposed as ever he comes to visit his wife, but this leads to the disclosure of how he has been treated."—*Cassel*.

**1. The time of wheat harvest**—Dr. Robinson saw the peasants in the Philistine plain, not far from Timnath, beginning their wheat harvest on the 19th of May. The harvest time is here mentioned in view of the facts about to be told of Samson's burning both the standing corn and shocks. Verse 5. **Visited his wife with a kid**—Samson's nuptials had not been fully consummated, and the rage and disgust with which he broke them off hindered his visiting his wife as an ordinary husband. He proposed, therefore, to visit her as one would visit a strange woman, and took the customary present. Compare Gen. xxxviii, 17. **Into the chamber**—The apartment of the women; the harem.

**2. Utterly hated her**—He surely had reason for so thinking, but to give her to that treacherous companion, who had so basely misused the confidence and responsibility reposed in him as friend of the bridegroom, was only to make matters worse, and to drive Samson to some other fearful act of retaliation. Under such circumstances, to propose to him **her young-**

shall I be more blameless than the Philistines, though I do them a dis-

er sister was to add insult to abuse, and render Samson **more blameless than the Philistines** (verse 3) in the fiery destruction which speedily visited their fields and vineyards.

#### 4. Caught three hundred foxes—

We are not to suppose that he caught them alone, or in a single day, nor that foxes were as scarce in Palestine then as they are now. The Hebrew word for foxes, *shualim*, is also used of jackals, and these latter are, doubtless, the animals which Samson caught for his purpose. They are gregarious in their habits, and may be easily taken in large numbers by means of traps and pitfalls.



SYRIAN FOX.

Dr. Kennicott felt that this narrative was so improbable that he sought out what he thought a more rational explanation, and, on the authority of seven Hebrew MSS., he read שְׁטָלִים, *handfuls*, instead of שְׁטָלִים, *foxes*, and supposed that Samson "took three hundred handfuls, or sheaves, of corn, and one hundred and fifty firebrands; that he turned the sheaves end to end, and put a firebrand between the two ends," and so accomplished his work of destruction. To this, however, it is replied: 1. Even granting the proposed reading *handfuls*, the word cannot mean *sheaves*. 2. The verb לָכַד, rendered *caught*, is never used of taking handfuls or sheaves of grain, but always of seizing something by violence or stratagem, and is specially used of catching animals. 3. Then the task of bringing three hundred sheaves together in the open field, and using them as Kennicott supposes, would

pleasure. 4 And Samson went and caught three hundred foxes, and took

have been a difficulty as great as the one he seeks to explain away, and would have exposed Samson to detection and opposition before he could well have accomplished his purpose. We abide, therefore, by the common reading, and on the supposed difficulty of catching three hundred foxes we give Dr. Thomson's very comprehensive statement: "It is probable that by foxes jackals are intended; and these are even now extremely numerous. I have had more than one race after them, and over the very theatre of Samson's exploit. When encamped out in the plain with a part of Ibrahim Pasha's army, in 1834, we were serenaded all night long by troops of these hideous howlers. But if we must limit Samson to the ordinary fox, even these are to be found here. I started up and chased one when I passed over that part of the plain where Timnath is believed to have been situated. In those days this country was infested with all sorts of wild animals to an extent which seems to us incredible. This is evident from the almost numberless incidental allusions in the Bible; but the use of firearms for so many centuries has either totally exterminated whole classes, or obliged them to retire into the remote and unfrequented deserts. . . . Not having firearms, the ancients were much more skilful than the moderns in the use of snares, nets, and pits for capturing wild animals. A large class of biblical figures and allusions necessarily presuppose this state of things. Job and David, and all the poets and prophets, continually refer in their complaints to snares, nets, pits, etc. We are justified, therefore, in believing that, at the time in question, the commander of Israel could, with no great difficulty, collect even three hundred foxes. We want no correction of the text to render the whole account credible, nor need we call in the aid of miracles. It was merely a cunning device of Israel's champion to inflict a terrible chastisement upon his ene-

\*firebrands, and turned tail to tail, and put a firebrand in the midst between two tails. **5** And when he had set the brands on fire, \*he let *them* go into the standing corn of the Philistines, and burnt up both the shocks, and also the standing corn, with the vineyards *and* olives.

3 Or, *torches*.—c Exod. 22. 6; 2 Sam. 14. 30.

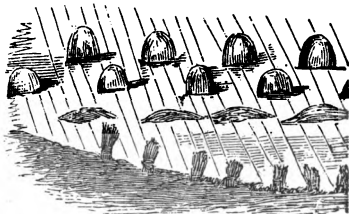
mies." **Firebrands**—Or, *torches*. The Hebrew word is the same as that rendered *lamps* in chap. vii, 16. These torches, one hundred and fifty in number, and made of material that would probably long hold fire and burn, were what Samson set on fire, not the tails of the foxes. **Turned tail to tail**—The sense obviously is that two foxes were fastened together by a cord tied to their tails—a cord perhaps several yards long—and when he put a firebrand in the midst between two tails, they would probably at first pull in opposite directions; but when they saw the brands on fire, and themselves freed from the hands of their captors, they would be likely to learn very soon to run in parallel lines, and would thus scatter the fire with most disastrous effect through the neighbouring cornfields. "On this and on many other matters," says Dr. Kitto, "people write large dissertations to prove or disprove points which might be determined in five minutes by a simple experiment. We happened lately to see two dogs somewhat similarly attached, and paused to see how they would act. They wasted some minutes in rather awkward movements, but, finding the futility of their efforts, they inclined their heads to each other, and, after a hasty consultation, turned round so as to bring their bodies parallel to each other, and then ran off with considerable speed. Now foxes have not the reputation of being duller than dogs."

**5. Let them go**—Hebrew, *נִשְׁלַח*, sent them. A hundred and fifty pairs, starting forth from different points and running in different directions, each pair carrying a firebrand, would rapidly spread destruction far and wide. **The standing corn**—Wheat yet uncut. This often, in the East, as on

**6** Then the Philistines said, Who hath done this? And they answered, Samson, the son in law of the Timnite, because he had taken his wife, and given her to his companion. \*And the Philistines came up, and burnt her and her father with fire. **7** And Samson said unto them, Though ye have done

d Chap. 12. 1; 14. 15; Prov. 22. 8; 1 Thess. 4. 6.

our western prairies, extends as far as eye can reach in one apparently unbroken field. **Shocks**—Not carefully arranged shocks of bound sheaves, as with us, but heaps of the grain,



GRAIN FIELD.

either bound or unbound, loosely piled up for temporary convenience. **Vineyards and olives**—Rather, *gardens of olives*. Large olive groves still abound in the plain of Philistia. "The cornfields of Philistia," says Stanley, "then as now interspersed with olive groves, lay stretched in one unbroken expanse before him, to invite his facetious outrage. The mischievousness of the conflagration of the cornfields by means of the jackals is subordinate to the ludicrousness of the sight, as, from the hill of Zorah, the contriver of the scheme must have watched the streams of fire spreading through cornfields and orchards in the plain below."

**SAMSON'S REVENGE OF HIS WIFE'S DEATH, 6-8.**

**6. Burnt her and her father with fire**—This was the first outburst of popular indignation and fury. Not finding at hand the perpetrators of the deed, they wreak vengeance on those who had been the occasion of it. And so that weak and deceitful woman, who had sought to save herself and her father by teasing Samson's secret from



this, yet will \*I be avenged of you, and after that I will cease. **8** And he smote them hip and thigh with a great slaughter: and he went down and dwelt in the top of the rock Etam.

**9** Then the Philistines went up, and pitched in Judah, and spread themselves 'in Lehi. **10** And the men of Judah said, Why are ye come up against us? And they answered, To bind Samson are we come up, to do to him as he hath done to us. **11** Then three thousand men of Judah \*went to the top of the rock Etam, and said to Samson, Knowest thou not that the Philistines are 'rulers over us? what is this that

e Rom. 12. 19.—f Verse 19.—4 Heb. *went down.*

him and telling it to his rival, meets at length the very doom she thought to turn away.

**8. Smote them hip and thigh—**Rather, *leg upon thigh*. A proverbial expression that seems most naturally to denote a ferocious and indiscriminate slaughter, as when we say of slaughtered troops, "They were utterly cut to pieces." Gesenius explains that he smote them so that the scattered limbs fell one upon another. It was a **great slaughter**, and convinced the Philistines, if they knew it not before, that Samson was their great national enemy. **Top of the rock—**Better, *cleft of the rock*. Some deep and wild gorge or cleft, such as abound in the hill country of Judea. **Etam—**This many have been inclined to identify with Etam of 2 Chron. xi, 6, a city which Rehoboam fortified, and which Dr. Robinson and others have supposed to be the modern Urtas, about a mile south of Bethlehem. But to this place, which is located on high ground, Samson could hardly have been said to go **down**, and hence the Etam of the tribe of Simeon, mentioned 1 Chron. iv, 32, is more probably intended here. Its exact location has not been certainly identified.

**SAMSON'S EXPLOIT WITH THE JAWBONE OF AN ASS, 9-20.**

**9. Philistines went up—**At least a thousand strong. Verse 15. The territory of Judah lies higher than the Philistine plain; hence the Philistines

thou hast done unto us? And he said unto them, As they did unto me, so have I done unto them. **12** And they said unto him, We are come down to bind thee, that we may deliver thee into the hand of the Philistines. And Samson said unto them, Swear unto me, that ye will not fall upon me yourselves. **13** And they spake unto him, saying, No; but we will bind thee fast, and deliver thee into their hand: but surely we will not kill thee. And they bound him with two new cords, and brought him up from the rock. **14** And when he came unto Lehi, the Philistines shouted against him: and 'the Spirit

g Chap. 13. 1; 14. 4; Deut. 28. 13, 47, 48; Psa. 106. 41.—h Chap. 3. 10; 14. 6.

**went up. Spread themselves—**Scattered about in small companies to hunt for Samson. **Lehi—**This word means a *jawbone*; and Gesenius thinks might have been so called from a chain of steep, craggy rocks, which resembled a jawbone, just as some single rocks are for a like reason called *teeth*. 1 Sam. vii, 12. The place, however, may have derived its name from Samson's exploit. See verse 17.

**10. Why are ye come up against us—**Judah was at peace and submissive to his Philistine masters, and demanded reason for any show of further oppression.

**11. Went to the top of the rock—**Hebrew, *went down*, that is, from the higher hill country of Judah. **Knowest thou not that the Philistines are rulers over us—**The lion of Judah was cowed by the presence of the enemy; and so utterly humbled and subdued by the Philistines were the leaders of this tribe that they readily became instruments in their hands to capture and deliver up to them their nation's great champion.

**12. Swear unto me—**He is willing to risk a combat singlehanded with the Philistines, but would not fight or injure his own countrymen. His work was to smite Philistines, not Israelites.

**13. Brought him up from the rock—**Led him a prisoner out of the cleft which he had made his stronghold.

**14. Shouted against him—**Raised a joyful shout of triumph to meet him as a bound captive and prisoner. They

of the Lord came mightily upon him, and the cords that were upon his arms became as flax that was burnt with fire, and his bands loosened from off his hands. **15** And he found a new jawbone of an ass, and put forth his hand, and took it, and slew a thousand men therewith. **16** And Samson said, With the jawbone of an ass, I heap upon heaps, with the jaw of an ass have I slain a thousand men. **17** And it came to pass, when he had made an

<sup>5</sup> Heb. were melted. — <sup>6</sup> Heb. moist. — <sup>7</sup> Lev. 26. 8; Josh. 23. 10; chap. 3. 31. — <sup>8</sup> Heb. a heap, two heaps.

exulted as if their victory was now complete. **The cords... his bands**—"The description rises," says Keil, "to a poetical parallelism, to depict the triumph which Samson celebrated over the Philistines in the power of the Spirit of Jehovah."

**15. New jawbone**—Moist or fresh, as would be the case if the animal had recently died. Such a bone would be less liable to break than one old and thoroughly dried. **A thousand men**—The host was, doubtless, more numerous, but many escaped. They probably became panicstricken when they saw this fearful foe suddenly break his bands, as with miraculous power, and rush upon them, smiting to the earth every Philistine that he encountered.

**16. Samson said**—Samson's words form a short poetical distich, and contain, in the Hebrew, a noticeable paronomasia, which may be thus presented in English:

With a jawbone of the ass, a mass, two masses;  
With a jawbone of the ass have I slain a thousand men.

It deserves notice, also, that the Hebrew word for mass or *heaps* is the same as that for *ass*, and the word for thousand means also an *ox*; so that a further idea of Samson's pun may be given by rendering:

With a jawbone of the ass, an ass, two asses;  
With a jawbone of the ass have I slain an ox of men.

This saying, like the method devised to burn the Philistines' corn, shows us the extent of Samson's humour. "His most valiant, his most cruel actions,

end of speaking, that he cast away the jawbone out of his hand, and called that place *Ramath-lehi*. **18** And he was sore athirst, and called on the Lord, and said, 'Thou hast given this great deliverance into the hand of thy servant: and now shall I die for thirst, and fall into the hand of the uncircumcised?' **19** But God clave a hollow place that was in the jaw, and there came water thereout; and when he had drunk, his spirit came again, and he

<sup>8</sup> That is, *The lifting up of the jawbone*, or, *casting away of the jawbone*. — <sup>k</sup> Psa. 3. 7. — <sup>9</sup> Or, *Lehi*. — <sup>l</sup> Gen. 45. 27; Isa. 40. 29.

are done with a smile on his face and a jest in his mouth. It relieves his character from the sternness of Phœnician fanaticism. As a peal of hearty laughter often breaks in upon the despondency of individual sorrow, so the joviality of Samson becomes a pledge of the revival of the greatness of his nation. The whole point of the massacre of the thousand Philistines lies in the cleverness with which their clumsy triumph is suddenly turned into discomfiture; and their discomfiture is celebrated by the punning turn of the hero, not forgotten even in the exultation or the weariness of victory."—*Stanley*.

**17. Called that place Ramath-lehi**—The name means *hill* or *height of the jawbone*, and seems to have originated with this triumph of Samson. In this case the name *Lehi* is used prophetically in verse 9.

**18. Sore athirst**—Having become exhausted by his fierce conflict with the enemy. **Called on the Lord**—With all his wit and humour he did not forget the source of his strength, nor fail to understand that he was fighting for Jehovah.

**19. God clave a hollow place that was in the jaw**—So the ancient versions render, and so many expositors understand that God miraculously caused a stream of water to flow out of the jawbone with which Samson had wrought his massacre. But much more properly is the Hebrew rendered, *God clave the hollow place which is in Lehi*; and the remark at the end of the verse, that the place or fountain re-

revived: wherefore he called the name thereof <sup>10</sup>En-hakkore, which <sup>is</sup> in Lehi unto this day. **20** And he judged Israel <sup>21</sup>in the days of the Philistines twenty years.

**CHAPTER XVI.**  
**T**HEN went Samson to Gaza, and

<sup>10</sup> That is, *The well of him that called, or, cried*, Psa. 34. 6.—*m* Chap. 13. 1.

mains in Lehi unto this day, fully confirms our rendering. The meaning obviously is, that God caused a spring or fountain to break out in Lehi, which became permanent, and was existing in the historian's day. **His spirit came again**—He was reinvigorated and restored from his exhaustion. **He revived**—He lived, did not perish from his extreme exhaustion. The whole passage shows that Samson's effort on that occasion had well nigh exhausted all his bodily powers. **Called the name thereof**—That is, the name of the fountain in the hollow place—**En-hakkore**—which means, as the margin has it, *the well or the fountain of him that called*. It was long known as the fountain that burst forth in answer to Samson's prayer, but its exact location is not at present known.

**20. Judged Israel...twenty years**—The same statement is repeated at the close of Samson's history, (chap. xvi, 31,) but seems to have been introduced here to indicate the time when he first became fully recognized as judge in Israel. His previous exploits had not gained him great influence or recognition as judge outside of the tribe of Dan, as Judah's action (verse 12) shows. But we may believe when the three thousand men of Judah saw his slaughter of the thousand Philistines, they, too, acknowledged him as judge. He never succeeded, however, in delivering Israel, for his mission was only to begin to deliver them, (chap. xiii, 5;) so that the term of his office was wholly **in the days of the Philistines**. The days of the Philistines' power extended on through the judgeship of Eli, and though at all times they may not have ruled and oppressed Israel, they were a constant source of trouble and fear. Complete deliverance was wrought by Samuel, the great Naz-

saw there <sup>1</sup>a harlot, and went in unto her. **2** And *it was told* the Gazites, saying, Samson is come hither. And they <sup>3</sup>compassed him in, and laid wait for him all night in the gate of the city, and were <sup>2</sup>quiet all the night, saying, In the morning, when it is day, we shall kill him. **3** And Samson lay till

<sup>1</sup> Heb. *a woman, a harlot*.—<sup>a</sup> 1 Sam. 28. 26; Psa. 118. 10-12; Acts 9. 24.—<sup>2</sup> Heb. *silent*.

arite, to whom Samson was a sort of John Baptist. 1 Sam. vii, 13.

### CHAPTER XVI.

The historian having, in the last chapter, shown how Samson became recognized beyond his own tribe as Israel's great champion, and having told us that his judgeship lasted twenty years, during all which time the Philistines were not subdued, passes over the incidents of those twenty years, which, probably, offered nothing of any considerable importance, and proceeds in this chapter, to tell us how the mighty Samson fell.

#### SAMSON'S EXPLOIT AT GAZA, 1-3.

**1. Gaza**—A very ancient city, mentioned as early as Gen. x, 19, and situated in the extreme southern portion of the Philistine plain. It stood upon a low round hill that rises some fifty or sixty feet above the surrounding plain. Its modern name is Ghuzzen. It was the most celebrated city of the Philistine pentarchy, and was the scene of Samson's last triumph and death.

**2. Samson is come hither**—Samson may have thought to pass unrecognized in that large town, but his fame was too extended, and too many Philistine eyes had seen him before. His stalwart form and long growth of hair would also, probably, anywhere attract attention. **Compassed him in**—Probably, compassed the city about with spies to guard against a sudden and sly departure of their foe. **Quiet all the night**—After night set in they supposed he would not be likely to leave the harlot before the morning, and so the watchmen gave so little heed to the gate of the city that Samson carried it off without their knowledge.

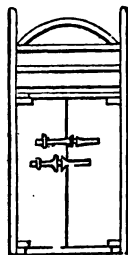
**3. Lay till midnight**—He, perhaps, knew or suspected what his enemies

midnight, and arose at midnight, and took the doors of the gate of the city, and the two posts, and went away with them, <sup>a</sup>bar and all, and put *them* upon his shoulders, and carried them up to the top of a hill that *is* before Hebron.

4 And it came to pass afterward, that he loved a woman <sup>a</sup>in the valley of So-

<sup>3</sup> Hebrew, *with the bar*.—<sup>4</sup> Or, *by the brook*.—<sup>b</sup> Chapter 14. 15; see Proverbs 2.

were doing, and his humour took occasion again to make them the butt of



BARRED GATE.

ridicule. **Doors of the gate**—The two leaves, or double folding doors.

**Two posts**—The two

sideposts to which the doors were hung, being fastened either by hinges or by sockets. **Bar**

**and all**—Better, as in the margin, *with the bar*. The bar was a large

heavy crosspiece or bolt of wood or iron, sometimes reaching across

the entire breadth of the two doors, and fastened in sockets in the sideposts or walls, and sometimes merely sliding backward and forward like an ordinary bolt. Samson tore away the whole gateway—doors, posts, and bar—and put them upon his shoulders, and carried them up to the top of a hill that is before Hebron.

"The present town of Gaza has no gates, being like an open village; yet the places of the former ones remain, and are pointed out around the hill. One of these, at the foot of the slope on the southeast, is shown as the gate whose doors and bars were carried off by Samson."—*Robinson*. About half an hour's walk southeast of the town is a partially isolated hill, (*el-Munkur*), from which the mountains of Hebron are visible, and also a wide view over all the surrounding country. An old tradition calls it "Samson's Mount," and points it out as the hill to which he carried the gates of Gaza; and Dr. Robinson says, "There is nothing improbable in the supposition." The expression *before Hebron* does not mean in the immediate vicinity of Hebron, but is better rendered *towards* or *over*

rek, whose name *was* Delilah. 5 And the lords of the Philistines came up unto her, and said unto her, <sup>b</sup>Entice him, and see wherein his great strength *lieth*, and by what *means* we may prevail against him, that we may bind him to <sup>a</sup>afflict him: and we will give thee every one of us eleven hundred *pieces*

16, 19, and 5. 8-11, and 6. 24-26, and 7. 21-23. —<sup>5</sup> Or, *humble*.

*against*, as in Deut. xxxii, 49, where Mount Nebo is said to be *over against* Jericho, though it was many miles away, and on the other side of Jordan.

#### SAMSON AND DELILAH, 4-20.

##### 4. Loved a woman... Delilah—

She was, doubtless, a Philistine woman, and it comports well with Samson's history that among the daughters of that people he found his earliest and his latest love. The name **Delilah**—*languishing*, or *enfeebling*—suggests, says Cassel, how "sensuality sings and lulls the manly strength of the hero to sleep." **The valley of Sorek**—Sorek means a vine or vine plantation, and probably took its name from the extensive cultivation of the grape. No trace of any town of this name has been found; but just south of Zorah runs the Wady-es-Surar, a wide and fertile valley, which, at least, bears some resemblance to the name, and is admirably adapted to the cultivation of the vine.

5. **Entice him**—The same demand put upon his first female betrayer. Chap. xiv, 15. The lords of the Philistines well knew wherein Samson's great weakness lay, and by taking advantage of that knowledge they at last found out **wherein his great strength** lay; but the secret of his strength was yet to them a mystery. They thought, perhaps, that it arose from some amulet or charm which he wore about him. **Eleven hundred pieces of silver**—The silver shekel was worth about sixty-two cents of our currency, and eleven hundred shekels would be six hundred and eighty-two dollars. This amount from each of the five lords would make three thousand four hundred and ten dollars. Surely a tempting bribe.

of silver. **6** And Delilah said to Samson, Tell me, I pray thee, wherein thy great strength *lieth*, and wherewith thou mightest be bound to afflict thee. **7** And Samson said unto her, If they bind me with seven \*green withs that were never dried, then shall I be weak, and be as \*another man. **8** Then the lords of the Philistines brought up to her seven green withs which had not been dried, and she \*bound him with them. **9** Now *there were* men lying in wait, abiding with her in the chamber. And she said unto him, The Philistines *be* upon thee, Samson. And he brake the withs, as a thread of tow is broken when it \*toucheth the fire. So his strength was not known. **10** And Del-

ilah said unto Samson, Behold, thou hast mocked me and told me lies: \*now tell me, I pray thee, wherewith thou mightest be bound. **11** And he said unto her, If they bind me fast with new ropes \*that never were occupied, then shall I be weak, and be as another man. **12** Delilah therefore took new ropes, and bound him therewith, and said unto him, The Philistines *be* upon thee, Samson. And *there were* liars in wait abiding in the chamber. And he brake them from off his arms like a thread. **13** And Delilah said unto Samson, Hitherto thou hast mocked me, and told me lies: tell me wherewith thou mightest be bound. And he said unto her, If thou weavest the seven locks of

6 Or, *new cords*. Heb. *moist*.—7 Heb. *one*.—c Eccles. 7. 26.—8 Heb. *smelleth*.

d Prov. 23. 7, 8; Ezek. 33. 31; Luke 22. 48.—9 Heb. *wherewith work hath not been done*.

**6. Tell me, I pray thee, wherein thy great strength lieth**—We shall better understand both the words and conduct of Delilah and Samson if we regard her questions and persuasion touching the secret of his strength as the price she laid on Samson for the privilege of intercourse with her. Instructed by the Philistine lords, she demands of Samson that he shall, before he gratifies his love with her, tell her this great secret of his life.

**7. Seven green withs**—Or, *seven moist cords*. The rendering *withs* comes from Josephus's statement that these cords were twisted of a vine, and the well-known fact that strings were often made of tough and pliant wood twisted in the form of a rope. Samson was too shrewd not to see Delilah's possible designs, and he thrice deceived her. The question of his veracity and morality need not be entertained, for if he was not too good to go in unto a harlot, he was not too good to practice deception on his wily mistress.

**9. Men lying in wait**—Hebrew, *the lier in wait*. She had a spy lying in ambush in an adjoining apartment, ready to take care of the fettered giant when it became evident that he was helpless. It is not likely that she went so far as to betray her real purposes by having this spy rush out upon Samson when she uttered her alarm cry. **The Philistines be upon thee, Sam-**

**son**—This she uttered to awake him in fright, and see what he would do.

**10. Told me lies**—This charge would have little effect coming on one from the lips of a harlot. My moral character, Samson might have said, will compare well with yours.

**11. New ropes that were never occupied**—Never used for any other purpose; ropes of the very firmest description.

**13. The seven locks**—He probably wore his long Nazarite hair in seven braids or flowing tresses. **If thou weavest...with the web**—The meaning is, that she should weave his seven braids of hair fast into the warp of the cloth which was upon her loom. "This time," says Kitto, "he approached dangerously near his great secret. His infatuation was like that of the moth, approaching gradually nearer and nearer to the flame which destroys it at last. This device was suggested by the presence of the small loom in which the



CIRC'S LOOM.

women of those days wove their household stuffs—a kind of industry from which it would seem that females even of Delilah's stamp did not hold themselves exempt. These looms, as

my head with the web. **14** And she fastened *it* with the pin, and said unto him, The Philistines *be* upon thee, Samson. And he awaked out of his sleep, and went away with the pin of the beam, and with the web. **15** And she said unto him, "How canst thou say, I love thee, when thine heart *is* not with me? Thou hast mocked me these three times, and hast not told me wherein thy great strength *lieth*." **16** And it came to pass, when she pressed him daily with her words, and urged him, *so* that his soul was <sup>10</sup>vexed unto death; **17** That he <sup>11</sup>told her all his heart, and said unto her, "There hath not come a

razor upon mine head; for I *have been* a Nazarite unto God from my mother's womb: if I *be* shaven, then my strength will go from *me*, and I shall become weak, and be like any *other* man. **18** And when Delilah saw that he had told her all his heart, she sent and called for the lords of the Philistines, saying, "Come up this once, for he hath showed me all his heart. Then the lords of the Philistines came up unto her, and brought money in their hand. **19** And she made him sleep upon her knees; and she called for a man, and she caused him to shave off the seven locks of his head; and she

<sup>a</sup> Chap. 14. 16.—<sup>10</sup> Heb. *shortened*.—<sup>f</sup> Micah 7. 5.—<sup>g</sup> Num. 6. 5; chap. 13. 5.

<sup>h</sup> Prov. 18. 8; Jer. 9. 4, 6.—<sup>i</sup> Prov. 7. 26, 27; 23. 33, 34; Eccles. 7. 26.

shown in Egyptian sculptures, and as still subsisting in the East, are very simple and comparatively light, and must by no means be confounded with the ponderous apparatus of our own hand-loom weavers."

**14. She fastened it with the pin**—This was an effort to make him still more secure. Not only did she weave his hair fast in her woof and warp, but made it faster still in some way by **the pin of the beam**. The meaning of this latter expression is doubtful. Some think that this *pin* was a large nail by which she fastened the web to the wall or floor; others, that it was the roller or beam to which the threads of the warp were fastened, and round which the cloth was rolled when woven. Keil thinks it was "the comb or press itself, which was fastened to the loom, so that it could only be torn out by force." Whatever it was, when he was again suddenly aroused by the startling cry, **The Philistines be upon thee!** he tore out with his hair both the web and the pin, and went off with them. Perhaps, as Bush suggests, "he took away the whole apparatus together."

**16. She pressed him daily**—We are not to suppose that her efforts to find out his secret and the three acts of binding him followed close upon one another on a single day. Weeks, perhaps, intervened between his visits to her, and now, after having been mocked three times, she will not admit him to her embrace unless he tells her all his

heart. **Daily** he comes, and vainly says, **I love thee**. She refuses to receive him, and torments him by such words as are given in verse 15, yet still *urging him* to reveal his secret, and so, being long hindered from indulging his lustful love with her, **his soul was vexed unto death**. So fierce was the conflict between his passions and his better sense.

**17. Told her all his heart**—Lust and love conquered at last. "Samson, when strong and brave," says St. Ambrose, "strangled a lion, but could not strangle his own love. He burst the fetters of his foes, but not the cords of his own lust. He burned up the crops of others, and lost the fruit of his own virtue when burning with the flame kindled by a single woman."

**18. Delilah saw**—She perceived from the character of what he said, and his solemn behaviour, and perhaps agitation, that now he had told her the fatal secret.

**19. She called for a man**—"Probably a barber. The business of eastern barbers lies in shaving the head rather than the beard, and they do it so skillfully and gently that, so far from a sleeping man being awaked, a waking man is lulled to sleep under the operation. Considering the great mass of hair of which Samson had to be deprived, he would probably have been roused by inexperienced hands, which may be the reason why Delilah herself did not operate upon the recumbent Nazarite, as painters falsely represent

began to afflict him, and his strength went from him. **20** And she said, The Philistines *be* upon thee, Samson. And he awoke out of his sleep, and said, I will go out as at other times before, and shake myself. And he

*Num. 14. 9, 43, 43; Josh. 7. 12; 1 Sam. 16. 14; 18. 12;*

that she did."—*Kitto*. She began to afflict him—In what particular way is told in the next verse.

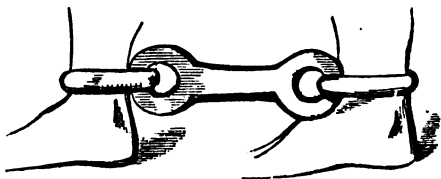
**20. Shake myself**—Alluding to his former shaking himself loose from fetters. She perhaps bound him in some way to ascertain if his strength had left him, and, not readily breaking himself loose, he proposes not to embarrass himself with apparently vain efforts in her presence, but to go out and do it.

wist not that the Lord *was* departed from him.

**21** But the Philistines took him, and put out his eyes, and brought him down to Gaza, and bound him with fetters of brass; and he did grind in the

*28. 15. 16; 2 Chron. 15. 2.—11 Heb. bored out.*

left at midnight, when the eyes of the men of Gaza were closed in slumber; now he is brought back with a deeper than midnight darkness on his eyes, while in broad daylight they laugh at his calamities. **Bound him with fetters of brass**—Literally, for the word is dual, *with double brass*, so called, perhaps, because both of his hands or feet were fettered. Fetters for both hands and feet are represented on the Assyrian



ANCIENT ASSYRIAN HANDCUFFS AND FETTERS FOR CAPTIVES.

In the confusion and drowsiness of the time he was not conscious of the awful fact that the Lord was departed from him, and before he fully realized it he was a hopeless captive.

#### SAMSON'S IMPRISONMENT AND DEATH, 21–31.

**21. The Philistines took him**—He probably was seized at once, and did not succeed in getting out of Delilah's chamber free. **Put out his eyes**—The Hebrew verb means *to bore*, and indicates that they thrust his eyes out by very violent means. This they did as soon as they had secured him, and thus rendered his case apparently helpless and hopeless. **Brought him down to Gaza**—Because it was the chief city of the nation, and far removed from the vicinity of Israelites who might seek to rescue him, and there was their great State prison. How changed from that Samson who so recently departed in scoffing triumph from that city with its gates upon his shoulder! Then he

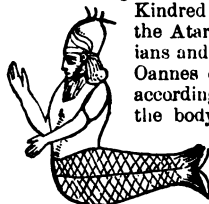
monuments. **He did grind**—Literally, *he became a grinder*. He was reduced to the basely low condition of a public slave, the most miserable of all the grades of slavery. Some may wonder that the Philistines did not at once kill their great enemy, and thus put him thoroughly out of the way; but to keep him alive in such a slavery, and with his eyes put out, was worse to him than death, and a magnifying of their triumph. "In itself grinding was very suitable for prison labour, being performed by hand-mills, the uppermost of which, called *the rider* by the Hebrews, was made to revolve upon the other by strength of hand. Being usually performed by females, the Philistines, studious of insult, regarded it as well suited to disgrace a man, and particularly such a man as Samson had been; while by providing stones of sufficient size and weight the work might be made laborious even for him."—*Kitto*. See cut of mill and women grinding at Matthew xxiv, 41.

prison house. **22** Howbeit the hair of his head began to grow again <sup>12</sup>after he was shaven. **23** Then the lords of the Philistines gathered them together for to offer a great sacrifice unto Dagon their god, and to rejoice: for they said, Our god hath delivered Samson our enemy into our hand. **24** And when the people saw him, they <sup>1</sup>praised their god:

<sup>12</sup> Or, *as when he was shaven.*  
*1 Dan. 5. 4.*

**22. Hair... began to grow again**—We must not suppose that Samson's great strength lay in his hair, and yet beneath that hair was the secret of his power. Not the hair, but the Nazarite consecration which it represented, was his glory before God; and when his locks were shaven Jehovah was basely dishonoured, and at once departed from him. Verse 20. Nor would he return to bless the dishonoured Nazarite until the symbol of his Nazarite vow appeared again.

**23. Dagon their god**—The name is derived from the Hebrew דָּג, *dag*, a fish, and the diminutive ending *on*, with the sense of endearment—"dear little fish," (Gesenius.) According to Kimchi and most scholars this idol had a human head and arms and the body of a fish. He was the great national deity of the Philistines, but was worshipped under modified forms and names by other nations. He was the representative or symbol of all those life-giving forces of nature which produce their effects through the medium of water.



FISH-GOD.

From monument at Khorsabad.

Kindred to Dagon were the Atargatis of the Syrians and the Babylonian Oannes or Odakon, who, according to Berosus, had the body of a fish, but the head, hands, feet and voice of a man, (see cut and note on 1 Sam. v. 4,) and from the very beginnings of their history had taught the people arts, religion, law, and agriculture. Among the Assyrian ruins have been found several representations of this fish-god.

**24. When the people saw him—**

for they said, Our god hath delivered into our hands our enemy, and the destroyer of our country, <sup>13</sup>which slew many of us. **25** And it came to pass, when their hearts were <sup>14</sup>merry, that they said, Call for Samson, that he may make us sport. And they called for Samson out of the prison house: and he made <sup>14</sup>them sport: and they

<sup>13</sup> Hebrew, *and who multiplied our slain* in Chap. 9. 27.—<sup>14</sup> Hebrew, *before them.*

In all his apparent misery and helplessness. **Praised their god**—They ascribed to Dagon the glory of making this great national enemy a blind and helpless captive. They gazed and wondered at the spectacle of one who had been so great a terror to all Philistia brought to the low condition of a blind and insulted prison slave. None but a god could, in their view, have wrought a victory like this, and they very naturally recognised, with festal rejoicings, the superiority of their national marine god over Jehovah, the national god of the Hebrews.

**25. When their hearts were merry**—By songs and dances, eating and drinking. "They were in high spirits over a victory for which they had not fought."—*Cussel*. **Made them sport**—Probably by exhibitions of strength, but especially by the awkward movements caused by his blindness, and exhibitions of his natural wit and buffoonery. "The closing scenes of his life," observes Stanley, who gives special prominence to this characteristic of Samson, "breathe throughout the same terrible yet grotesque irony. When the captive warrior is called forth, in the merriment of his persecutors, to exercise for the last time the well known raillery of his character, he appears as the great jester or buffoon of the nation; the word employed expresses alike the roars of laughter and the wild gambols with which he *made them sport*; and as he puts forth the last energy of his vengeance, the final effort of his expiring strength, it is in a stroke of broad and savage humour that his indignant spirit passes away. 'Strengthen me now, only this once, O God, that I may be avenged of the Philistines (not for both of my lost eyes—but) for one of my two



set him between the pillars. **26** And Samson said unto the lad that held him by the hand, Suffer me that I may feel the pillars whereupon the house standeth, that I may lean upon them. **27** Now the house was full of men and women; and all the lords of the Philis-

*a* Deuteronomy 22. 8.

eyes. That grim playfulness, strong in death, lends its paradox even to the act of destruction itself, and overflows into the touch of triumphant satire with which the pleased historian closes the story: 'The dead which he slew at his death were more than they which he slew in his life.' **Set him between the pillars**—To rest awhile from the fatigue of his exertions.

**26. The lad that held him**—The blind man needs a lad to show him the way, and how humiliating this alone, leaving out other considerations, that the once mighty Samson is now led about by a lad! **The pillars whereupon the house standeth**—This passage shows the existence in that early time of pillars or columns in Philistine architecture. In Egypt, Syria, and the farther East, they were doubtless common long before this, and not a few of the broken columns still found in the ruined cities of Palestine probably belong to the same period. It has been a question how such a large building could have been torn down by merely pulling out two pillars. But the possibility of such a thing is hardly to be questioned. The plan of the building and the style of its architecture are now unknown, but from the known plans of many partially ruined temples and palaces of the East we may at least infer that, whatever else it comprised, this house at Gaza had a spacious court or hall, on which rested several rows of columns, supporting an equally spacious roof above. The roof was covered and the great hall filled with men and women, and under such a pressure it is in the highest degree probable that the sudden removal of two central pillars would precipitate the whole house into a heap of ruins. Dr. Thomson, who made observations on the spot, finds a further explanation in the peculiar to-

times *were* there; and *there were* upon the roof about three thousand men and women, that beheld while Samson made sport. **28** And Samson called unto the Lord, and said, O Lord God, remember me, I pray thee, and strengthen me, I pray thee, only this once, O God,

*o* Jeremiah 15. 15.

pography of Gaza. "Most of it," he writes, "is built on hills, which, though comparatively low, have declivities exceedingly steep. The temple was erected over one of these beyond a doubt, for such was and is the custom in the East. There is such a steep declivity on the northeast corner of the present city, near the old dilapidated castle and palace, and the houses in that vicinity have fragments of columns wrought into the walls, and laid down as sills for their gates. I am inclined to believe," he adds, "that the immense roof which rested upon these columns was sustained by arches. If this were so, and the centre columns stood on the brow of the declivity, near the old castle, the whole edifice would be precipitated down the hill merely by tearing away those centre supports."

**27. Upon the roof about three thousand**—A roof one hundred and fifty feet square would afford a space of nearly a square yard for each one of these, and probably the roof of this building was still larger than this.

**28. Only this once**—Samson does, upon attempting this last act of his life, what he is not said to have done before when he undertook his great feats of strength—invokes the help of Jehovah. The ancient expositors raise the question whether Samson, by his last act, committed suicide. This prayer and its context answer in the negative. Samson no more committed suicide than does a brave general when, with certain death before him, he rushes into the thickest battle, confident that his fall will save his country from a hated foe. **For my two eyes**—Hebrew: *for one of my two eyes*. See Stanley's note above, on verse 25. But instead of viewing, as he does, this expression as an instance of grim humour in the very moment of

that I may be at once avenged of the Philistines for my two eyes. **29** And Samson <sup>15</sup> took hold of the two middle pillars upon which the house stood, and on which it was borne up, of the one with his right hand, and of the other with his left. **30** And Samson said, Let <sup>16</sup> me die with the Philistines. And he bowed himself with *all his might*; and the house fell upon the lords, and

upon all the people that *were* therein. So the dead which he slew at his death were more than *they* which he slew in his life. **31** Then his brethren and all the house of his father came down, and took him, and brought *him up*, and buried him between Zorah and Esh-taol in the buryingplace of Manoa'h his father. And he judged Israel twenty years.

15 Or, *he leaned on them*.—16 Heb. *my soul*.

p Chap. 13. 25.

death, we may see a deeper meaning. Samson may have felt that the utmost vengeance could not requite him for the loss of both his eyes, and, with profoundest earnestness and emotion, he prayed that the present destruction might be great enough to measurably answer for the loss of at least one of his eyes.

**30. More than they which he slew in his life**—All that he slew in his life, as far as we know, were the thirty men of Ashkelon, (xiv, 19,) the thousand at Lehi, (xv, 15,) and the unnamed number of the great slaughter mentioned xv, 8. He probably slew more than these, but all together would not amount to five or six thousand—the number that perished by the fall of this temple. If three thousand were on the roof, there were doubtless as many more below.

**31. His brethren**—The Danites. **House of his father**—His immediate relatives. **Took him**—For the terrible calamity of the Philistines rendered them unable or indisposed to hinder the removal of Samson's body. **In the buryingplace of Manoa'h his father**—There is nothing in all this narrative so full of pathos as this record of Samson's burial. Amid those native hills, and near the spot where the Spirit first began to move him to his famous exploits, (xiii, 25,) and by the side of that father who had watched with pride the growth and wondrous power of his son, but, probably, never lived to see his misery and shame—there they laid the great Danite hero in his dishonoured grave, and with mingled pride, reverence, and sorrow, remembered that **he judged Israel twenty years**.

Some writers find in Samson a type of Christ; others, the original from whom all the Egyptian, Grecian, and other fabulous myths of Hercules have sprung.

The union of great physical and mental powers are not to be looked for in one and the same individual. In Samson we find great strength united with wit and humour. No evidence of great wisdom and strong mental powers appears, but abundance to show that he was the slave of amorous lusts. He was rough and savage towards his enemies, yet coolly shrewd about it all; never showing sudden outbursts of fiery passion, but perpetrating some of his fiercest cruelties as if with a smile on his face. In these respects he is the most singular and eccentric character of the Old Testament history.

His prominence in the sacred history is to be explained, as in note on chap. xiii, 5, with special reference to his Nazariteship, and his divine commission as a deliverer of Israel. Stanley observes that the order of Nazarites was the nearest approach to a monastic institution that the Jewish Church affords us, and he calls attention to the fact "that the character of the Jewish chief who most nearly resembles the founder of a monastic order was the most frolicsome, irregular, uncultivated creature that the nation ever produced. Not only was celibacy no part of his Nazarite obligations, but not even ordinary purity of life. He was full of the spirits and the pranks, no less than of the strength, of a giant. But in all his wild wanderings and excesses amid the vineyards of Sorek and Timnath, he is never reported to

## CHAPTER XVII.

**A**ND there was a man of mount Ephraim, whose name *was* Micah. **2** And he said unto his mother, The eleven hundred *shekels* of silver that were taken from thee, about which thou cursedst, and spakest of also in

*a* Chap. 10. 1; Josh. 15. 9; 17. 14, 18.

have touched the juice of one of their abundant grapes."

{ It justifies the Divine administration in his case that his blended failure and success in fulfilling his mission corresponded with the blended traits of his character. For twenty years we may assume that his wildness grew grave, and he added to the character of a hero much of the just judge and wise ruler; but he scarce fulfilled the promise of the angel who announced his birth. An act of apostate debauchery, committed by this judge of Israel in the midst of his enemies, closed the honourable part of his career. Taken by his foes, no "Spirit of Jehovah" touched, as of old, the sinews of his strength, and he was abandoned to a just retribution. During those years that should have been laurelled with honours, he was left to grind out wisdom in his dark penitentiary. In his final hour his heart returned to Jehovah, and his prayer was heard. In the united facts of his death and his finishing his mission with the destruction of the foes of Jehovah, we find proofs of the honesty of the historian and the blended goodness and severity of God. }

## PART THIRD.

## APPENDIX.

## CHAPS. XVII-XXI.

The remaining chapters of Judges have the form of two distinct appendices, one contained in chap. xvii and xviii, the others in chap. xix-xxi, and though they record facts which probably occurred before the time of Samson, they may have been added by a later hand. But whether added by the same writer or another, they serve to show further the lawlessness and

mine ears, behold, the silver *is* with me; I took it. And his mother said, *Blessed be thou* of the Lord, my son. **3** And when he had restored the eleven hundred *shekels* of silver to his mother, his mother said, I had wholly dedicated the silver unto the Lord from my hand

*b* Gen. 14. 19; Ruth 3. 10.

misrule that prevailed in those times when there was no central governing power in Israel. See Introduction.

{ Milman suggests that the times of the Judges were indeed rude, but in general peaceful and happy. Individualism prevailed; but the very reason why there is so little history is, because there was so little of contention, war, turbulence, or misery. The cruel deeds narrated were not specimens of all the rest, but exceptional, and narrated because exceptional. }

## CHAPTER XVII.

## MICAH AND THE LEVITE, 1-13.

**1. Mount Ephraim**—The exact limits of this mountain range are nowhere indicated in the Scriptures. It ran midway through the territory assigned to the tribe of this name, extending as far north as Shechem, (Josh. xx, 7; xxi, 21,) and at least as far south as Ramah. Chap. iv, 5. It was the central portion of the great mountain range that forms the backbone of Palestine, and took this name from the early allotment of this section of the country to the tribe of Ephraim.

**2. About which thou cursedst**—Having missed the money, she uttered imprecations against the thief. **Also in my ears**—She so uttered and kept repeating her curses that among others Micah also heard her. **I took it**—The son had been the thief, but his mother's curses seem to have awed him, and led him to make restitution. This act of robbery, and the thief being allowed to go unpunished, show the lawlessness of the time. **Blessed**—Instead of reproof and penalty for his theft he receives a blessing. This blessing sprang from sudden joy at receiving again her lost silver.

**3. I had wholly dedicated**—Rather, *I have wholly dedicated*. Her

for my son, to <sup>c</sup>make a graven image and a molten image: now therefore I will restore it unto thee. **4** Yet he restored the money unto his mother; and his mother <sup>d</sup>took two hundred *shekels* of silver, and gave them to the founder, who made thereof a graven image and a molten image: and they were in the house of Micah. **5** And the man Mi-

<sup>c</sup> See Exod. 20. 4, 23; Lev. 19. 4. — <sup>d</sup> Isa. 46. 6. — <sup>e</sup> Chap. 8. 27. — <sup>f</sup> Gen. 31. 19, 30; Hos. 3. 4. — <sup>g</sup> Heb. *filled the hand*, Exod. 29. 9; 1 Kings

13. 33. — <sup>h</sup> Chap. 18. 1; 19. 1; 21. 25; Deut. 33. 5. — <sup>i</sup> Deut. 12. 8. — <sup>j</sup> See Josh. 19. 15; chap. 19. 1; Ruth 1. 1, 2; Micah 6. 2; Matt. 2. 1, 5, 6.

cah had a house of gods, and made an <sup>e</sup>ephod, and <sup>f</sup>teraphim, and <sup>g</sup>consecrated one of his sons, who became his priest. **6** <sup>h</sup>In those days *there was* no king in Israel, <sup>i</sup>but every man did *that which was* right in his own eyes. **7** And there was a young man out of <sup>j</sup>Beth-jehem-judah, of the family of Judah, who *was* a Levite, and he sojourned there.

purpose to sanctify the silver unto the Lord seems to have originated with the pleasure with which she received it from the hand of her son. **Graven image and a molten image**—The former was carved out of either metal or wood, the latter cast or poured; but the difference of form or make between the two is hard to determine. Keil conjectures that the *graven image* was an image of a bull, like the golden calf at Sinai. But these images were not meant for idols to be worshipped, though they naturally led to idolatry. They seem to have been looked upon as household or tutelary gods, not to be worshipped as gods, yet to be revered as talismans. This act of Micah and his mother was, however, a coming nearer to idolatry than the act of Gideon in setting up his famous ephod in Ophrah, and yet this home idolatry of Micah may have been a consequence of Gideon's wrong example. Compare note on chap. viii, 27. **Now therefore I will restore**—Rather, *and now I restore it to thee*, that is, for the purpose of making images to place in Micah's house of gods. Verse 5.

**4. Two hundred shekels**—Less than one fifth of the eleven hundred shekels. What was done with the remaining nine hundred? They were probably used for making the ephod and teraphim mentioned in verse 5, and paying the founder who made all the images; for, according to verse 3, the silver was to be in some way wholly dedicated to the Lord. This mention of *the founder*, or *smelter*, indicates the knowledge at this time in Israel of the art of metallurgy.

**5. House of gods**—Or, *a house of God*, a sanctuary after the model of

that at Shiloh. He would have a tabernacle of his own. **An ephod**—Probably after the fashion of Gideon's. See on chap. viii, 27. **Teraphim**—Idolatrous images among the Syrians, but in Israel connected rather with corrupt notions of religion than with open idolatry. It does not appear that they were ever worshipped. But see on Gen. xxxi, 19, and Josh. xxiv, 14. **Consecrated**—Literally, *filled the hand*, in allusion to the sacred and solemn duties which filled the hands—required all the care—of those who occupied the priest's office. **One of his sons**—This fact affords further evidence of the looseness of that age, and shows how completely some of the most solemn enactments of the law had become a dead letter. But Micah did not feel fully satisfied with this priest of his own household, and hence his subsequent consecration of the wandering Levite.

**6. No king**—This verse seems here, as everywhere, to explain the irregularities and evils of the age. It here explains how a man in central Palestine could establish such a semblance of idolatry, and profanely make a priest contrary to the requirements of the law. There was no central government to look after such irregularities, and bring the whole nation to uniform methods of worship, or counteract and destroy the growth of various evils.

**7. Of the family of Judah**—This does not mean that this young man was a descendant of Judah, for he is immediately called a **Levite**, but that he belonged to the Levites who occupied by divine appointment cities within the tribe-territory of Judah. Compare Josh. xxi, 8–16. In chap. xviii, 30,

O. T.

8 And the man departed out of the city from Beth-lehem-judah to sojourn where he could find *a place*: and he came to mount Ephraim to the house of Micah, <sup>a</sup>as he journeyed. 9 And Micah said unto him, Whence comest thou? And he said unto him, I *am* a Levite of Beth-lehem-judah, and I go to sojourn where I may find *a place*. 10 And Micah said unto him, Dwell with me, <sup>a</sup>and be unto me a <sup>a</sup>father and a priest, and I will give thee ten *shekels* of silver by the year, and <sup>a</sup>a suit of apparel, and thy victuals. So the Levite went in. 11 And the Levite was content to dwell with the man; and the young man was unto him as one of his sons. 12 And Micah <sup>a</sup>consecrated the Levite; and the young man <sup>a</sup>became his priest, and was in the house of Micah. 13 Then said Micah,

<sup>a</sup> Heb. *in making his way*.—*k* Chap. 18. 19.  
—*l* Gen. 45. 8; Job 29. 16.—<sup>a</sup> Or, *a double suit*.  
*ac.* Heb. *an order of garments*.—*m* Verse 5.

this Levite is called "Jonathan the son of Gershom, the son of Manasseh." He seems from chap. xviii, 3, to have been a person of some distinction, known at least to leading persons in the tribe of Dan. See notes on those passages. **Beth-lehem-judah** was not one of those cities allotted to the Levites, and hence it is added that this young man had only *sojourned* there, that is, dwelt there for a time as a stranger; it was not his native city nor his permanent home.

8. **To sojourn where he could find a place**—The irregularity and neglect of sanctuary worship, and of the several enactments of the law concerning the priests and Levites, probably left many of this tribe to wander idly through the land, seeking a residence wherever they might chance to find one.

10. **A father and a priest**—A spiritual counsellor as well as a priest. The word *father* is here a title of respect and reverence. Compare Gen. xlv, 8; 2 Kings vi, 21. **Ten shekels of silver by the year**—A little more than six dollars. A small sum, indeed, but, with food and clothing, probably ample for his comfort in those simple times.

13. **Now know I**—Micah had not felt easy and safe before. He seems to have feared that he had gone too far,

Now know I that the LORD will do me good, seeing I have a Levite to *my* priest.

## CHAPTER XVIII.

**I**N <sup>a</sup>those days *there was* no king in Israel: and in those days <sup>a</sup>the tribe of the Danites sought them an inheritance to dwell in; for unto that day *all their* inheritance had not fallen unto them among the tribes of Israel. 2 And the children of Dan sent of their family five men from their coasts, <sup>a</sup>men of valour, from <sup>a</sup>Zorah, and from Eshtaol, <sup>a</sup>to spy out the land, and to search it; and they said unto them, Go, search the land: who when they came to mount Ephraim, to the <sup>a</sup>house of Micah, they lodged there. 3 When they *were* by the house of Micah, they knew the voice of the young man the Levite: and

<sup>a</sup> Chap. 18. 30.—*a* Chap. 17. 6; 21. 25.—*b* Josh. 19. 47.—*l* Heb. *sons*.—*c* Chap. 13. 25.—*d* Num. 13. 17; Josh. 2. 1.—*e* Chap. 17. 1.

and he evidently knew enough of the law to understand that the tribe of Levi had been set apart to the priesthood and ministry of the sanctuary. But now, having a priest from the divinely chosen tribe, he begins to feel sure of Jehovah's favour.

## CHAPTER XVIII

THE DANITE CONQUESTS IN THE NORTH, 1-31.

1. **The Danites sought them an inheritance**—The Danites were the last of the tribes to receive their portion of the Promised Land, but, according to Josh. xix, 47, their coast "went out too little for them." Their lot fell in the rich and fertile plain of northern Philistia, but, according to chap. i, 34, "the Amorites forced the children of Dan into the mountain; for they would not suffer them to come down into the valley." Being thus shut in among the hills about Zorah and Eshtaol, they felt the necessity of seeking an addition to their inheritance, and, finding themselves unable to drive out the inhabitants of the neighbouring valley, they sent an exploring party northward to spy the land.

3. **They knew the voice of the young man**—They overheard his conversation, and, looking upon him, they

they turned id thither, and said unto him, Who brought thee hither? 'and what makest thou in this *place*? and what hast thou here? 4 And he said unto them, Thus and thus dealeth Micah with me, and hath 'hired me, and I am his priest. 5 And they said unto him, 'Ask counsel, we pray thee, 'of God, that we may know whether our way which we go shall be prosperous. 6 And

*f* Isa. 22. 16.—*g* Chap. 17. 10; Isa. 56. 11.—*h* 1 Kings 22. 5; Isa. 30. 1; Hos. 4. 12.—*i* See chap. 17. 5; verse 14.

at once recognised him as an old acquaintance. Most commentators understand that the Danites knew by his dialect or mode of pronunciation that he was not an Ephraimite, but the words **they knew the voice** are not adapted to convey such an idea, and the questions, **Who brought thee hither?** etc., are the natural language of old acquaintances that have unexpectedly met. And if this Levite was a grandson or great grandson of Moses, the lawgiver of Israel, as appears from verse 30, it is not strange at all that he was personally known to these Danites.

5. **Ask counsel**—By means of the urim on the ephod which Micah had made for his sanctuary and priest. Chap. xvii. 5. It was a common custom in Israel thus to inquire of the Lord. Comp. chap. i. 1; xx. 18; 1 Sam. xxiii. 1; iv. 9–12.

6. **Before the Lord is your way**—That is, ordered of him, and acceptable in his sight. The Danites requested him to inquire of God; he reports a favourable response from *Jehovah*, and in this interchange of the names *Elohim* and *Jehovah* some find that Micah's illegally constituted priest had purer notions of religion than these Danites. They speak more like idolaters, he like a true prophet. But did Jehovah really answer through the medium of this illegal priest? Why should he not? Did he never use for communication of his will any medium but that of a person altogether pure and good and conformed to his law? Or is it clear that a refusal to answer through this Levite would, in this case, have been wiser, or accomplished a better purpose, than the answer that was given? God winked

the priest said unto them, 'Go in peace: before the Lord *is* your way wherein ye go. 7 Then the five men departed, and came to 'Laish, and saw the people that *were* therein, 'how they dwelt careless, after the manner of the Zidonians, quiet and secure; and *there was* no 'magistrate in the land, that might put *them* to shame in *any* thing; and they *were* far from the Zidonians, and

*k* 1 Kings 22. 6.—*l* Josh. 19. 47, *Leshem*.—*m* Verses 27, 28.—2 Heb. *possessor*, or, *heir of restraint*.

at (Acts xvii. 30) the darkness and ignorance of those times, and we do wrong to judge those ancient characters and facts by the standard of New Testament ethics. Micah and his priest had certainly turned aside from the exact regulations of the law of Moses, but everything recorded of them shows an earnest purpose to serve and please Jehovah. Their fault was largely excused by the circumstances of their age, and the response which Jehovah gave this inquiring Levite is a representative of the ten thousand instances in which his blessings have come to devout worshippers through systems and forms of religion far from pure.

7. **Laish**—Called *Leshem* in Josh. xix. 47, and afterwards *Dan*. Verse 29, where see note. **Manner of the Zidonians**—That is, as explained in the immediate context, **careless, quiet, and secure**. The inhabitants of Zidon lived by commerce, and took no interest in war and conquest. They consequently took no thought of danger from armed forces; and in their more peaceful pursuits enriched themselves, while other nations weakened and impoverished themselves by constant wars. It is commonly supposed that these people of Laish were originally a colony of the Zidonians, and hence the resemblance named. **No magistrate in the land, that might put them to shame in any thing**—A very difficult passage, finding little agreement among critics as to its meaning. The versions all vary, and give little help. Bertheau, as usual, supposes an error in the text, and suggests that possibly the reading מכלים originated in overlooking the letters חסור, which, being restored, give,

had no business with *any* man. 8 And they came unto their brethren to "Zorah and Eshtaol: and their brethren said unto them, What *say* ye? 9 And they said, "Arise, that we may go up against them: for we have seen the land, and, behold, it *is* very good: and *are* ye *still*? be not slothful to go, *and* to enter to possess the land. 10 When ye go,

n Verse 2.—o Num. 13. 30; Josh. 2. 23, 24.  
p 1 Kings 22. 3.

by dropping the ending ים, the reading in verse 10, *no want of any thing*.

Fürst proposes to amend מְכַלִּים דָּבָר

by joining the מ to the following word, מְכַלִּי מְדָבָר, and he takes מְכַלִּי for

מְכַלִּיָּא, a hinderance. He also gives

עָצָר a cognate sense with מְחַסֵּר, *want*, of verse 10, and, repeating אֵין from the

preceding clause, would read, There was no hinderance to any thing in the land; no one had need: (literally, *no possessor of want*.) But such emendations are not to be followed, except as a last resort. Keil renders it, No one who seized the government to himself did any harm to them in the land; Cassel, No hereditary ruler was in the land, who in any way oppressed. The main difficulty attaches to the word עָצָר, which occurs

here only. Fürst, as we have seen, renders it *need*; Gesenius renders it *wealth, riches*, after the Septuagint. But the verbal root, עָצָר, often means

*to be able, to have strength or power*, and hence we incline to substantially the meaning which our common version, and Keil and Cassel, put upon the noun, עָצָר, namely, *power, dominion*,

*rule*. The Hebrew text, without any alteration, would then literally read, *No one harming a thing in the land—a possessor of power*; and the meaning, as we take it, is, No possessor of power—that is, no neighbouring king, prince, or ruler of any kind, for a ruler or magistrate may aptly be called a possessor of power—disturbed or injured any thing in the country belonging to Laish. They acknowledged no allegiance and paid

ye shall come unto a people *secure*, and to a large land: for God hath given it into your hands; *a place where there is no want of any thing that is in the earth*. 11 And there went from thence of the family of the Danites, out of Zorah and out of Eshtaol, six hundred men *appointed with weapons of war*. 12 And they went up, and pitched in

q Verses 7, 27.—r Deuteronomy 8. 9.  
3 Heb. *girded*.

no tribute to any government, nor did any government meddle with any thing in their land. The statements which immediately follow confirm this view of the passage. **They were far from the Zidonians**, the only people who might lawfully claim allegiance and tribute from them; and because of this their remoteness from Zidon, whence they had originally emigrated as a colony, they were, on the one hand, quietly ignored by the ruling powers of the home government, and could, on the other, expect no help from them in case of danger. Compare verse 28. **Had no business with any man**—Not only were they thus separated from the Zidonians, but they formed no alliances with any other people. Hence it was, as stated above, that no possessor of power meddled with them to the injury of a thing in their land.

11. **Six hundred men**—So confident were they of victory that they took along with them, as appears from verse 21, their little ones, and their cattle and precious things. This entire expedition was a fulfilling of Jacob's prophetic words: "Dan shall be a serpent by the way, an adder in the path, that biteth the horse's heels, so that his rider shall fall backward." Gen. xlix. 17. So, too, Moses likens Dan to a young lion of Bashan that leaps forth suddenly from his ambush upon the prey. Deut. xxxiii. 22.

12. **Kirjath-jearim**—Identified by Dr. Robinson with the modern Kuriet el-Enab, which lies about ten miles northeast of Zorah and five northwest of Jerusalem. See on Josh. ix. 17. **They pitched in Kirjath** does not mean that they encamped *within* the city of this name, but, as the context

\* Kirjath-jearim, in Judah: wherefore they called that place 'Mahaneh-dan unto this day: behold, *it is* behind Kirjath-jearim. 13 And they passed thence unto mount Ephraim, and came unto 'the house of Micah. 14 'Then answered the five men that went to spy out the country of Laish, and said unto their brethren, Do ye know that 'there is in these houses an ephod, and teraphim, and a graven image, and a molten image? 'now therefore consider what ye have to do. 15 And they turned thitherward, and came to the house of the young man the Levite, *even* unto the house of Micah, and 'saluted him. 16 And the 'six hundred men appointed with their weapons of war, which *were* of the children of Dan, stood by the entering of the gate. 17 And 'the five men that went to spy out the land went up, *and* came in

thither, *and* took 'the graven image, and the ephod, and the teraphim, and the molten image: and the priest stood in the entering of the gate with the six hundred men *that were* appointed with weapons of war. 18 And these went into Micah's house, and fetched the carved image, the ephod, and the teraphim, and the molten image. Then said the priest unto them, What do ye? 19 And they said unto him, Hold thy peace, 'lay thine hand upon thy mouth, and go with us, 'and be to us a father and a priest: *is it* better for thee to be a priest unto the house of one man, or that thou be a priest unto a tribe and a family in Israel? 20 And the priest's 'heart was glad, and he took the ephod, and the teraphim, and the graven image, and went in the midst of the people. 21 So they turned and departed, and put the little ones and the cattle and the

<sup>s</sup> Josh. 15. 60.—<sup>t</sup> Chap. 13. 25.—<sup>u</sup> Verse 2.  
<sup>v</sup> 1 Sam. 14. 28.—<sup>w</sup> Chap. 17. 5.—<sup>x</sup> Prov. 19. 27; Isa. 8. 19, 20.—<sup>y</sup> Heb. *asked him of peace*, Gen. 43. 27; 1 Sam. 17. 22.—<sup>z</sup> Verse 11.

<sup>a</sup> Vers. 3, 14.—<sup>a</sup> Ch. 17. 4, 5; Ex. 32. 20; 1 Sam. 6. 2, 9; 2 Kings 19. 18, 19; Isa. 46. 1, 2, 7.—<sup>b</sup> Job 21. 5; 39. 9; 40. 4; Prov. 30. 32; Micah 7. 16.—<sup>c</sup> Chap. 17. 10.—<sup>d</sup> Isa. 56. 11; Phil. 3. 19; 2 Pet. 2. 3.

shows, in the open country **behind** the city. **Called that place**—The place where they encamped, not the city Kirjath-jearim. **Mahaneh-dan**—That is, *the camp of Dan*. It probably lay some distance west or southwest of the city of Kirjath, and hence is said to be *behind* it. Compare note on chap. 13. 25.

14. **The five men**—They had spied the land, and acted now as guides to the six hundred. **Consider what ye have to do**—They meant more than they said, but their meaning was well understood: Let us not miss this opportunity of supplying ourselves with sacred images and a priest for our new settlement.

16. **Stood by the entering of the gate**—The gate or doorway that led to Micah's sanctuary is meant. By this the six hundred stationed themselves to prevent any one from hindering the five men as they took possession of Micah's gods.

17. **Went up, and came in thither**—That is, in Micah's sanctuary. The images, etc., seem to have been kept in an upper chamber. Comp. 2 Kings xxiii, 12; Jer. xix, 13. **The priest stood in... the gate**—Having saluted him, (ver. 15,) the six hundred detained

him at the door while the five spies brought out the sacred images and the ephod.

19. **Lay thine hand upon thy mouth**—A proverbial expression for maintaining utter silence. **Better for thee**—"Almost in the same words was the like bribe offered by one of the greatest religious houses of England to the monk who guarded the shrine of one of the most sacred relics in the ancient cathedral of Canterbury: 'Give us the portion of St. Thomas' skull which is in thy custody and thou shalt be Abbot of St. Augustine's.' As Roger accepted the bait in the twelfth century after the Christian era, so did the Levite in the fifteenth century before it."—*Stanley*.

20. **The priest's heart was glad**—It was an honourable promotion, as they suggested, to be advanced from being a priest unto one man to that of a tribe in Israel, and he who had sold his service to Micah for little more than his food and clothes (xvii, 10) would surely be happy in the change.

21. **Little ones**—They had taken their families with them. See note on verse 11. **The carriage**—The baggage, consisting of their valuables. This sense of the English word *car-*



carriage before them. **22** And when they were a good way from the house of Micah, the men that *were* in the houses near to Micah's house were gathered together, and overtook the children of Dan. **23** And they cried unto the children of Dan. And they turned their faces, and said unto Micah, What aileth thee, 'that thou comest with such a company? **24** And he said, 'Ye have taken away my gods which I made, and the priest, and ye are gone away: and what have I more? and what is this *that* ye say unto me, What aileth thee? **25** And the children of Dan said unto him, Let not thy voice be heard among us, lest 'angry fellows run upon thee, and thou lose

thy life, with the lives of thy household. **26** And the children of Dan went their way: and when Micah saw that they *were* too strong for him, he turned and went back unto his house. **27** And they took *the things* which Micah had made, and the priest which he had, and 'came unto Laish, unto a people *there were* at quiet and secure: 'and they smote them with the edge of the sword, and burnt the city with fire. **28** And *there was* no deliverer, because it *was* 'far from Zidon, and they had no business with *any* man; and it was in the valley that *lieth* 'by Beth-rehob. And they built a city, and dwelt therein, **29** And 'they called the name of the city 'Dan, after the name of Dan their

5 Heb. *that thou art gathered together*.—*e* Psa. 115. 8; Isa. 44. 18, 20; Jer. 50. 38; 51. 17.  
—6 Heb. *bitter of soul*, 2 Sam. 17. 8.—*f* Vers.

7, 10; Deut. 33. 22.—*g* Josh. 19. 47.—*h* Verse 7.  
—*i* Num. 13. 21; 2 Sam. 10. 6.—*k* Josh. 19. 47.  
—*l* Gen. 14. 14; chap. 20. 1; 1 Kings 12. 29, 30; 15. 20.

*riage* has become obsolete. **Before them**—They anticipated pursuit and trouble from Micah, whom they had so lawlessly robbed, and therefore set their families, cattle, and other possessions in front.

**22. The men that were in . . . houses near to Micah's house**—These neighbours of Micah probably had an interest in his sanctuary and priest, and felt it no small blessing to have a Levitical minister and worship so near them. Hence their readiness to go with Micah to recover his gods and priest.

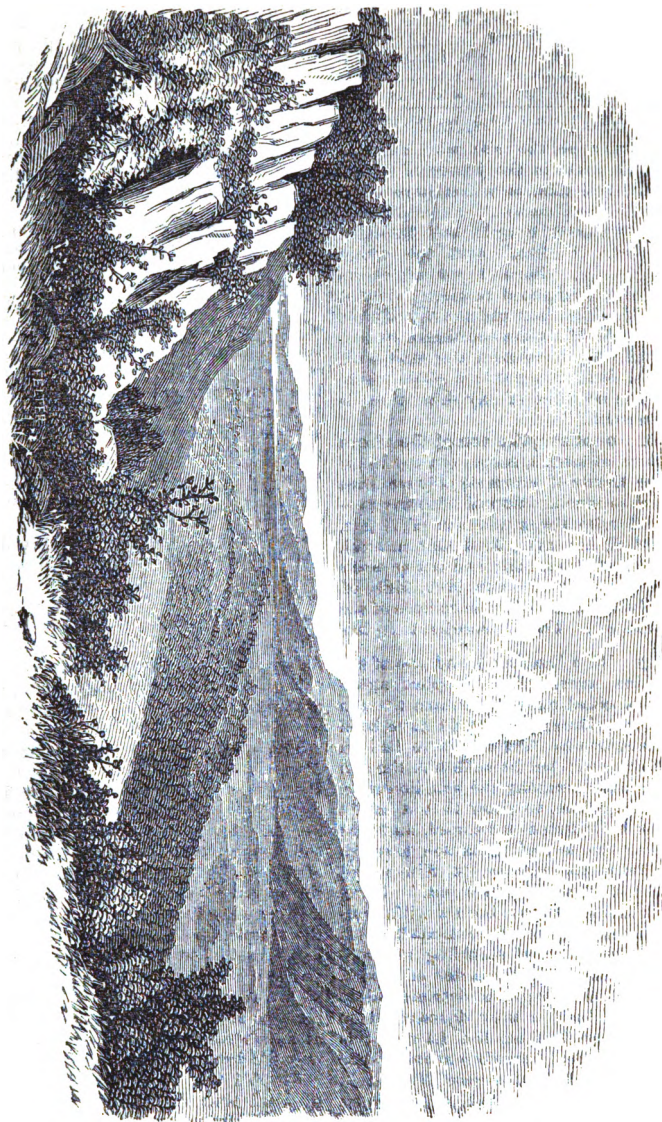
**24. My gods**—This language of Micah shows that, however earnest and deep was his desire to serve and please Jehovah, his sanctuary and images had already carried him far towards idolatry.

**28. Because it was far from Zidon**—The Zidonians were the only people likely to give them assistance at such a time of disaster, for they originally belonged to Zidon. See note on verse 7. **No business with any man**—No alliance with nearer governments, from whom, in such case, they might have received help. **Beth-rehob**—Dr. Robinson is inclined to identify this place with Hunin, an ancient fortress several miles southwest of Dan, and commanding a fine prospect of the plain of the Huleh. With him agrees J. L. Porter, who says: "The site is most commanding—a terrace on the

steep mountain side, a thousand feet above the plain of Dan. Facing it, on the opposite range of Hermon, I saw the ruins of Caesarea Philippi. The sacred writer, in telling the story of the capture of Laish by the Danites, says it was situated in the valley that **lieth by Beth-rehob**. There was the valley before me, and yonder little rounded hill in the midst of it is the site of Laish." It was an important stronghold, and was occupied, in the time of David, by the Syrians. 2 Sam. x. 6. It is not to be confounded with the Rehob in the tribe of Asher, further west. Chap. i, 31; Josh. xix, 28.

**29. Called the name of the city Dan**—It henceforth became the northern limit of the land of Israel, and the formula "from Dan to Beer-sheba" is of frequent occurrence throughout the historical books. Compare chap. xx, 1. This city is mentioned as early as the time of Abram. Gen. xiv, 14. It was situated about twelve miles north of the waters of Merom, on a circular hill, (the modern *Tell el-Kady*,) half a mile in circumference, and nearly eighty feet above the level of the surrounding plain. The chief ruins are on the southern declivity of the hill, but "not one solitary habitation is there. The fountain at the base of the hill pours forth its river of delicious water, but herds of black buffaloes wash and wallow in its crystal pools. You cannot

PLAIN OF THE HUTER.



father, who was born unto Israel: howbeit the name of the city *was* Laish at the first. **30** And the children of Dan set up the graven image: and Jonathan, the son of Gershom, the son of Manasseh, he and his sons

*m* Chap. 13. 1; 1 Sam. 4. 2, 3, 10, 11; Ps. 73. 60, 61.

even examine the site with satisfaction, so dense is the jungle of briars, thorns, and thistles which have over-spread it."—*Thomson*. The top of the hill commands a wide and beautiful prospect. "Often," says the writer just quoted, "have I sat under its great oak, and gazed in dreamy delight upon the luxuriant plain of the Huleh. No wonder the spies exclaimed, (verses 9, 10,) 'We have seen the land, and, behold, it is very good; a place where there is no want of any thing there is in the earth.'"

**30. Jonathan, the son of Gershom**—Here, at length, comes out the name of the Levite of whom already we have heard so much. **Son of Manasseh**—But Gershom was the son of Moses, (Exod. ii, 22; xviii, 3; 1 Chron. xxiii, 15,) not of Manasseh; and *son of Moses* is the reading of some Heb. MSS. of the Vulgate, and of some codices of the Septuagint. The Masoretic text has

מִישָׁה with a hanging י, and one of the Rabbins says: "The prophet studiously avoided calling Gershom the son of Moses, because it would have been ignominious to Moses to have had an ungodly son; but he calls him the son of Manasseh, raising the *nun*, however, above the line, to show that it might either be inserted or omitted, and that he was the son of Manasseh through imitating his impiety, (2 Kings xxi, 1-16,) of Moses by descent." Here, then, has doubtless been a wilful corruption of the sacred text, made with the pious design of shielding the venerable name and character of Moses. Jewish zeal thought it detrimental to Moses to have a near descendant so far gone aside from the Law as this Levite was, and therefore attempted to substitute the hated name of Manasseh, the idolatrous son of Hezekiah. As the Levite was a young man, (verse iii, 15,) it is probable that he was not

were priests to the tribe of Dan "until the day of the captivity of the land. **31** And they set them up Micah's graven image, which he made, "all the time that the house of God was in Shiloh.

*n* Josh. 18. 1; chap. 19. 18; 21. 12.

strictly the grandson of Moses, but a near descendant, probably a great-grandson, for the word בֶּן, *son*, is often used in this sense. Such a near descendant of Moses would very naturally be widely known in Israel, and hence his recognition by the Danites. Verse 3. But such was the looseness of the age, and the want of a powerful central government, that this descendant of the great Lawgiver was a homeless wanderer, and became one of the first ministers of an illegal sanctuary service. **The day of the captivity of the land**—That Philistine captivity which reached its darkest night of horror when the ark was captured, (1 Sam. iv, 11,) and Jehovah "forsook the tabernacle of Shiloh, and delivered his strength into captivity, and his glory into the enemies' hand." Ps. lxxviii, 61. Houbigant and others propose to read הָאָרֶץ, *the ark*, instead of הָאָרֶץ, *the land*; but this is unnecessary, for we may well believe that the terrible calamity of the nation in the loss of the ark was regarded by the sacred writer as a most wretched captivity of the whole land. See note on 1 Sam. ii, 32. Many interpreters have thought that the reference here was to the Assyrian captivity under Tiglath-pileser. 2 Kings xv, 29. But it is hardly credible that the image worship and illegal service of these Danites were tolerated all through the reigns of David and Solomon, especially after the latter built the temple, and gathered all the tribes to Jerusalem to witness its dedication as the central seat of the national worship. Nor would Jeroboam have been likely to set up one of his golden calves at Dan (1 Kings xii, 29) had this illegal worship been still existing there.

**31. All the time that the house of God was in Shiloh**—This statement confirms our view in the last note, that the captivity of the land was

## CHAPTER XIX.

**AND** it came to pass in those days, when *there was no king in Israel*, that there was a certain Levite sojourning on the side of mount Ephraim, who *look to him* <sup>a</sup> a concubine out of <sup>b</sup> Beth-lehem-judah. **2** And his concubine <sup>c</sup> played the whore against him, and went away from him unto her father's house to Beth-lehem-judah, and was there <sup>d</sup> four whole months. **3** And her husband arose, and went after her, to speak <sup>e</sup> friendly unto her, and to bring her again, having his servant with him, and a couple of asses: and she brought him into her father's house; and when the father of the damsel saw him, he rejoiced to meet him. **4** And his father in law, the damsel's father, retained him; and he abode with him three

<sup>a</sup> Chap. 17. 6; 18. 1; 21. 25.—1 Heb. *a woman a concubine*, or, *a wife a concubine*.—<sup>b</sup> Chap. 17. 7.—<sup>c</sup> Lev. 21. 9.—<sup>d</sup> Or, *a year and four months*. Heb. *days four months*.

that which followed the capture of the ark, and the consequent desolation of Shiloh. About the same time, it would seem, the Danite sanctuary in which the sons of Jonathan the Levite ministered was also made desolate. It had probably stood more than a hundred years.

## CHAPTER XIX.

THE LEVITE AND HIS CONCUBINE, 1-30.

**1. In those days**—When Phinehas, the grandson of Aaron, was high priest, (chap. xx, 28;) consequently, not long after the days of Joshua. **Sojourning on...mount Ephraim**—So that he was in the same vicinity where Micah dwelt. Chap. xvii, 1. **A concubine**—A wife of second rank, who had no other rights than those of cohabitation and subsistence, and even then the husband could send her away with a small present, as Abraham did Hagar. Gen. xxi, 14. The practice is condemned by New Testament ethics, but by this standard we are not to judge the examples of Nahor, (Gen. xxii, 24,) Abraham, (xxv, 6,) Jacob, (xxx, 3; xxxv, 22,) and other of the Old Testament worthies. The Law of Moses made provision for concubinage; but even its regulations touching man and

days: so they did eat and drink, and lodged there. **5** And it came to pass on the fourth day, when they arose early in the morning, that he rose up to depart: and the damsel's father said unto his son in law, <sup>f</sup> "Comfort thine heart with a morsel of bread, and afterward go your way." **6** And they sat down, and did eat and drink both of them together: for the damsel's father had said unto the man, Be content, I pray thee, and tarry all night, and <sup>g</sup> let thine heart be merry. **7** And when the man rose up to depart, his father in law urged him: therefore he lodged there again. **8** And he arose early in the morning on the fifth day to depart: and the damsel's father said, Comfort thine heart, I pray thee. And they tarried <sup>h</sup> until afternoon, and they did eat both of them.

<sup>3</sup> Hebrews, *to her heart*, Genesis 34. 3.—<sup>4</sup> Hebrews, *strengthen*.—<sup>d</sup> Genesis 18. 5.—<sup>e</sup> 1 Samuel 25. 36; Psalm 104. 15.—<sup>5</sup> Hebrews, *till the day declined*.

wife were set aside by our Lord, and treated as a politic measure, in view of the hardness of the people's hearts. Matt. xix, 8.

**2. Played the whore**—Dr. Clarke, on the authority of Josephus and several of the ancient versions, understands that they had contentions, and, being alienated in her affections from her husband, she ran away, and went home to her father's house; but the Hebrew word here used ever means a criminal act of conjugal infidelity.

**3. To speak friendly unto her**—Literally, *to speak to her heart*. "To conciliate her affection, to rekindle her tenderness, to whisper forgiveness to her, and to implore her to return to the home she had left desolate. He had, perhaps, heard that she was penitent; for the phrase often denotes the giving of comfort to one who is in sorrow."—**Kitto**. **Rejoiced to meet him**—To meet him on such an errand, for he might have come not to speak friendly to her, but to scourge her for her crime of conjugal infidelity. Lev. xix, 20.

**8. Until afternoon**—Literally, *until the declining of the day*. "All the painful results grew out of this detention and late setting out, and may help, if every day did not supply lessons enough, to teach us the danger and

9 And when the man rose up to depart, he, and his concubine, and his servant, his father in law, the damsel's father, said unto him, Behold, now the day <sup>6</sup>draweth toward evening, I pray you tarry all night: behold, <sup>7</sup>the day groweth to an end, lodge here, that thine heart may be merry; and to morrow get you early on your way, that thou mayest go <sup>8</sup>home. 10 But the man would not tarry that night, but he rose up and departed, and came <sup>9</sup>over against <sup>1</sup>Jebus, which <sup>is</sup> Jerusalem; and <sup>there were</sup> with him two asses saddled, his concubine also <sup>was</sup> with him. 11 And when they <sup>were</sup> by Jebus, the day was far spent; and the servant said unto his master, Come, I pray thee, and let us turn in into this city <sup>10</sup>of the Jebusites, and lodge in it. 12 And his master said unto him, We will not turn aside hither into the city of a stranger, that <sup>is</sup> not of the children of Israel; we will pass over <sup>11</sup>to Gibeah. 13 And he said unto his servant, Come, and let us draw near to one of these places to lodge all night, in Gibeah, or in <sup>12</sup>Ramah. 14 And they passed on and went their way; and the sun went down upon them <sup>when they were</sup> by Gibeah, which <sup>belongeth</sup> to Benjamin. 15 And they turned aside

<sup>6</sup> Heb. *is weak*.—<sup>7</sup> Heb. *it is the pitching time of the day*.—<sup>8</sup> Heb. *to thy tent*.—<sup>9</sup> Heb. *to over against*.—<sup>1</sup> Josh. 18. 28; 2 Sam. 5. 6.—<sup>10</sup> Josh. 15. 8. 63; chap. 1. 21; 2 Sam. 5. 6.—<sup>11</sup> Josh. 18. 28.—<sup>12</sup> Josh. 18. 25; 1 Sam. 10. 26; Isa. 10. 29; Hos. 5. 8.

weakness of allowing our better judgment to be overcome by even the kind importunities of others."—*Kitto*.

10. **Jebus**—The ancient name of Jerusalem. See at Josh. xv, 63, and chap. i, 21. This was a journey of about two hours north of Beth-lehem.

13. **In Gibeah, or in Ramah**—Cities of Benjamin lying northward from Jerusalem, one about an hour, the other two hours, or more, distant. See Josh. xviii, 25, 28.

15. **He sat him down in a street of the city**—This, we are told by Orientalists, is a way of making known one's want of entertainment, and is a custom still existing in the East. Usually one is allowed to wait but a little while in such a place. **For there was no man that took them**—Rather, *And no man took them*. This implies that the inhabitants of that town were wilfully inhospitable. It was a reproach to

thither, to go in *and* to lodge in Gibeah: and when he went in, he sat him down in a street of the city: for *there was* no man that <sup>14</sup>took them into his house to lodging. 16 And, behold, there came an old man from <sup>13</sup>his work out of the field at even, which <sup>was</sup> also of mount Ephraim; and he sojourned in Gibeah: but the men of the place <sup>were</sup> Benjamites. 17 And when he had lifted up his eyes, he saw a wayfaring man in the street of the city: and the old man said, Whither goest thou? and whence comest thou? 18 And he said unto him, We <sup>are</sup> passing from Beth-lehem-judah toward the side of mount Ephraim; from thence <sup>am</sup> I; and I went to Beth-lehem-judah, but I <sup>am now</sup> going to <sup>15</sup>the house of the Lord; and there <sup>is</sup> no man that <sup>16</sup>receiveth me to house. 19 Yet there is both straw and provender for our asses; and there is bread and wine also for me, and for thy handmaid, and for the young man <sup>which is</sup> with thy servants: <sup>there is</sup> no want of any thing. 20 And the old man said, <sup>17</sup>Peace be with thee; howsoever, <sup>let</sup> all thy wants <sup>lie</sup> upon me; <sup>18</sup>only lodge not in the street. 21 <sup>19</sup>So he brought him into his house, and gave provender unto the asses: <sup>20</sup>and they washed their feet,

<sup>14</sup> Matt. 25. 43; Heb. 13. 2.—<sup>15</sup> Psa. 104. 23.—<sup>16</sup> Josh. 18. 1; chap. 18. 31; 20. 18; 1 Sam. 1. 2, 7.—<sup>17</sup> Hebrew, *gathereth*, verse 15.—<sup>18</sup> Gen. 43. 23; chap. 6. 23.—<sup>19</sup> Gen. 19. 2.—<sup>20</sup> Gen. 24. 32; 43. 24.—<sup>21</sup> Gen. 18. 4; John 13. 5.

them that they allowed a wayfaring man to wait so long in a street of their city before entertainment was offered him, and verse 18 implies that the Levite himself felt misused.

19. **Straw . . . provender . . . bread . . . wine**—This shows that the Israelites did then, as the Orientals do now, take with them the provisions for themselves and beasts that they required during a journey, replenishing their stores from time to time when they came to a town that could supply them. The *straw* was chopped straw, used in the East instead of hay; and the *provender* barley. This is carried in hair bags, something like the mouth-bags of our horses, but of larger size."—*Kitto*.

21. **Washed their feet**—One of the most ancient usages of Eastern hospitality. (Gen. xviii, 4; xix. 2,) being regarded as a mark of respect to a guest,

and did eat and drink. **22** *Now* as they were making their hearts merry, behold, 'the men of the city, certain sons of Belial, beset the house round about, *and* beat at the door, and spake unto the master of the house, the old man, saying, 'Bring forth the man that came into thine house, that we may know him. **23** And 'the man, the master of the house, went out unto them, and said unto them, Nay, my brethren, *nay*, I pray you, do not *so* wickedly; seeing that this man is come into mine house, 'do not this folly. **24** 'Behold, *here is* my daughter a maiden, and his concubine; them I will bring out now, and 'humble ye them, and do with them what seemeth good unto you: but unto this man do not 'so vile a thing. **25** But the men would not hearken to him: so the man took his concubine, and brought her forth unto them; and they 'knew her, and abused her all the

<sup>r</sup> Gen. 19. 4; chap. 20. 5; Hos. 9. 9; 10. 9.—<sup>s</sup> Deut. 13. 13.—<sup>t</sup> Gen. 19. 5; Rom. 1. 26, 27.—<sup>u</sup> Gen. 19. 6, 7.—<sup>v</sup> 2 Sam. 13. 12.—<sup>w</sup> Gen. 19. 8.—<sup>x</sup> Gen. 34. 2; Deut. 21. 14.

and of kind attention on the part of the host.

**22. Making their hearts merry**—By eating, drinking, and conversation. This indicates the warmth and cheer of ancient friendship and hospitality. **Sons of Belial**—Low, lewd, worthless fellows, such as their conduct showed them to be. See note on 1 Sam. i, 16. **Bring forth the man**—Most shameful and impudent demand, the revived voice of wicked Sodom. Compare Gen. xix, 1–11. **That we may know him**—"These," says Clarke, "were genuine Sodomites as to their practice; rascals and miscreants of the deepest dye; worse than brutes, being a compound of beast and devil inseparably blended."

**24. Humble ye them**—This was a proposition most shocking to our Christian instincts, but far less revolting, though not blameless, in that ancient time. It was a thing that had not occurred before in Israel. The fact here related shows how degraded was woman's condition even in ancient Israel. She was regarded principally as the object meant for man to gratify his sensual lust upon, and held well nigh the position of a slave to him. But was it strange when, even now, in Japan and other lands, it is a common custom for

night until the morning: and when the day began to spring, they let her go. **26** Then came the woman in the dawning of the day, and fell down at the door of the man's house where her lord *was*, till it was light. **27** And her lord rose up in the morning, and opened the doors of the house, and went out to go his way: and, behold, the woman his concubine was fallen down *at* the door of the house, and her hands *were* upon the threshold. **28** And he said unto her, Up, and let us be going: but 'none answered. Then the man took her *up* upon an ass, and the man rose up, and gat him unto his place. **29** And when he was come into his house, he took a knife, and laid hold on his concubine, and 'divided her, *together* with her bones, into twelve pieces, and sent her into all the coasts of Israel. **30** And it was so, that all that saw it said, There was no such deed done nor seen from

<sup>11</sup> Hebrew, *the matter of this folly*.—<sup>v</sup> Genesis 4. 1; Jeremiah 5. 7, 8; Hosea 7. 4, 7; Ephesians 4. 19.—<sup>2</sup> Chapter 20. 5.—<sup>a</sup> Chapter 20. 6; see 1 Samuel 11. 7.

parents to sell their daughters to persons to be subjected to lives of prostitution? A Christian lady, writing from Yokohama, Japan, in August, 1871, says: "In the suburbs of this city my friend pointed out to me a square of native houses in which, he told me, the licensed prostitution of the city is carried on. The victims are the fairest, choicest young girls of the place. They are sold by their parents, and the more beautiful they are, the higher price they command. From eight hundred to a thousand were confined in that square; and this is only what is found in every city in this land."

**29. Together with her bones**—Rather, *According to her bones*, that is, severing her limbs, as he would do of an animal, according to the joints of the bones. **Twelve pieces**—One for each tribe in Israel. Compare Saul's similar act in 1 Sam. xi, 7. **Sent her into all the coasts**—The messengers who bore these pieces doubtless told the shocking story in all the coasts through which they passed.

**30. No such deed done nor seen**—It has its only parallel in the history of ancient Sodom, long before Israel's exodus from the land of Egypt. Compare Gen. xix, 1–11.

the day that the children of Israel came up out of the land of Egypt unto this day: consider of it, <sup>b</sup>take advice, and speak *your minds*.

### CHAPTER XX.

**T**HEN <sup>a</sup>all the children of Israel went out, and the congregation was gathered together as one man, from <sup>b</sup>Dan even to Beer-sheba, with the land of Gilead, unto the LORD <sup>c</sup>in Mizpeh. **2** And the chief of all the people, *even* of all the tribes of Israel, presented themselves in the assembly of the people of God, four hundred thousand footmen <sup>d</sup>that drew sword. **3** (Now the children of Benjamin heard that the children of Israel were gone up to Mizpeh.) Then said the children of Israel, Tell *us*, how was this wickedness? **4** And <sup>e</sup>the Levite, the husband of the woman that was slain, answered and said, <sup>f</sup>I came into Gibeah that *belongeth*

to Benjamin, I and my concubine, to lodge. **5** <sup>g</sup>And the men of Gibeah rose against me, and beset the house round about upon me by night, *and* thought to have slain me: <sup>h</sup>and my concubine have they <sup>i</sup>forced, that she is dead. **6** And <sup>j</sup>I took my concubine, and cut her in pieces, and sent her throughout all the country of the inheritance of Israel: for they <sup>k</sup>have committed lewdness and folly in Israel. **7** Behold, ye *are* all children of Israel; <sup>l</sup>give here your advice and counsel. **8** And all the people arose as one man, saying, <sup>m</sup>We will not any of *us* go to his tent, neither will we any of *us* turn into his house. **9** But now this *shall be* the thing which we will do to Gibeah; *we will go up* <sup>n</sup>by lot against it; **10** And we will take ten men of a hundred throughout all the tribes of Israel, and a hundred of a thousand, and a thousand out of ten thousand, to fetch victuals for

<sup>b</sup> Chap. 20. 7; Prov. 23. 10.—<sup>c</sup> Deut. 13. 13; Josh. 22. 12; chap. 21. 5; 1 Sam. 11. 7.—<sup>d</sup> Chap. 18. 29; 1 Sam. 3. 20; 2 Sam. 3. 10; 24. 2.—<sup>e</sup> Judges 10. 17; 11. 11; 1 Sam. 7. 5; 10. 17.—<sup>f</sup> Chap. 8. 10.—<sup>g</sup> 1 Heb. *the man the Levite*.

<sup>h</sup> Chap. 19. 15.—<sup>i</sup> Chap. 19. 22.—<sup>j</sup> Chap. 19. 25, 26.—<sup>k</sup> Heb. *humbled*.—<sup>l</sup> Chap. 19. 29.—<sup>m</sup> Josh. 7. 15.—<sup>n</sup> Chap. 19. 30.—<sup>o</sup> Chap. 21. 15; Prov. 21. 8; Eccles. 9. 10.—<sup>p</sup> Josh. 14. 2; Neh. 11. 1; Prov. 16. 33.

### CHAPTER XX.

#### THE COUNCIL AT MIZPEH, 1-11.

#### 1. From Dan even to Beer-sheba

—The common formula to designate the entire country, from its northern to its southern boundary. Compare 1 Sam. iii, 20; 2 Sam. iii, 10; xvii, 11; xxiv, 2, 15; 1 Kings iv, 25. In the later books the formula is reversed: 1 Chron. xxi, 2; 2 Chron. xxx, 5. On *Dan*, see at chap. xviii, 7, 29; on *Beer-sheba*, Gen. xxi, 31. **Land of Gilead**

—The country east of the Jordan. See on chap. x, 8, 17. **Unto the Lord**—The meaning is, that the assembly was held as in the sight of the Lord. The tribes came together in the name of the Lord, and bound themselves by solemn oaths and execrations to destroy Benjamin. Compare chap. xxi, 15; see note on chap. xi, 11. **In Mizpeh**—Not the Mizpeh in the land of Gilead, where the eastern tribes assembled in the time of Jephthah to prepare for war against Ammon, (chap. x, 17,) but the Mizpeh of Benjamin, which is mentioned in Josh. xviii, 25, 26, in connexion with Gibeon and Ramah, and which was probably identical with the modern

Neby Samwil, a little northwest of Jerusalem. See note on 1 Sam. vii, 5. This was an appropriate place for the council. Commanding a wide prospect, it was a central place for all the tribes, and was in the territory of Benjamin, near the spot where the offence took place, so that all proper witnesses to the case might be near at hand.

**2. Four hundred thousand**—On the possibility of collecting so vast a number in a short time, see note on 1 Sam. xi, 9.

**3. How was this wickedness**—The members of the assembly had heard the substance of the horrid tale before, but the purpose of the council required that the particulars be now publicly related in the hearing of all.

**9. By lot against it**—That is, We will deal with Gibeah just as our fathers, by divine commandment, dealt with devoted Canaanitish cities: we will subdue it, destroy all its inhabitants, and then divide its territory *by lot* among our families. See Num. xxxii, 53, 54. Some expositors understand this of the selection by lot of the tenth of the men to supply the rest with provisions during the war, as narrated in

the people, that they may do, when they come to Gibeah of Benjamin, according to all the folly that they have wrought in Israel. **11** So all the men of Israel were gathered against the city, <sup>3</sup>knit together as one man.

**12** "And the tribes of Israel sent men through all the tribe of Benjamin, saying, What wickedness *is* this that is done among you? **13** Now therefore deliver *us* the men, <sup>4</sup>the children of Belial, which *are* in Gibeah, that we may put them to death, and <sup>5</sup>put away evil from Israel. But the children of Benjamin would not hearken to the voice of their brethren the children of

Israel: **14** But the children of Benjamin gathered themselves together out of the cities unto Gibeah, to go out to battle against the children of Israel.

**15** And the children of Benjamin were numbered at that time out of the cities twenty and six thousand men that drew sword, besides the inhabitants of Gibeah, which were numbered seven hundred chosen men. **16** Among all this people *there were* seven hundred chosen men <sup>1</sup>lefthanded; every one <sup>2</sup>could sling stones at a hair *breadth*, and not miss.

**17** And the men of Israel, besides Benjamin, were numbered four hundred thousand men that drew sword:

**8** Heb. *fellows*.—*n* Deut. 13. 14; Josh. 22. 13, 16.  
*o* Deut. 13. 13; chap. 19. 22.

*p* Deut. 17. 12.—*q* Chap. 3. 15; 1 Chron. 12. 2.  
*r* 1 Sam. 17. 40, 49, 50.

the next verse; but such a construction of the passage would be strangely inapposite.

#### PREPARATIONS FOR WAR, 12-19.

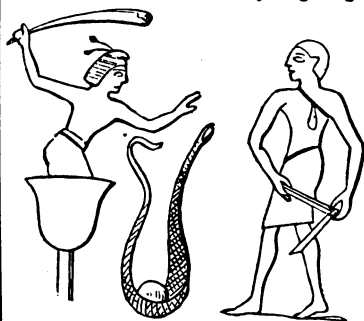
**12. Sent men**—The Benjamites knew of Israel's gathering at Mizpeh, (verse 3.) and they had themselves, probably, been notified to meet there, as had the other tribes; but no Benjamite seems to have appeared in that assembly.

**13. Benjamin would not hearken**—Here was amazing perversity. For a whole tribe to assume the responsibility of the crime of Gibeah, and fight to defend it, was another folly in Israel. But the measures taken to punish the crime, from their fierceness and suddenness, were not calculated to conciliate, but rather to provoke the Benjamites to war, and thus was brought to pass the saying of Jacob: "Benjamin shall raven as a wolf." Gen. xlix, 27.

**15. The inhabitants of Gibeah**—These are specially mentioned because they were specially interested in the war. For their sake it was carried on, and so they furnished seven hundred men.

**16. Lefthanded**—See on chap. iii, 15. **Sling stones at a hair breadth**—Literally, *to the hair*. Seven hundred men thus disciplined argues that this lefthanded skill of Benjamin was acquired. "This is a region where such a mode of warfare would be cultivated in ancient times, and be very effective.

The stones for the sling are everywhere at hand, and the country is cut up by deep gorges with impracticable banks; and before the invention of guns there was no other weapon that would carry across these profound depths, and reach the ranks of the enemy. David, while following his flocks over these rough mountains, practised other arts besides that of playing on the shepherd's pipe, for he became as expert in the use of the sling as any of the chosen men of Benjamin."—*Thomson*. This writer also states that he had seen boys fighting



EGYPTIAN SLINGERS AND SLING.

battles with slings among the gorges of Mount Hermon, and at times almost darkening the air with their whizzing pebbles. By similar practices, perhaps, the ancient youth of Benjamin and other tribes were disciplined for warfare.



all these *were* men of war. **18** And the children of Israel arose, and 'went up to the house of God, and 'asked counsel of God, and said, Which of us shall go up first to the battle against the children of Benjamin? And the Lord said, Judah *shall go up* first. **19** And the children of Israel rose up in the morning, and encamped against Gibeah.

**20** And the men of Israel went out to battle against Benjamin; and the men of Israel put themselves in array to fight against them at Gibeah. **21** And 'the children of Benjamin came forth out of Gibeah, and destroyed down to the ground of the Israelites that day

<sup>a</sup> Verses 23, 26. — <sup>t</sup> Num. 27. 21; chap. 1. 1. — <sup>u</sup> Gen. 49. 27; Hos. 10. 9. — <sup>v</sup> 1 Sam. 30. 6; 2 Sam. 11. 25; Psa. 64. 5.

**18. Went up to the house of God**—Rather, *went up to Beth-el*, because, as verse 27 informs us, the ark of God was there at that time. See note on verse 27. **Asked counsel of God**—By means of the urim on the ephod of Phinehas, the high priest. Compare notes on Num. xxvii, 21, and chap. xviii, 5. **Which of us shall go up first**—The same question that was asked when they went to battle against the Canaanites, (chap. i, 1,) and the same answer was given. They felt that all preparations for battle were incomplete until they had received a communication from God; but it was a grievous mistake in them not to have asked counsel of the Lord before declaring war against their brother Benjamin, and for this neglect and their self-confidence they pay dearly before the war is over. "Nothing can be clearer," says Kitto, "than that they never once thought of consulting the Divine oracle till the war had been fully resolved upon and settled beyond recall by solemn pledges and oaths."

THE WAR AGAINST BENJAMIN, 20-48.

**21. Destroyed down to the ground**—That is, smote them so that they lay dead upon the ground. **Twenty and two thousand**—Almost as many as all Benjamin's host contained. Compare verse 15. But of the Benjamites very few seem to have fallen.

**22. Encouraged themselves**—  
"They did not seek for courage from

twenty and two thousand men. **22** And the people, the men of Israel, 'encouraged themselves, and set their battle again in array in the place where they put themselves in array the first day.

**23** "And the children of Israel went up and wept before the Lord until even, and asked counsel of the Lord, saying, Shall I go up again to battle against the children of Benjamin my brother? And the Lord said, Go up against him.

**24** And the children of Israel came near against the children of Benjamin the second day. **25** And 'Benjamin went forth against them out of Gibeah the second day, and destroyed down to the

<sup>w</sup> Verses 26, 27; Psalm 78. 34, 36; Hosea 5. 15. — <sup>x</sup> Verse 21; Gen. 18. 25; Job 9. 12, 13; Psalm 97. 2.

God, but they cheered one another with vainglorious vauntings of their own strength, and with confident assurances of victory, and therefore God punished them."—*Wordsworth*.

**23. Went up and wept**—Though they had sought to speak lightly of their losses, and to assure themselves of victory, there was a secret sadness and a gloomy sense of loss. Though their loss had not thoroughly subdued them, it had manifestly humbled them, and now they *weep* as well as ask of God; and their question is not, Who shall go up first? but, **Shall I go up again to battle against the children of Benjamin my brother?** There is a noticeable humility behind this question, as compared with that of verse 18, but it lacks the depth and penitence that appear in verses 26-28. It is noticeable, too, that in verse 18 they ask of *God*, while here and afterwards they inquire of *Jehovah*, the covenant God of Israel, as if in the former instance they had failed to recognise Jehovah in his proper character as their covenant God. **Go up against him**—Jehovah does not espouse the cause of Benjamin, though he grants him signal victories. His purpose is first to humble the mightier forces of Israel, who have been glorying too much in their own strength.

**25. The second day**—Not necessarily the next day after the first conflict, but the second day of actual battle. Several days may have intervened

ground of the children of Israel again eighteen thousand men; all these drew the sword. **26** Then all the children of Israel, and all the people, went up, and came unto the house of God, and wept, and sat there before the Lord, and fasted that day until even, and offered burnt offerings and peace offerings before the Lord. **27** And the children of Israel inquired of the Lord, (for the ark of the covenant of God was there in those days, **28** And Phinehas, the son of Eleazar, the son of Aaron, stood before it in those days,) saying, Shall I

yet again go out to battle against the children of Benjamin my brother, or shall I cease? And the Lord said, Go up: for to-morrow I will deliver them into thine hand. **29** And Israel set liers in wait round about Gibeah. **30** And the children of Israel went up against the children of Benjamin on the third day, and put themselves in array against Gibeah, as at other times. **31** And the children of Benjamin went out against the people, and were drawn away from the city; and they began to smite of the people, and kill, as at other times,

*y* Verse 18.—*z* Josh. 18, 1; 1 Sam. 4, 3, 4.  
*a* Josh. 24, 33.—*b* Deut. 10, 8; 18, 5.

*c* So Josh. 8, 4.—*4* Heb. *to smite of the people wounded as at, &c.*

between the two battles. **Eighteen thousand**—Four thousand less than the loss of the first day's battle; but Israel's self-confidence was also less than then.

**26. And all the people**—These, as distinguished from the children of Israel, were those not capable of bearing arms—old men and women—who nevertheless assembled with the warriors to weep and fast and pray before the Lord. **Came unto the house of God**—Rather, *came unto Beth-el*, as in verse 18. **Sat there before the Lord**—Their object in going to Beth-el was a religious one, and their assembling was in the name of the Lord, as had been the case at Mizpeh. Verse 1, note. But the solemnity of this meeting at Beth-el was increased by the presence of the ark. See next verse. **Fasted**—This was an additional and very significant way of expressing their profound humiliation and heart penitence before the Lord. **Offered burnt offerings and peace offerings**—They had become deeply convinced that they had offended God, and they sought by *burnt offerings* to propitiate him, and by *peace offerings* to renew their covenant, and realize again his fellowship and love.

**27. The ark... was there in those days**—When and why it was brought there, and how many days it continued there, the sacred writer does not tell us, and we must be content to remain uninformed. Some understand, as our translators seem to have done, that the adverb *there* refers to Shiloh, and that *Beth-el* in the Hebrew text of verses 26

and 18 should be rendered *house of God*, meaning the tabernacle at Shiloh; but the tabernacle is never called Beth-el. Hengstenberg and Keil suppose that the ark was brought only temporarily to Beth-el, and to serve some special design on this occasion; but the phrase *in those days* is hardly consistent with such an explanation. Compare the same phrase in chaps. xviii, 1; xix, 1; xxi, 25, and frequently. And if the ark had been brought from Shiloh merely for this occasion, it is not clear why it was not brought to Mizpeh rather than to Beth-el. More plausible is the supposition, that as Beth-el was a sacred place in Israelitish history, the ark was sometimes brought there, accompanied by the high priest, and abode there for many days at a time, in honour of the holy spot which Jacob regarded as the gate of heaven. Gen. xxviii, 17. Hence, after Shiloh's desolation, it naturally became a central seat of worship. See 1 Sam. x, 3, note.

**28. Phinehas**—This mention of the grandson of Aaron, like that of Moses' grandson in chap. xviii, 30, (where see note,) shows that the events of this chapter, like those recorded in chaps. xvii and xviii, must have occurred early in the period of the Judges, and not many years after the death of Joshua.

**29. Liers in wait**—Armed warriors in ambush. They probably went out under cover of the night, and concealed themselves in the meadows around Gibeah. Verse 33.

**31. To smite of the people, and kill**—Rather, *to smite of the people the wounded, or pierced*. Some thirty men

in the highways, of which one goeth up to the house of God, and the other to Gibeah in the field, about thirty men of Israel. **32** And the children of Benjamin said, They *are* smitten down before us, as at the first. But the children of Israel said, Let us flee, and draw them from the city unto the highways. **33** And all the men of Israel rose up out of their place, and put themselves in array at Baal-tamar: and the liers in wait of Israel came forth out of

their places, *even* out of the meadows of Gibeah. **34** And there came against Gibeah ten thousand chosen men out of all Israel, and the battle was sore: but they knew not that evil *was* near them. **35** And the Lord smote Benjamin before Israel: and the children of Israel destroyed of the Benjamites that day twenty and five thousand and a hundred men: all these drew the sword. **36** So the children of Benjamin saw that they were smitten: *for*

5 Or, *Beth-el.*—*d* Joshua 8. 15, 16.—*e* Joshua 8. 15, 22.

*f* Joshua 8. 14; *Isalah* 47.. 11.—*g* Job 20. 5.  
*h* Joshua 8. 15.

were hit and wounded by the slingers, and the Benjamites rushed upon them and smote them. **In the highways**—The contest shows that the *highways* here mentioned was a spot where two roads parted, one leading up to Beth-el, (not **house of God**, as here again rendered,) the other to Gibeah. **In the field** designates not the site of Gibeah, (as *Gibeah in the field*.) but the place where the two roads parted.

**33. All the men of Israel rose up out of their place**—These were the main forces of the army, while those mentioned in verse 30 were probably a lesser body of men, several thousand, perhaps, whose object was to draw the Benjamites off from Gibeah. When they fled and the Benjamites pursued them, then this vast army, called *all the men of Israel* because they comprised the vast majority of the Israelitish warriors, rose up and marched to action. **Baal-tamar**—A place near Gibeah, mentioned also by Eusebius, but not now known. **Meadows of Gibeah**—Some interpreters, after the Septuagint, take the Hebrew words *Muareh gaba* as a proper name; others, after the Syriac, render it *cave of Geba*. These renderings come from the idea that a meadow or plain would be unsuitable for an ambush; but the plain around Gibeah may have afforded numerous hiding places; and then, as Keil well says, "There is no necessity to understand the words as signifying that the treeless country formed the actual hiding-place of the ambush; but that when the men broke from their hiding-place, they came from the treeless land toward the town."

**34. Ten thousand chosen men out of all Israel**—These may have been identical with the "liers in wait," (verses 29, 33,) but were more probably a detachment from the main army that marched from Baal-tamar, sent to assist the men of the ambush in capturing and smiting Gibeah, while the rest marched on to smite the Benjamite forces outside of the city. **They knew not**—That is, the Benjamites knew not the evil that was about to befall them.

**35. Twenty and five thousand and a hundred**—The historian here gives the result of the battle, and then proceeds, in verses 36–46, to give more of the details. It appears that eighteen thousand fell in battle, (verse 44,) five thousand were gleaned along the highways, (verse 45,) and that two thousand more were killed as they fled to Gidom. This makes exactly twenty-five thousand; but no account is given in this latter part of the other one hundred. So also no account at all is given of the number of Benjamites who fell in the previous battles. According to verse 47 only six hundred men of Benjamin escaped; but before the first battle they numbered twenty-six thousand seven hundred. Verse 15. Consequently twenty-six thousand one hundred were killed and missing in the war. The historian records twenty-five thousand one hundred killed on this last day of battle; the other one thousand, not accounted for, probably fell in the battles of the previous days, for it is not supposable that the Benjamites killed twenty-two thousand on one day (verse 21) and eighteen thousand on another without any loss to themselves.

the men of Israel gave place to the Benjamites, because they trusted unto the liars in wait which they had set beside Gibeah. **37** <sup>1</sup>And the liars in wait hastened, and rushed upon Gibeah; and the liars in wait <sup>2</sup>drew *themselves* along, and smote all the city with the edge of the sword. **38** Now there was an appointed <sup>3</sup>sign between the men of Israel <sup>4</sup>and the liars in wait, that they should make a great <sup>5</sup>flame with smoke rise up out of the city. **39** And when the men of Israel retired in the battle, Benjamin began <sup>6</sup>to smite *and* kill of the men of Israel about thirty persons: for they said, Surely they are smitten down before us, as *in* the first battle. **40** But when the flame began to arise up out of the city with a pillar of smoke, the Benjamites <sup>7</sup>looked behind them,

<sup>4</sup> Josh. 8. 19.—<sup>5</sup> Or, *made a long sound with the trumpet*, Josh. 6. 5.—<sup>7</sup> Or, *time*.—<sup>8</sup> Heb. *with*.—<sup>9</sup> Heb. *elevation*.—<sup>10</sup> Heb. *to smite the wounded*.—<sup>11</sup> Josh. 8. 20.

**36. Gave place**—Fled, as described in verse 32.

**37. Drew themselves along**—That is, *marched forward*, advanced; or, as we often say, *drew on*; not, as margin, *made a long sound with the trumpets*.

**38. Make a great flame with smoke**—More literally, *Do greatly to make them raise an elevation of smoke from the city*. רָבַח is a shortened Hiphil imperative, from רָבַח, and means *to multiply, to increase, to do greatly*. The reference of the suffix *ם*, *them*, is not clear, but it probably refers to the incendiaries who should be employed to raise the smoky signal.

**42. Way of the wilderness**—The wild mountainous country northeast of Gibeah. **Them which came out of the cities**—That is, the old men, women, and children, that fled for their lives out of the cities of Benjamin. **In the midst of them**—Rather, *in the midst of it*; that is, the wilderness.

**43. With ease**—The Hebrew word thus rendered is better taken as a proper name, *Menuchah*, as in the margin. Translate the verse thus: *They enclosed Benjamin, pursued him, trod him down at Menuchah unto the place over against Gibeah eastward*. The sense is, that Menuchah itself was over

and, behold, <sup>11</sup>the flame of the city ascended up to heaven. **41** And when the men of Israel turned again, the men of Benjamin were amazed: for they saw that evil <sup>12</sup>was come upon them. **42** Therefore they turned *their backs* before the men of Israel unto the way of the wilderness; but the battle <sup>1</sup>overtook them; and them which *came* out of the cities they destroyed in the midst of them. **43** Thus they inclosed the Benjamites round about, *and* chased them, *and* trode them down <sup>13</sup>with ease <sup>14</sup>over against Gibeah toward the sun-rising. **44** And there fell of Benjamin eighteen thousand men; all these *were* men of valour. **45** And they turned and fled toward the wilderness unto the rock of <sup>15</sup>Rimmon: and they gleaned of them in the highways five thousand

<sup>11</sup> Heb. *the whole consumption*.—<sup>12</sup> Heb. *touch*ed them.—<sup>13</sup> Lam. 1. 3; Hos. 9. 9; 10. 9.—<sup>14</sup> Or, from *Menuchah*, &c.—<sup>15</sup> Heb. *unto over against*.—<sup>16</sup> Josh. 15. 32.

against Gibeah on the east, so that the battle was fought principally on the east of the city. Menuchah was probably the same as Manahath, (1 Chron. viii. 6,) and lay somewhere to the east or northeast of Gibeah.

**45. Rock of Rimmon**—"About ten miles north of Jerusalem, and nearly four east of Beth-el, is a very conspicuous white limestone tell, rising like a cone above the neighbouring hilltops, and overlooking the whole wilderness down to the Jordan valley. Upon it stands a large modern village called *Rummon*. This is unquestionably the *rock Rimmon*, on which the Benjamites took refuge. It is admirably adapted for the purpose. A deep and wild ravine cuts off the approach from the south, and others skirt its western and northern sides, rendering it a natural fortress of great strength. The sides of the tell are steep, bare, and rocky, and could be defended by a few resolute men against a host. The top is rounded, affording ample space for the refugees, while along the sides are some large caverns."—*J. L. Porter*. **Gleaned of them in the highways**—That is, they discovered many small companies of men fleeing or seeking to defend themselves here and there along the roads, and they at once enclosed them and cut them off; like

men; and pursued hard after them unto Gidom, and slew two thousand men of them. **46** So that all which fell that day of Benjamin were twenty and five thousand men that drew the sword; all these *were* men of valour. **47** <sup>a</sup>But six hundred men turned and fled to the wilderness unto the rock Rimmon, and abode in the rock Rimmon four months. **48** And the men of Israel turned again upon the children of Benjamin, and smote them with the edge of the sword, as well the men of *every* city, as the beast, and all that <sup>18</sup>came to hand: also they set on fire all the cities that <sup>16</sup>they came to.

## CHAPTER XXI.

**N**OW <sup>a</sup>the men of Israel had sworn in Mizpeh, saying, There shall

<sup>a</sup> Chap. 21. 13.—<sup>15</sup> Heb. *was found*.—<sup>16</sup> Heb. *were found*.—<sup>a</sup> Chap. 20. 1.—<sup>b</sup> Chap. 20. 13, 26.

gleaning scattered stalks of grain which the reapers had overlooked. **Gidom**—Another place northeast of Gibeah, whose exact site is now unknown.

**46. All these were men of valour**—The brave Benjamites, though conquered at last, compelled the victors to acknowledge their heroism and valour. On the number of the slain, see note on verse 35.

**48. Israel turned again upon...** **Benjamin**—Turned upon the old men, women, and children that remained unarmed and helpless in the cities; and smote men and cattle together, and burned the cities, just as they had done when warring with the idolatrous on Canaanites.

## CHAPTER XXI.

**THE REMNANT OF BENJAMIN PRESERVED, 1-25.**

**1. Israel had sworn**—This fact, not recorded before, shows up the impetuous zeal and fury with which Israel had been inspired, and during the whole conflict feelings of personal revenge held too much sway on both sides. **Not... give his daughter unto Benjamin**—They meant to treat Benjamin as one of the heathen nations among whom they were forbidden to marry. Deut. vii. 3.

**2. House of God**—Rather, *Beth-el*; see notes on chap. xx, 18, 26, 27. **Abode... before God**—In solemn

not any of us give his daughter unto Benjamin to wife. **2** And the people came <sup>b</sup>to the house of God, and abode there till even before God, and lifted up their voices, and wept sore; **3** And said, O LORD God of Israel, <sup>c</sup>why is this come to pass in Israel, that there should be to day one tribe lacking in Israel? **4** And it came to pass on the morrow, that the people rose early, and <sup>d</sup>built there an altar, and offered burnt offerings and peace offerings. **5** And the children of Israel said, Who *is there* among all the tribes of Israel that came not up with the congregation unto the LORD? <sup>e</sup>For they had made a great oath concerning him that came not up to the LORD to Mizpeh, saying, He shall surely be put to death. **6** And the children of

<sup>c</sup> Deut. 29. 24; Josh. 7. 7, 9; Psa. 74. 1; Prov. 19. 3. <sup>d</sup> 2 Sam. 24. 25.—<sup>e</sup> Chap. 5. 23.

penitence and humiliation before the ark of the covenant which was there. **Wept sore**—Not so much over their sins, as over the calamities of Benjamin.

**3. One tribe lacking in Israel**—A fearful thought thus came over them after the hour of bitterness and passion had gone, and calm reflection returned. "God had taken care of every tribe," remarks Henry; "their number twelve was that which they were known by; every tribe had his station appointed in the camp, and his stone in the high priest's breastplate; every tribe had his blessing, both from Jacob and Moses, and it would be an intolerable reproach to them if they should drop any out of this illustrious jury, and lose one out of twelve; especially Benjamin, the youngest, who was particularly dear to Jacob, their common ancestor. Benjamin is not; what then will become of Jacob? Benjamin become a Benoni! the son of the right hand—a son of sorrow!" Gen. xxxv, 18.

**4. Built there an altar**—The altar on which they had sacrificed a few days before (xx, 26) was perhaps not large enough for the purposes of the present occasion, or there may have been thought something meritorious in the building of a new altar there.

**5. A great oath**—Here is the record of another oath, of which nothing was said in the account of the council at Mizpeh given in chap. xx, 1-11. **Ac-**

Israel 'repented them for Benjamin their brother, and said, There is one tribe cut off from Israel this day. 7 How shall we do for wives for them that remain, seeing we have sworn by the LORD, that we will not give them of our daughters to wives? 8 And they said, What one *is there* of the tribes of Israel that came not up to Mizpeh to the LORD? And, behold, there came none to the camp from 'Jabesh-gilead to the assembly. 9 For the people were numbered, and, behold, *there were* none of the inhabitants of Jabesh-gilead there. 10 And the congregation sent thither twelve thousand men of the valiantest, and commanded them, saying, 'Go and smite the inhabitants of Jabesh-gilead with the edge of the sword, with the women and the children. 11 And this *is* the thing that ye shall do, 'Ye shall utterly destroy every male, and every woman that 'hath lain by man. 12 And they found among the inhabitants of Jabesh-gilead four hundred <sup>2</sup> young vir-

gins, that had known no man by lying with any male: and they brought them unto the camp to 'Shiloh, which *is* in the land of Canaan. 13 And the whole congregation sent *some* <sup>2</sup> to speak to the children of Benjamin 'that *were* in the rock Rimmon, and to 'call peaceably unto them. 14 And Benjamin came again at that time; and they gave them wives which they had saved alive of the women of Jabesh-gilead: and yet *so* they sufficed them not. 15 And the people <sup>2</sup> repented them for Benjamin, because that the LORD had made a breach in the tribes of Israel. 16 Then the elders of the congregation said, How shall we do for wives for them that remain, seeing the women are destroyed out of Benjamin? 17 And they said, *There must be* <sup>2</sup> an inheritance for them that be escaped of Benjamin, that a tribe be not destroyed out of Israel. 18 Howbeit we may not give them wives of our daughters: <sup>2</sup> for the children of Israel have sworn, saying, Cursed *be* he that

<sup>2</sup> Verse 15; Chapter 11. 35; 20. 23; 2 Samuel 2. 26.   
<sup>2</sup> g 1 Samuel 11. 1; 31. 11; 2 Samuel 2. 5, 6.   
<sup>2</sup> Verse 5; chapter 5. 23; 1 Samuel 11. 7.   
<sup>2</sup> Numbers 31. 17.—1 Hebrew, *knoweth the lying with man*.

<sup>2</sup> Heb. *young women virgins*.—<sup>2</sup> Josh. 18. 1.—3 Heb. *and spake and called*.—<sup>2</sup> Chap. 20. 47.—4 Or, *proclaim peace*, Deut. 20. 10.—<sup>2</sup> Verse 6.—<sup>2</sup> Num. 26. 55; 36. 7.—<sup>2</sup> Verse 1; chap. 11. 35.

cording to Henry, this oath was taken "while the general convention of the states was gathering together, and was waiting for a full house before they would proceed." But all the tribes felt bound by it. It was an age of fearful oaths and vows, and when such vows were once uttered it was not thought possible or honourable to be released from them. Witness the case of Jephthah.

8. **Came none . . . from Jabesh-gilead**—This was the chief city of the mountainous land of Gilead on the east of the Jordan, and its name is still preserved in the valley in which it was situated—*Wady Yabis*. Its exact site has not been positively ascertained, but there remains hardly a doubt that it was identical with the modern ruin ed-Deir, which lies on a hill on the south side of the wady Yabis, some six or seven miles east of the Jordan. "The name ed-Deir," says Dr. Robinson, "is often given to ruins of which the Arabs can make nothing else; while the existence of columns, and the position upon the road from Beisan to Jerash, are circum-

stances of great weight. The distance, too, of six miles from Pella, as specified by Eusebius and Jerome, seems entirely applicable to ed-Deir." The fact that none came from this city to fight against Benjamin has led some writers, with reason, to suspect that a secret alliance existed between this city and Benjamin.

10. **Go and smite**—They attempt to help one calamity by causing another. It is noticeable that in all this action it is not said that they asked counsel of Jehovah.

12. **Brought them unto the camp to Shiloh**—Shiloh was the seat of the tabernacle, and lay ten miles north of Beth-el, and hither, after sending the twelve thousand to smite Jabesh-gilead, the rest of the people seem to have removed their camp. The ark and Phinehas the high priest probably accompanied them on this occasion.

13. **Call peaceably unto them**—That is, proclaim to them a proclamation of peace, and invite them to their homes again.

16. **Wives for them that remain**—Two hundred were yet destitute of

giveth a wife to Benjamin. **19** Then they said, Behold, *there is a feast of the Lord in Shiloh* <sup>yearly, in a place which is on the north side of Beth-el, <sup>on the east side</sup> of the highway that goeth up from Beth-el to Shechem, and on the south of Lebonah.</sup> **20** Therefore they commanded the children of Benjamin, saying, Go and lie in wait in the vineyards; **21** And see, and, behold, if the

5 Heb. *from year to year.*—6 Or, *toward the sunrise.*—7 Or, *on.*

wives, for the virgins of Jabesh numbered but four hundred, and the remnant of Benjamin were six hundred.

**19. A feast of the Lord in Shiloh**—One of the great yearly festivals, which, notwithstanding the irregularities of the age, were still observed at the seat of the tabernacle. Compare 1 Sam. i, 3, note. The context shows that the festival occurred about this time. **Lebonah**—Identical with the modern village Lubban, about three miles north-west of Shiloh. The particular description here given of the location of Shiloh seems to have been given to the men sent to capture the dancing maidens there, and make off with them without hinderance.

**21. To dance in dances**—As did the women of the exodus under the leadership of Miriam, (Exod. xv, 20;) only they danced for triumph, these for pleasure. "There are not in eastern towns places where assemblies can be held for such festivities. It is, therefore, usual to assemble in such pleasant spots as may be in the neighbourhood—in any small valley through which a stream flows, near some secluded fountain, in gardens or plantations. The women especially affect this mode of enjoyment, which agreeably diversifies their somewhat monotonous existence. A few years ago the ladies of Aleppo bribed an astrologer to predict a coming plague, for no other reason than that they might—as they knew to be usual in such cases—be sent out of the way into the suburban gardens. That these festivities are held by the different sexes apart explains that there were no men present to oppose the Benjamites in carrying off their daughters and their sisters."—*Kitts*.

daughters of Shiloh come out <sup>to dance in dances</sup>, then come ye out of the vineyards, and catch you every man his wife of the daughters of Shiloh, and go to the land of Benjamin. **22** And it shall be, when their fathers or their brethren come unto us to complain, that we will say unto them, <sup>Be favourable unto them for our sakes: because we reserved not to</sup> <sup>each man his wife in the</sup>

p Exod. 15, 20; chap. 11, 24; 1 Sam. 18, 6; Jer. 31, 13. 8 Or, *Gratify us in them.*—q 1 Cor. 7, 2.

**22. Come unto us to complain**—Unto us, the elders and warriors of the nation. It seems that for four months or more (compare chap. xx, 47) the elders and the larger part of the army of Israel remained encamped at Beth-el and at Shiloh in order to settle the affairs of Benjamin, and provide against the utter ruin of that tribe. While thus encamped the fathers and brothers of the captured maidens would naturally appeal to them, especially as the children of Benjamin did this act by their command. Verse 20. **Be favourable unto them for our sakes**—That is, for the sake of our common nation and kindred do not seek to recover the captive maidens, or injure their captors, but be favourable unto them. Literally the Hebrew is, *Favour us as regards them*. Keil thinks that the elders proposed to speak these words in the name of Benjamin, in which case *us* refers to the Benjamites, and *them* to the maidens. But this is less natural than to understand that the elders speak in behalf of the common interests of Israel, and with special allusion, perhaps, to the fact that they themselves were personally involved in the seizure of the maidens, having counselled and commanded it. **Because we reserved not**—Rather, *because we did not take each man his wife in the war*. That is, in the war with Jabesh-gilead we did not succeed in capturing virgins enough to supply each man of the six hundred Benjamites with a wife. **For ye did not give unto them**—They were taken stealthily and by force; ye did not give your daughters and sisters unto them, so ye have not broken the oath which we all took that we would not give our daughters unto Benjamin to wife. Ver. 1.

war: for ye did not give unto them at this time, *that* ye should be guilty. **23** And the children of Benjamin did so, and took *them* wives, according to their number, of them that danced, whom they caught: and they went and returned unto their inheritance, and <sup>r</sup>repaired the cities, and dwelt in

<sup>r</sup>See chap. 20. 48.—<sup>s</sup> Chap. 17. 6; 18. 1; 19. 1.

**At this time . . . ye should be guilty**—Thus these words should be construed, and not according to the punctuation of our common version. The words might be better rendered, *as at the time ye would have been guilty*. More is implied than is said. The sense is, If ye had given these maidens freely, ye would have been guilty of violating your oath by which at the time ye were bound. This decision probably satisfied the people of Shiloh.

**23. Repaired the cities**—A great work for six hundred men to do, for all the cities of their tribe had been destroyed. Chap. xx, 48.

**24. Israel departed thence at that time**—As remarked in note on verse 22, the great body of the army remained encamped with the elders

them. **24** And the children of Israel departed thence at that time, every man to his tribe and to his family, and they went out from thence every man to his inheritance. **25** <sup>t</sup>In those days *there was* no king in Israel: <sup>t</sup>every man did *that which was* right in his own eyes.

<sup>t</sup>Deut. 12. 8; chap. 17. 6.

until these affairs of Benjamin were settled. So great a civil war demanded for a time afterwards a standing army.

**25. In those days there was no king in Israel**—With this familiar text, in part or in whole so frequently repeated in this book, the historian of the Dark Ages of Israel appropriately closes his narrative. And thus, says Wordsworth, "he prepares the way for the record of a better condition of things under David, the king of Judah and Israel, whose genealogy and history are described in the next following books of Ruth and Samuel, and who was the ancestor and type of the Divine King of Israel, JESUS CHRIST, to whom, with the FATHER and the HOLY GHOST, be ascribed all honour and glory, now and forever. Amen."



## INTRODUCTION TO THE BOOK OF RUTH.

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THIS romantic yet historic Hebrew idyl, which bears the name of its gentle heroine, is most appropriately inserted in our English Bibles between the Books of Judges and Samuel, for it is a supplement to the former, and affords a pleasing transition from its bloody narratives to the history of the rise of the Israelitish monarchy. It holds the same position in the Septuagint and Vulgate versions; and Josephus and some of the Christian Fathers seem to have regarded it and Judges as one book. But in the Hebrew Bibles it is placed in the Hagiography, between Canticles and Lamentations.

Its age and authorship are matters of uncertainty. According to the Talmud, Samuel was the author, and this has been a prevalent opinion. It seems, however, very clear, from the noticeable care in bringing out David's genealogy in chap. iv, 17-22, that the author must have lived as late, at least, as the time when David was thoroughly established on the throne of Israel. But this was after the death of Samuel. The reference to the Age of the Judges as past, (chap. i, 1,) and to customs no longer common, (chap. iv, 7; compare 1 Sam. ix, 9,) and the oath, "The Lord do so to me, and more also," (chap. i, 17,) so often used in the books of Samuel and Kings, and never elsewhere, lead us to suppose that the author of Ruth and the author of Samuel, if not the same person, were at least contemporary, and wrote as late as the closing years of David's reign.

The time of the events which it relates was "the days when the judges ruled." Chap. i, 1. This covered a period of three hundred years, and it is impossible to decide the exact point of time during all those years when the events of this book occurred. Some have supposed, from the genealogy of chap. iv, 22, that Obed was literally the grandfather of David, and therefore must have lived during the judgeship of Eli; but, as is shown in the notes on that genealogy, there have been names designedly omitted from that list of David's ancestors, not because they had become forgotten or unknown, but because the writer's object was, after the manner of the first two genealogies recorded in the Old Testament, (Gen. iv, 17-22, and v, 1-29,) to form a mnemonic record of ten prominent ancestral names. There may, therefore, have been a generation or two passed over between Obed and Jesse, so that no certain argument can be drawn from that quarter to decide the exact time of the events of this book. In the note on

chap. i, 1, we have suggested that the famine which caused Elimelech to migrate was caused by the Midianite oppression in the days of Gideon; but that is given only as a probable supposition, not by any means as an ascertained fact.

The history itself is of the most interesting character. It is, says Stanley, "one of those quiet corners of history which are the green spots of all time, and which appear to become greener and greener as they recede into the distance." Its worth is thus expressed by Kitto: "The simple and touching interest of the story, the beautiful and engaging rural scenery which it exhibits, the homely and honest manners which it describes, and the impressive and heartfelt piety which pervades the whole, render it the most remarkable picture of ancient life and usages extant, and give us a far more complete idea of the real conditions of Hebrew life, in the early ages of their settlement in Canaan, than we could otherwise possess. The young and the old read it with equally enwrapped interest; and we have known strong and rough voices break down with emotion in reading aloud some of the passages that occur in the progress of the narrative."

"The eighty-five verses of this little book," says Cassel, "enclose a garden of roses as fragrant and full of myatic calyxes as those which the modern traveller still finds blooming and twining about the solitary ruins of Israel and Moab, this side the Jordan and beyond. The significance and beauty of the brief narrative cannot be highly enough estimated, whether regard be had to the thought which fills it, the historical value which marks it, or the pure and charming form in which it is set forth. The narrative displays no hatred toward foreigners; gives no prominence to the keen discriminations of the Mosaic law against them, notwithstanding that they form the background of the story; does not blame the well-disposed Orpah, although she turns back; has not a word of reprehension for the anonymous relative who refuses to marry Ruth; but, in contrast to these facts, it causes the brightness of the blessing that lights on Ruth to become known. Orpah is forgotten; the name of the superstitious kinsman is unknown; but Ruth is the grandmother of David.

"The Book of Ruth does not preach by means of mighty deeds of war inspired by faith, like those of Gideon and Samson, but by acts of love, which demand no less strength of soul. God can be praised not only with timbrels and trumpets, but also in quietness and silence. There is a heroism of faith in the family, at the sick bed, and in grief for those we love, which is not inferior to that of Barak. Jephthah found it easier to triumph over Ammon than to subdue his sorrow on account of his daughter. It is often easier to die for the faith than, in the midst of men, to live for it.

"The Book tells of no prophetic woman like Deborah, in whom glowed the fires which rouse a nation to enthusiasm, but of women in whom burned the gentle flames of the household hearth, which distress and desertion cannot quench. The Book of Judges tells of a prophetess who was strong as a man; the Book of Ruth of a man who was tender as a woman. Our Book proposes not, like Daniel, to unveil the destinies of nations and the world; but at its close appears the son of David, into whose Godhead all history empties as the rivers into the ocean. No miracles occur in it like that of the three men in the fiery furnace, but it tells of three believing ones, who in the glowing heat of suffering and temptation were found strong and true."

We have called it above a romantic Hebrew idyl, for it has some of the finest features of a pastoral poem. Boaz appears as a noble minded, generous hearted man; a person of wealth and influence in his native city, and without a blot upon his name. Ruth is pictured before us as a woman of noble soul and unsullied virtue; of tenderest affection and most ardent faith. She appears in the barley fields of Beth-lehem as a beautiful stranger who has left home, and kindred, and native land, to unite her fortunes with Jehovah's people, and her praise is on many a tongue. No attempt is made to conceal her nationality; no such thought as that real worth and poverty are incompatible is entertained in that simple age; but the royal David's lineage is traced up through a poor gleaner of the harvest field, and she a stranger from among the hated Moabites; and the impression is given that all this is most honourable to the royal family. Hence appears the design of this little book: to preserve from oblivion a most interesting narrative, to shed a tender and romantic lustre on David's ancestral history, and prophetically to indicate, by this adoption of a Gentile woman into the royal genealogy, the final breaking down, through the Messiah, of all national partition walls, so that Jew and Gentile, high and low, become alike sons and daughters of the Lord Almighty, and joint heirs with Christ to a heavenly inheritance.

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# THE BOOK OF RUTH.

## CHAPTER I.

**N**OW it came to pass in the days when <sup>a</sup>the judges <sup>1</sup>ruled, that

<sup>a</sup> Judges 23. 16. — <sup>1</sup> Heb. *judged*. — <sup>b</sup> See Gen.

## CHAPTER I.

### SOJOURN OF ELIMELECH'S FAMILY IN MOAB, 1-5.

1. **When the judges ruled**—The age of the Judges extended from the death of Joshua's generation unto the time of Samuel's public resignation of his office at Gilgal, (1 Sam. xii,) when Saul was established king—a period, according to the common chronology, of more than three hundred years. See Introduction to Judges. **A famine in the land**—Perhaps that scarcity of food and suffering caused in the land of Israel by the seven years' oppression of the Midianites, whose devastations reached even to Gaza, and left no sustenance for man or beast. Judges vi, 4. According to verse 4, Naomi dwelt in the land of Moab about ten years, and verse 6 gives the impression that the famine continued in the land of Israel during most of this period, which comports well with the seven years of Midianitish rule. According to this supposition the events of this book of Ruth were contemporaneous with the judgeship of Gideon. **Beth-lehem-judah**—So called to distinguish it from another city of the same name in the tribe of Zebulun. Josh. xix, 15. It is situated about six miles south of Jerusalem. Its great celebrity is its being the birthplace of Ruth's divine descendant, Jesus the Messiah. Its ancient name was Ephrath or Ephratah. See, further, notes on Gen. xxxv, 19, and Matt. ii, 1. **Went to sojourn**—To reside for a

there was <sup>b</sup>a famine in the land. And a certain man of <sup>c</sup>Beth-lehem-judah went to sojourn in the country of Moab,

12. 10; 26. 1; 2 Kings 8. 1. — <sup>c</sup> Judges 17. 8.

time as a stranger; not to remain permanently. **The country of Moab**—Literally, *The fields of Moab*; the district east of the Dead sea, forty or fifty miles in length by twenty in width, peopled by the descendants of Moab, whose origin is narrated in Gen. xix, 30-37. See also notes on Num. xxi, 13, and Deut. ii, 9. This region has long lain waste, and the dangers of modern travel there have been so many that until quite recently few have ventured to explore it. Captains Irby and Mangles passed through it in 1818, and in their *Travels* describe the land as capable of rich cultivation, and, though now so deserted, yet presenting evidences of former plenty and fertility. In some places the form of fields is still visible, and the plains are covered with the sites of towns on every eminence or spot convenient for the construction of one. Wherever any spot is cultivated the corn is luxuriant, and the multitude and close vicinity of the sites of ancient towns prove that the population of the country was formerly proportioned to its fertility. In 1870 Professor Palmer passed through the fields of Moab, and his description of the country confirms that of Irby and Mangles. "The uplands are very fertile and productive; and, although the soil is badly tended by the few scattered Arab tribes who inhabit it, large tracts of pasture land and extensive corn fields meet the eye at every turn. Ruined villages and towns, broken walls that once enclosed gardens and

he, and his wife, and his two sons. **2** And the name of the man *was* Elimelech, and the name of his wife Naomi, and the name of his two sons Mahlon and Chilion, <sup>4</sup> Ephrathites of Beth-lehem-judah. And they came <sup>5</sup> into the country of Moab, and <sup>6</sup> continued there. **3** And Elimelech Naomi's husband

*d* See Gen. 35. 19.—*e* Judges 3. 30.—*2* Heb. *were*.

vineyards, remains of ancient roads—every thing in Moab tells of the immense wealth and population which that country must have once enjoyed." In the days of Ehud the Israelites were subject to the Moabites for the space of eighteen years, but under that judge the Moabites were "subdued," after which the land had rest fourscore years. Judges iii, 12–30. From this history of Ruth we find that amicable relations existed in her day between the two nations, so that Moab became a place of refuge for Israelitish emigrants. So, too, in later times, it continued to be an asylum for outcasts and wanderers. See 1 Sam. xxii, 3, 4; Isa. xvi, 3, 4; Jer. xl, 11, 12. **His two sons**—Who were, at the time of his emigration, unmarried.

2. The names of this family are significant. **Elimelech**—My God a king. **Naomi**—My pleasantness. Compare verse 20. **Mahlon**—Sickness. **Chilion**—Consumption. The sons were, perhaps, so named from having sickly constitutions, which resulted in their early death. **Ephrathites**—So called from the more ancient name of their native place, Ephrath. The same Hebrew word is also used as synonymous with Ephraimite. See Judges xii, 4, 5; 1 Sam. i, 1.

4. **They took them wives**—"A kind of phrase," says Kitto, "which usually occurs in a bad sense, as done without the concurrence of their parents, or not left so entirely to them as custom required." **Of the women of Moab**—The law condemned intermarriages with the Canaanitish tribes, but, inasmuch as Israel and Moab were descended from kindred ancestors, Abraham and Lot, not with the daughters of the Moabites, (Deut. vii, 3;) it commanded, however, that no Moabite,

died; and she was left, and her two sons. **4** And they took them wives of the women of Moab; the name of the one *was* Orpah, and the name of the other Ruth: and they dwelt there about ten years. **5** And Mahlon and Chilion died also both of them; and the woman was <sup>6</sup> left of her two sons and her husband.

*f* 2 Kings 4. 1; Psa. 34. 19; Heb. 12. 6, 10, 11.—*g* Isa. 49. 21.

even to the tenth generation, should enter the congregation of the Lord. Deut. xxiii, 3. In the days of Ezra and Nehemiah the law was so construed as to prohibit all intermarriage with foreigners. Exod. ix, and Neh. xiii.

But it was a distinguishing feature of the age of the Judges that every man did that which was right in his own eyes, (Judges xvii, 6;) the law was not enforced, and men forgot the commandments of the Lord and indulged in such looseness as even to intermarry with the idolatrous Canaanites. See Judges iii, 5, 6.

In this marriage of Ruth, the Moabitess, and Mahlon, the Beth-lehemite, we may now see the overruling hand of Providence, by which a Gentile woman is adopted into the family from which Christ had his human lineage, thus typifying the reception of the Gentiles into the kingdom of the Messiah, and the elevation, by the Gospel, of different nations above narrow sectional prejudices and partition-walls into feelings of a common brotherhood. "The story of Ruth has shed a peaceful light over what else would be the accursed race of Moab. We strain our gaze to know something of the long line of the purple hills of Moab, which form the background at once of the history and of the geography of Palestine. It is a satisfaction to feel that there is one tender association which unites them with the familiar history and scenery of Judea—that from their recesses, across the deep gulf which separates the two regions, came the Gentile ancestress of David and the Messiah."—Stanley.

5. **The woman was left of her two sons and her husband**—That is, she alone remained of the family that came from Beth-lehem. They emigrated from

**6** Then she arose with her daughters in law, that she might return from the country of Moab: for she had heard in the country of Moab how that the Lord had <sup>a</sup>visited his people in <sup>i</sup>giving them bread. **7** Wherefore she went forth out of the place where she was, and her two daughters in law with her; and they

<sup>a</sup> Exod. 4. 31; Luke 1. 68.—<sup>i</sup> Psa. 132. 15; Matt. 6. 11.—<sup>k</sup> See Josh. 24. 15.

the land of their people to escape the miseries of famine, but in the plentiful land of Moab death overtook them. The Targum and the Jewish writers generally regard these deaths as a judgment on the family of Elimelech for seeking comfort among idolaters, and intermarrying with them. Generally, those who are easily induced by losses or difficulties to change their places or pursuits in life seldom reap advantage from their changes. The bitter losses and changes of Naomi, however, were overruled by a wise and gracious Providence to the honour of her name and the blessing of the world.

#### NAOMI'S RETURN WITH RUTH TO BETH-LEHEM, 6-22.

Bereft of her husband and her sons, the desolate Naomi turns her heart towards the land of her people. To her Moab has been a land of sorrows, and though the graves of her beloved dead are there, they are so full of bitter recollections that she wishes not to linger near them. The ten years of her sojourn in these sunny, fertile fields of abundance have been to her worse than years of famine.

**6. She arose with her daughters in law**—She made known to them her intention to return on foot and alone to the land of Israel; and when the time of her departure came, Orpah and Ruth arose and went forth with her to bear her company a little way on her journey, perhaps undecided whether to go all the way with her or not. **She had heard**—Probably by some traveller that had recently passed through the land of Judea. But the tidings may not have reached her until several years after the famine had ceased, for sometimes intelligence travels with wonderful slowness in the East,

went on the way to return unto the land of Judah. **8** And Naomi said unto her two daughters in law, <sup>k</sup>Go, return each to her mother's house: <sup>i</sup>the Lord deal kindly with you, as ye have dealt with <sup>m</sup>the dead and with me. **9** The Lord grant you that ye may find <sup>n</sup>rest, each of you in the house of her husband.

<sup>l</sup> 2 Tim. 1. 16-18.—<sup>m</sup> Verse 5; chap. 2. 20.  
<sup>n</sup> Chap. 3. 1.

and particularly in that age, when there was probably very little intercourse between Israel and the surrounding nations. **The Lord had visited his people in giving them bread**—By raising up Gideon to end the oppression of the Midianites, who for seven years had consumed the produce of their fields, and by now causing the fields to yield unwonted abundance. The sacred historian sees in all this the hand of Jehovah.

**7. Her two daughters in law with her**—They would, as a matter of courtesy and love, accompany her a distance on her lonely journey. **They went on the way**—They all three went along together, as if all were started for Beth-lehem; they felt a common sympathy and sorrow, and could not bear to be separated.

**8. Go, return**—Thus, at length, the tearful Naomi herself breaks the silence of their grief. She feels that she would wrong these daughters of Moab to take them with her where, in all probability, they would be shut up to lasting widowhood. **Each to her mother's house**—She says *mother's* house rather than *father's*, for it is maternal tenderness and sympathy that best knows how to comfort and cheer a daughter in her sorrows. **As ye have dealt with the dead and with me**—Their life in Moab had been one of harmony and reciprocated kindnesses. No discord, no family feuds, had arisen among them; their sorrows came from the death of those they loved.

**9. That ye may find rest**—That is, that ye may be happily married again, and thereby obtain relief from the bereavement and sorrows which now afflict you. The estate of holy matrimony is well called a state of *rest*, for the natural affections and propensi-

Then she kissed them; and they lifted up their voice, and wept. **10** And they said unto her, Surely we will return with thee unto thy people. **11** And Naomi said, Turn again, my daughters: why will ye go with me? *are there yet any more sons in my womb,* that they may be your husbands? **12** Turn again, my daughters, go *your way*; for I am too old to have a husband. If I should say, I have hope, *if* I should

*o* Gen. 38. 11; Deut. 25. 5.—*3* Or, *If I were with a husband.*—*4* Heb. *hope.*—*5* Heb. *I have*

ties instinctively yearn for it, and in it alone find their lawful gratification. The Rabbins say: "The man is restless while he misses the rib that was taken out of his side; and the woman is restless till she gets under the man's arm, from whence she was taken." **She kissed them**—With such kisses as only a tender mother could imprint upon the objects of her lost sons' love. But those kisses bound them to her so that they could not tear themselves asunder.

**11. Why will ye go with me**—What purpose will it serve for you to accompany me further? What object of self-interest can ye have? **Are there yet any more sons**—This is said in allusion to the levirate law, which made it the duty of a person to marry his deceased brother's widow and thus preserve his brother's name and family. See the law, as detailed in Deut. xxv, 5–10, and note at the beginning of chap. iii. Naomi here reminds Ruth and Orpah, in the spirit of her age and country, that she has no more sons for them.

**12. I am too old to have a husband**—She urges, in addition, the utter improbability of her having another husband or other sons, and hence the propriety of their return to their mothers' homes, where, as young widows, they might be happily married again.

**13. It grieveth me much for your sakes**—More literally, *It is much more bitter to me than to you that,* etc. My hopes for earthly comfort in my own land are poorer than yours in Moab. **The hand of the Lord is gone out against me**—In my own family a severe and mysterious Providence has

have a husband also to night, and should also bear sons; **13** Would ye tarry for them till they were grown? would ye stay for them from having husbands? nay, my daughters; for *it grieveth me much for your sakes that* the hand of the Lord is gone out against me. **14** And they lifted up their voice, and wept again: and Orpah kissed her mother in law; but Ruth *clave* unto her. **15** And she said, Behold, thy sister in law is

*much bitterness.*—*p* Judges 2. 15; Job 19. 21; Psa. 32. 4; 38. 2; 39. 9, 10.—*q* Prov. 17. 17; 18. 24.

cut off all temporal hope for you and for me. This was indeed a source of grief. Keil observes that Naomi omitted to notice one possible case, namely, that her daughters in law might find other husbands in Judea. He supposes she did not hint at this chiefly from feelings of delicacy on account of their Moabitish descent, which would be an obstacle to their marriage among the Israelites.

**14. Orpah kissed her mother in law**—The last sad kiss of a tearful separation; after which she, unlike Ruth, turned back again to her people and her gods. The great deity of the Moabites was Chemosh. Num. xxi, 29; Judges xi, 24. **But Ruth clave unto her**—She would not leave nor forsake her. It was not merely because of a tender affection for her mother in law that she clung to her, but also a yearning desire to know more of the God and land of Israel. Compare chap. ii, 11, 12. Like Martha and Mary of New Testament history, Orpah and Ruth represent two different types of character. Orpah's home attachments, and desire to find rest in another husband's house, control and limit her life-influence and action. Ruth's loftier spirit discerns in the God of Israel the fountain of a purer religion than the Moabitish idolatry affords, and gladly forsakes father and mother and sister and native land to identify herself in any way with the people of Jehovah. Thus it is that, in some decisive moment, every soul that attains salvation makes its choice, by which it adopts the true Jehovah as its portion. It abandons all the former idolatries of its life, and becomes a true worshipper of the true God.

gone back unto her people, and unto her gods: "return thou after thy sister in law. **16** And Ruth said, "Entreat me not to leave thee, or to return from following after thee: for whither thou goest, I will go; and where thou lodgest, I will lodge: "thy people *shall be* my people, and thy God my God: **17** Where thou diest, will I die, and there will I be buried: "the Lord do so to me, and more also, *if aught* but death part thee and me. **18** "When she saw that she was steadfastly minded to go with her, then she left speaking unto her. **19** So they two went until they

came to Beth-lehem. And it came to pass, when they were come to Beth-lehem, that "all the city was moved about them, and they said, *"Is this Naomi?* **20** And she said unto them, Call me not "Naomi, call me "Mara: for the Almighty hath dealt very bitterly with me. **21** I went out full, "and the Lord hath brought me home again empty: why *then* call ye me Naomi, seeing the Lord hath testified against me, and the Almighty hath afflicted me? **22** So Naomi returned, and Ruth the Moabitess, her daughter in law, with her, which returned out of the country of Moab:

*r* Judges 11. 24. — *s* Josh. 24. 15, 19; 2 Kings 2. 2; Luke 24. 28. — *6* Or, *Be not against me.* — *t* 2 Kings 2. 2, 4, 6. — *u* Chap. 2. 11, 12. — *v* 1 Sam. 3. 17; 25. 23; 2 Sam. 19. 13; 2 Kings 6. 31.

— *w* Acts 21. 14. — *7* Heb. *strengthened herself.* — *x* Matt. 21. 10. — *y* See Isa. 23. 7; Lam. 2. 15. — *8* That is, *Pleasant.* — *9* That is, *Bitter.* — *a* Job 1. 21.

**16. Entreat me not to leave thee**—Nothing in all the range of literature can surpass the beauty and tenderness of Ruth's reply to Naomi, contained in this and the following verse. The Chaldee Paraphrase puts the passage in the following form: "And Ruth said, Entreat me not to leave and return from following after thee, for I desire to become a proselyte. Said Naomi, We are commanded to observe the Sabbath and good days, in not travelling more than two thousand cubits. Said Ruth, To every place whither thou goest I will go. Said Naomi, We are commanded not to lodge with the Gentiles. Said Ruth, Wheresoever thou lodgest I will lodge. Said Naomi, We are commanded to keep six hundred and thirteen precepts. Said Ruth, What thy people keep I will keep, as if they were my people from of old until now. Said Naomi, We are commanded not to worship with a strange worship. Said Ruth, Thy God shall himself be my God. Said Naomi, We have four kinds of capital punishment for criminals: stoning, burning, beheading, and hanging. Said Ruth, In whatever way thou diest I will die. Said Naomi, We have a house of burial. Said Ruth, And there will I be buried." Blessed are the human ties that lead us to God and heaven!

**17. The Lord do so to me**—Here is the first occurrence of that common formula of an oath by which the person swearing called down upon himself

a stroke of Divine judgment in case he kept not his word, nor carried out his resolution. Compare marginal references.

**19. They came to Beth-lehem**—The journey must have occupied several days. They knew not what awaited them. The future seemed full of darkness and sorrow, and they then little dreamed of the honours that were to crown their memory in the history of the chosen people. **All the city was moved about them**—The Beth-lehemites beheld with emotion their grief and loneliness, and heard with sorrow the story of their sad bereavement. Their sad history, we may suppose, was for a time on every lip, and even a matter of interesting conversation among the elders and most honourable of the city. Chap. ii, 11–12. **Is this Naomi**—As though they had said, Has the once cheerful and pleasant wife of the honoured Elimelech come to this state of sorrow?

**20. Call me not Naomi, call me Mara**—Naomi means *pleasant*, or, more exactly, *my pleasantness*; Mara signifies *bitter* or *sorrowful*. The mysterious and severe dispensations of the Almighty had turned all her former pleasures into bitterness and woe.

**21. I went out full**—That is, in the rich possession of a husband and two sons. **Home again empty**—Bereft of my most precious treasures, so that the cause of my pleasantness is gone.



and they came to Beth-lehem "in the beginning of barley harvest.

## CHAPTER II.

**A**ND Naomi had a "kinsman of her husband's, a mighty man of wealth, of the family of Elimelech; and his name *was* <sup>b</sup> Boaz. 2 And Ruth the

<sup>a</sup> Exod. 9. 31, 32; chap. 2. 23; 2 Sam. 21. 9.  
<sup>a</sup> Chap. 3. 2, 12.—<sup>b</sup> Chap. 4. 21.

22. **The beginning of barley harvest**—April is the month in which the barley harvest is chiefly gathered in, although it begins earlier in some parts of Palestine and later in others. The mention of the harvest at the time of Naomi's return contrasts suggestively with the notice of the famine which was the occasion of her emigration.

## CHAPTER II.

### RUTH GLEANING IN THE FIELD OF BOAZ, 1-23.

This chapter affords us a perfect picture of an oriental harvest scene. The traveller who at the present day passes, in the harvest time, through the fields of Beth-lehem, is struck with delight at beholding the rural incidents of the Book of Ruth passing in actual reality before his eyes. He sees vast numbers of reapers cutting barley, and companies of women and children gleaning behind them. He hears the salutations between master and servants in the very words of Boaz and his reapers. Here and there a company of reapers may be seen under a temporary booth taking their refreshment, and ready to extend to the traveller handfuls of parched corn; and at evening time the maidens sit down by the wayside and with a stick or a stone beat out what they have been gleaning through the day.

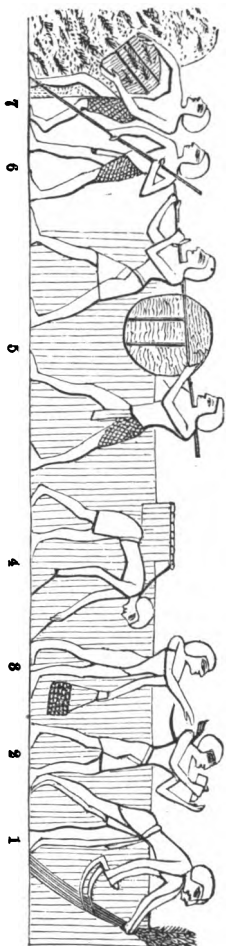
1. **A kinsman of her husband's**—An acquaintance and friend, and also a relative. But the Hebrew word is not the same as that rendered *kinsman* in verse 20 and chap. iii, 9, 12, 13. According to a Rabbinical tradition, Boaz was a nephew of Elimelech. He was a wealthy and influential citizen of Beth-lehem, and perhaps had also distinguished himself in war.

Moabitess said unto Naomi, Let me now go to the field, and "glean ears of corn after *him* in whose sight I shall find grace. And she said unto her, Go, my daughter. 3 And she went, and came, and gleaned in the field after the reapers: and her <sup>2</sup>hap was to light on a part of the field *belonging* unto Boaz, who *was*

1 Matt. 1. 5, *Boaz*.—<sup>c</sup> Lev. 19. 9; Deut. 24. 19.  
<sup>2</sup> Heb. *hap happened*.

2. **Let me now go to the field**—To this course she is prompted by love and care for her mother in law: and by gleaning she hopes to provide subsistence for them both in their loneliness, for they were doubtless poor and needy. She sees not now that this labour, undertaken in love, is to lead her to blessing and honour. **Glean**—Gather up what the reapers leave behind them. The right to glean was a legal privilege of the poor in Israel: "When ye reap the harvest in your land, thou shalt not make clean riddance of the corners of thy field when thou reapest, neither shalt thou gather any gleaning of thy harvest; thou shalt leave them unto the poor, and to the stranger." Lev. xiii, 22. See also Lev. xix, 9, and Deut. xxiv, 19-22. **Ears of corn**—Corn is in Scripture the generic word for grain of any kind, as barley, wheat, or rye. In Scotland the use of the word is restricted to *oats*, in America to *maize* or *Indian corn*. Ears of corn, as used of barley or wheat, means the heads, or seed ends, of the stalks. **After him in whose sight I shall find grace**—As yet she knew nothing of Boaz; she proposes to glean after him, whoever he may be, who will generously allow it. Though the law secured to the poor the right to glean, the owner of the harvest field had a right to nominate the persons who might glean after his reapers; otherwise the right to glean might have been carried to serious inconvenience and injury to the owners of the harvest.

3. **She went... and gleaned**—But not without first asking permission of the overseer of the reapers. Verse 7. **Her hap was**—To human observation her lighting upon Boaz's field was accidental; in the Divine economy it was providentially designed.



15 14 13 12 11 10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1



ANCIENT EGYPTIAN HARVEST SCENE.

1. The reapers; 2. A reaper drinking from a cup; 3, 4. Gleaners—the first of these asks the reaper to allow him to drink; 5, 6, 7. Carrying the ears of grain in a rope basket, and emptying them on the threshing-floor—the length of the stubble showing the ears alone are cut off; 8. Winnowing; 9, 10, 11. The threshing; 12, 13. Drinking from a water-skin suspended in a tree; 14. Scribe noting down the number of bushels measured from the heap; 15. Scribe checking the account by noting those taken away to the granary.

of the kindred of Elimelech. **4** And, behold, Boaz came from Beth-lehem, and said unto the reapers, "The Lord *be* with you. And they answered him, The Lord bless thee. **5** Then said Boaz unto his servant that was set over the reapers, Whose damsel *is* this? **6** And the servant that was set over the reapers answered and said, It *is* the Moabitish damsel "that came back with Naomi out of the country of Moab: **7** And she said, 'I pray you, let me

*d* Psa. 139. 7, 8; Luke 1. 23; 2 Thess. 3. 16.

**4. Boaz came from Beth-lehem**—His dwelling was in the city and his grainfield some distance out in the neighbouring country. **The Lord be with you. . . The Lord bless thee**—These salutations are well paraphrased by Dr. A. Clarke: "May God be with you to preserve you from accidents, and strengthen you to accomplish your work!" "May God bless THEE with the increase of the field, and grace to use his bounty to the glory of the Giver!" They impress us as beautiful indications of the pious and simple courtesy of the ancient Hebrew people. • Such salutations, both between equals and superiors and inferiors, are still common in the East, but a Moslem will not thus knowingly hail one of another religion.

**5. His servant that was set over the reapers**—An officer or steward whose business it was to oversee the work of the reapers and exercise authority in the absence of the owner. **Whose damsel is this**—That is, Whence comes she, and where does she belong? It seems that Boaz found her resting in the tent where the reapers were accustomed to take their meals. Compare verses 7, 14. Other maidens, too, were there, (verse 8,) but he saw that she was a stranger. "It may be supposed, also," says Cassel, "that her modest and reserved bearing served at once to mark her. She who had so long been mistress herself had not the look of those who have grown bold in beggary."

**6. The Moabitish damsel**—Boaz had heard of her, and had been much

glean and gather after the reapers among the sheaves: so she came, and hath continued even from the morning until now, that she tarried a little in the house. **8** Then said Boaz unto Ruth, Hearst thou not, my daughter? Go not to glean in another field, neither go from hence, but abide here fast by my maidens: **9** Let thine eyes *be* on the field that they do reap, and go thou after them: have I not charged the young men that they shall not touch thee? and

*e* Chap. 1. 22.—*f* Prov. 15. 23; 18. 23.

interested in her history, (verse 11,) but he had not seen her before, so that this was their first meeting.

**7. That she tarried a little in the house**—Literally, *This her resting in the house is little*. That is, This rest which you now see her taking in the tent has been but for a little time, for her toil has been most assiduous from early morning until now.

**8. My maidens**—These seem to have been women servants employed by Boaz, and they probably assisted the men by performing some of the lighter labours of reaping, such as making bands and arranging the form and size of the sheaves. There were also, perhaps, other gleaners in that field, who, before Ruth came, had obtained permission of Boaz to glean after his reapers, and whom he might also include among his maidens.

**9. That they do reap... go after them**—The words *they* and *them* refer respectively to the reapers and the maidens of Boaz, for in the Hebrew the verb קצרו *reap*, is in the masculine, and the suffix הן *them*, is in the feminine form.

In the absence of fences to mark the exact limits of Boaz's field, Ruth might, if she allowed herself to become far separated from his reapers, go unlicensed on another's possessions; hence the charge to keep near his maidens. **Have I not charged the young men**—From this remark it seems that the reapers were apt to be rude in their deportment towards defenceless females, if they received no charge from their masters. "Such precautions," says Dr. Thomson, "are not out of place at this day. The reapers are gathered from all parts of

when thou art athirst, go unto the vessels, and drink of *that* which the young men have drawn. **10** Then she 'fell on her face, and bowed herself to the ground, and said unto him, Why have I found grace in thine eyes, that thou shouldst take knowledge of me, seeing I *am* a stranger? **11** And Boaz answered and said unto her, It hath fully been showed me, 'all that thou hast done unto thy mother in law since the death of thine husband; and *how* thou hast left thy father and thy mother, and

the land of thy nativity, and art come unto a people which thou knewest not heretofore. **12** 'The Lord recompense thy work, and a full reward be given thee of the Lord God of Israel, 'under whose wings thou art come to trust. **13** Then she said, 'Let me find favour in thy sight, my lord; for that thou hast comforted me, and for that thou hast spoken 'friendly unto thine handmaid, 'though I be not like unto one of thine handmaidens. **14** And Boaz said unto her, At mealtime come thou

*g* 1 Sam. 25. 23.—*h* Chap. 1. 14, 16, 17.—*†* 1 Sam. 24. 19.—*k* Chap. 1. 16; Psa. 17. 8; 36. 7; 37. 1; 68. 7.

*3* Or, *I find favour*.—*l* Gen. 33. 15; 1 Sam. 1. 18.—*4* Heb. *to the heart*, Gen. 34. 3; Judges 19. 3.—*m* 1 Sam. 25. 41.

the country, and largely from the ruder class, and, living far from home, throw off all restraint, and give free license to their tongues, if nothing more." **Go unto the vessels**—This was doubtless a special indulgence to a gleaner. The harvest field was often at some distance from springs or wells, but the occasional refreshment of a drink of water was all important to the heated labourers; hence the vessels of water provided by the young men.

**10. Fell on her face**—Prostrated herself in the humblest attitude before him, so as to show her gratitude by ceremony as well as by word. See note



MODERN ORIENTAL PROSTRATION.

and cut at Matt. viii. 2. **Take knowledge of me**—Regard me with such sympathy, kindness, and care. **A stranger**—She was better known than she imagined.

**11. It hath fully been showed me**—The story of Ruth's bereavement, and of her sacrifices for and attachment to Naomi, had become a topic of conversation among the families of Beth-lehem, and touched a tender chord of sympathy in all who heard it. **Thou hast left thy father...mother...land**—Far back in the dark age of the Judges the Moabitish ancestress of the Messiah bears one of the heaviest crosses of the

Gospel age. Surely she showed herself worthy of New Testament discipleship, and for her recompense has already received in sacred history a hundredfold reward. Compare Matt. x, 37; xix, 29.

**12. Under whose wings thou art come to trust**—Jehovah in his care for his people is represented as an eagle fluttering over her young, and spreading abroad her wings over them. Compare Deut. xxxii, 11; Psa. lvii, 1; xci, 4. Boaz here speaks as the true Israelite, and recognises in Ruth the Moabitess a proselyte who has come to be incorporated with Jehovah's chosen people.

**13. Thou hast comforted me**—"To the humble mind of Ruth the words of Boaz were the first sunbeam that broke through the grief and tears of many weeks. Hitherto she had tasted only parting sorrow. Now, for the first time, she is addressed about the God of Israel and his grace. The full import of his words her humble heart does not presume to appropriate. But the kindness of the speaker's voice is for her like the sound of a bubbling spring in the desert to the thirsty. A word of love comes on a loving heart like hers, long afflicted by sorrow, like morning dews on a thirsty field."—*Cassel*. **Though I be not like unto one of thine handmaidens**—Though I be a stranger from a foreign land, and have done thee no service as these maidens who assist thy reapers, yet thou speakest to my heart words of comfort.

**14. At mealtime**—At the time of the noontide lunch. The principal meal

hither, and eat of the bread, and dip thy morsel in the vinegar. And she sat beside the reapers: and he reached her parched corn, and she did eat, and was sufficed, and left. **15** And when she was risen up to glean, Boaz commanded his young men, saying, Let her glean even among the sheaves, and reproach her not: **16** And let fall also some of the

handfuls of purpose for her, and leave *them*, that she may glean *them*, and rebuke her not. **17** So she gleaned in the field until even, and beat out that she had gleaned: and it was about an ephah of barley. **18** And she took *it* up, and went into the city; and her mother in law saw what she had gleaned: and she brought forth, and gave to her

n Verse 18.

5 Heb. *shame her not*.

was taken after the labours of the day were over. Chap. iii, 7. **Come thou hither**—Into the house (verse 7) or tent which was pitched in the harvest field for the accommodation of the reapers, and in which they kept their provisions and ate their meals. **Bread**—A generic word for *provisions*. The meaning is, Come and take of the provisions here in store. **Vinegar**—Wine or strong drink of some kind turned sour, which would form a nauseous draught if taken in any considerable quantity alone, (Psa. lxi, 21,) but served a useful purpose as a sop. "Pliny describes it as being refreshing to the spirits, binding and bracing the nerves, and very sustaining and strengthening for labour. The use of vinegar by reapers is alluded to by Theocritus in his tenth idyl."—*Kitto*. **She sat beside the reapers**—From this we may not infer that the two sexes ordinarily took their meals together, for this noontide lunch in the harvest field is no proper example of the ordinary domestic customs of the ancient families in Israel. Ruth came to this lunch by special invitation from Boaz. **He reached her parched corn**—In passing from Gaza to Hebron in May, 1838, Dr. Robinson saw nearly two hundred reapers and gleaners at work in one field. He saw some taking their refreshment, and as he passed they offered him some parched corn. The manner of its preparation, according to Dr. Thomson, is this: "A quantity of the best ears, not too ripe, are plucked, with the stalks attached. These are tied into small parcels, a blazing fire is kindled with dry grass and thorn bushes, and the corn heads are held in it until the chaff is mostly burned off. The grain is thus sufficiently roasted to be

eaten, and it is a favourite article all over the country." Mr. Tristram gives a similar description of the parching of grain which he witnessed in northern Palestine in May of 1864. He and his party were invited to partake, and he adds: "We found the dish by no means unpalatable. The green ears had become half-charred by the roasting, and there was a pleasant mingling of milky wheat and a fresh crust flavour as we chewed the parched corn."

**15. Let her glean even among the sheaves**—This was evidently a rare privilege, not at all allowed to ordinary gleaners. **Reproach her not**—Or, as in the margin, *Shame her not*. Offer her no injury or annoyance either by word or deed. See note on verse 9.

**16. Handfuls of purpose for her**—"These directions of Boaz went far beyond the bounds of generosity and compassion for the poor, and show that he felt a peculiar interest in Ruth, with whose circumstances he was well acquainted, and who had won his heart by her humility, her faithful attachment to her mother in law, and her love to the God of Israel—a fact important to notice in connection with the further course of the history."—*Keil*.

**17. Beat out... had gleaned**—This process is often witnessed by the modern traveller in the East. In passing a harvest field near Gaza, Robinson observes: "Several women were beating out with a stick handfuls of the grain which they seemed to have gleaned." **About an ephah**—About a bushel and a half, a large amount for a gleaner to gather in a single day.

**18. Her mother in law saw**—With manifest surprise at the large quantity of her day's gleanings. **She brought forth**—Out of a wallet, according to

'that she had reserved after she was sufficed. **19** And her mother in law said unto her, Where hast thou gleaned to day? and where wroughtest thou? blessed be he that did 'take knowledge of thee. And she showed her mother in law with whom she had wrought, and said, The man's name with whom I wrought to day *is* Boaz. **20** And Naomi said unto her daughter in law, 'Blessed *be* he of the LORD, who 'hath not left off his kindness to the living and to the dead. And Naomi said unto

*o* Verse 14; John 6. 12, 13; 1 Tim. 5. 4.—*p* Verse 10; Psa. 41. 1.—*q* Chap. 3. 10; 2 Sam. 2. 5; Job 29. 13.

the Targum. **That she had reserved**—Namely, of the superabundance of parched corn which Boaz had given her. Verse 14.

**20. Blessed be...the Lord**—That was a joyful evening both to Naomi and Ruth, and the Israelitish mother's heart was filled with thanksgiving towards Jehovah. **Kindness to the living and to the dead**—By *the living* she means herself and Ruth; by *the dead* her deceased husband and sons. He who provides for the widow and the fatherless does at the same time a kindness to those dead ones who can provide for them no more. In these words we may also recognise the true Israelites' consciousness of immortality. To Naomi the beloved dead are not annihilated, and Jehovah's kindness towards them has not ceased with their departure from this world. Jehovah is still the God of Elimelech and his departed sons, just as He declared himself to be "the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob." Exod. iii. 6. He lovingly preserves them in conscious existence and blessedness though they die. From this lofty point of view Jesus urged his mighty argument against the Sadducees, "God is not the God of the dead, (the annihilated,) but of the living." Matt. xxii. 32. **One of our next kinsmen**—One whose right and duty it is to redeem the name and inheritance of a deceased blood relative. Naomi had doubtless before this instructed her Moabitish daughter in law on the nature and requirements of the levirate among the Israelites. See note at the beginning of chap. iii.

her, The man *is* near of kin unto us, "one of our next kinsmen. **21** And Ruth the Moabitess said, He said unto me also, Thou shalt keep fast by my young men, until they have ended all my harvest. **22** And Naomi said unto Ruth her daughter in law, *It is* good, my daughter, that thou go out with his maidens, that they 'meet thee not in any other field. **23** So she kept fast by the maidens of Boaz to glean unto the end of barley harvest and of wheat harvest; and dwelt with her mother in law.

*r* Prov. 17. 17.—6 Or, *one that hath right to redeem*. See Lev. 25. 25.—*s* Chap. 3. 9; 4. 6.—7 Or, *fall upon thee*.

**22. Not in any other field**—This was prudent counsel for Ruth, for in a strange field she would be exposed to annoyances and possible insults, from which in Boaz's possessions she was now happily shielded by his careful charges to the reapers.

### CHAPTER III.

#### RUTH'S APPEAL TO BOAZ TO REDEEM HER, 1-18.

To understand the incidents of this chapter we must have before us the ancient custom and laws of *levirate* marriage, so called from the Latin word *levir*, a brother in law. We meet the first instance of it in Gen. xxxviii, 8, where Judah calls upon his younger son Onan to marry Er's widow, and thus preserve his brother's name. The custom, however, was not peculiar to the Hebrews solely, but has been found to exist in several eastern countries. The Mosaic law on the subject is given in Deut. xxv, 5-10, and is in substance as follows: If a man die and leave no children, his brother is under obligations to marry the widow, and she has a right to demand it of him. This obligation, however, is not absolutely binding. If the levir refuses to take her, he is brought before a council of the elders and publicly alleges his dislike to take her, and there his brother's wife unlooses his shoe from off his foot, and spits in his face, and says, So shall it be done unto the man that will not build up his brother's house. From this book of Ruth we see that the levirate law was so construed that in case the

## CHAPTER III.

**T**HEN Naomi her mother in law said unto her, My daughter, \* shall I not seek \* rest for thee, that it may be well

a1 Cor. 7. 36: 1 Tim. 5. 8. — b Chap. 1. 9.

deceased husband had no surviving brother the obligation to marry his widow devolved upon his next nearest kinsman. The Hebrew word for this kinsman is *gōēl*, which means a *redeemer*. Its root is the exact equivalent of the Greek *λύω*, to *loose*, from which comes the New Testament *λύτρον*, a *ransom*. "The meaning of the word is profoundly set forth in the various grand historical unfoldings of its idea. According to the social philosophy of the Mosaic law no member of the national organism was to perish, no branch of the tree was to wither: whatever had been dislocated by natural events was to be reset; whatever had been alienated must be redeemed. This applied to lands as well as to persons; and the duty of redemption rested, as within the nation, so within the families into which the nation branched out. No one could redeem any thing for a family who did not belong to it by blood relationship. The great Liberator of Israel is God. He frees from servitude. For that reason the Messiah, who delivers Israel, is called *Gōēl*—*Redeemer*. When he appears he will come as Israel's blood-relation and brother, as Christ truly was.

"The dismal counterpart of the *gōēl* as redeemer and deliverer is the *gōēl* as blood-avenger. He owes his origin to the opinion, which slowly and painfully disappeared in Israel, but which is still partially prevalent in the East, and inspires many current superstitions, that the blood of the slain cannot be put to rest and liberated until his murderer has been killed. The duty of this blood-revenge rests upon the blood relatives, not only on the brother, strictly so called, but on the nearest relative, whoever he may be. So far this terrible usage becomes instructive with reference to the beneficent national custom which made it the duty of the blood-relative not to let the house of his kins-

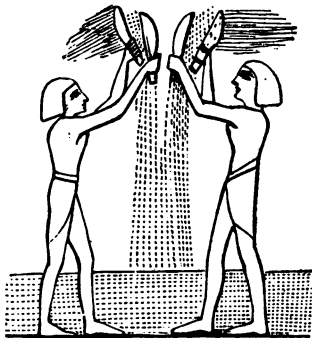
with thee? **2** And now is not Boaz of our kindred, \* with whose maidens thou wast? Behold, he winnoweth barley to night in the threshingfloor. **3** Wash

c Chap. 2. 8.

man die out; for this also was a blood-redemption, not unto death, however, but unto happiness and peace. The *gōēl* was no judge, but a comforter, a dispenser of life and love."—*Cassel*.

**1. Naomi . . . said**—All through that memorable barley harvest, from the evening when Ruth showed her the results of her first day's gleanings in the field of Boaz until the time of this utterance, had the now hopeful Naomi been planning that to which she here advises her daughter in law. **Seek rest**—See note on chap. i. 9.

**2. He winnoweth barley to night**—The night was chosen for the purpose because of the breeze which usually set in with the cool of the day. "The winnowing was performed by throwing up the grain with a fork against the



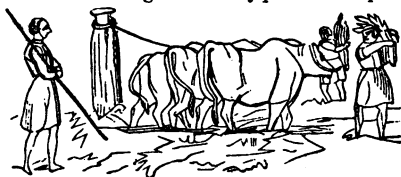
EGYPTIAN WINNOWING.

wind, by which the broken straw and chaff were dispersed, and the grain fell to the ground. The grain was afterwards passed through a sieve to separate the morsels of earth and other impurities, and it then underwent a final purification by being tossed up with wooden scoops or short-handled shovels, such as we see figured in the monuments of Egypt."—*Kitto*. **The threshingfloor**—This was a level plot of ground of a circular shape, generally

thyself therefore, <sup>a</sup> and anoint thee, and put thy raiment upon thee, and get thee down to the floor: *but* make not thyself known unto the man, until he shall have done eating and drinking. 4 And it shall be, when he lieth down, that thou shalt mark the place where he shall lie, and thou shalt go in, and <sup>1</sup>uncover his feet, and lay thee down; and he will tell thee what thou shalt do. 5 And she said unto her, All that thou sayest unto me I will do. 6 And she went down

<sup>d</sup> 2 Sam. 14. 2; Psa. 104. 15; Eccles. 9. 8.  
<sup>1</sup> Or. *lift up the clothes that are on his feet.*

about fifty feet in diameter, and beaten down to a hard, smooth surface. Upon this the sheaves of grain were thrown, and the threshing was usually performed



ORIENTALS TREADING OUT GRAIN.

by driving cattle over them: the Scriptural mode of "treading out the corn."

3. **Wash . . . anoint . . . raiment** — Arrange and prepare thy person in the most attractive form, as a bride for her nuptials.

4. **Uncover his feet, and lay thee down** — Viewed in the light of our own age this act would be in the highest degree immodest and presumptuous, but not so according to the laws and manners of that ancient time. We have seen that according to the levirate law Ruth had a right to claim the favour of marriage from her deceased husband's nearest unmarried kinsman, and therefore this act, instead of being a compromise of her virtue, was regarded by Boaz as prudent and worthy of praise. See verses 10, 11. Doubtless the reason of Naomi's advising this course to Ruth was, that she thought it would be more likely to succeed than any other form in which she could make known her desire to Boaz.

7. **When Boaz had eaten** — This was the evening meal, taken after the

unto the floor, <sup>a</sup> and did according to all that her mother in law bade her. 7 And when Boaz had eaten and drunk, and <sup>1</sup>his heart was merry, he went to lie down at the end of the heap of corn: and she came softly, and uncovered his feet, and laid her down. 8 And it came to pass at midnight, that the man was afraid, and <sup>2</sup>turned himself: and, behold, a woman lay at his feet. 9 And he said, Who *art* thou? And she answered, I *am* Ruth thine handmaid:

<sup>a</sup> Exod. 20. 12; Psa. 1. 8; Eph. 6. 1, 3. — <sup>f</sup>Judges 13. 6, 9, 23; 2 Sam. 13. 23; Esther 1. 10. — 2 Or, *took hold on.*

labours of the day were over. **His heart was merry** — He was cheerful and happy over a bountiful harvest, and probably also with the drinking of wine. **At the end of the heap of corn** — The winnowed grain was left over night lying in a heap, and this exposed the threshing floors to the danger of being robbed. See 1 Sam. xxiii. 1. "We have on various occasions," says Thomson, "seen the summer threshing floors in the open country, and the owners sleeping at them to prevent stealing." And Captain Postans remarks: "Natives of the East [usually] care little for sleeping accommodations, but rest where weariness overcomes them, lying on the ground. They are, however, careful to cover the feet, and to do this they have a sheet of coarse cloth that they tuck under the feet, and, drawing it up over the body, suffer it to cover the face and head. An oriental seldom changes his position, and we are told that Boaz did so because *he was afraid*; the covering of the feet in ordinary cases is consequently not disturbed. I have frequently observed, when riding out in a native city before dawn, figures with their feet so covered, lying like monumental effigies in the pathway, and in the open verandahs of the houses."

8. **The man was afraid** — Finding the covering of his feet removed, he feared that robbers might have entered his floor; but not knowing what was the matter he **turned himself**, that is, bent over or forward to see and feel who or what the intruder was.



\*spread therefore thy skirt over thine handmaid; for thou art <sup>2b</sup>a near kinsman. 10 And he said, 'Blessed be thou of the Lord, my daughter: for thou hast showed more kindness in the latter end than <sup>a</sup>at the beginning, inasmuch as thou followedst not young men, whether poor or rich. 11 And now, my daughter, fear not; I will do to thee all that thou requirest: for all the <sup>c</sup>city

<sup>g</sup> Ezek. 16, 8.—<sup>3</sup> Or, *one that hath right to redeem*.—<sup>h</sup> Chap. 2, 20; verse 12.—<sup>i</sup> Chap. 2, 20.—<sup>k</sup> Chap. 1, 8.

9. **Spread...thy skirt over thine handmaid**—Literally, *spread thy wing*. The meaning is, Take me into the protection and intimacy of the marriage relation. The figure, taken originally from birds that cover their young with their wings for protection, is appropriately used of the marriage state. Thus in Ezek. xvi, 8, Jehovah represents himself as spreading his wing over Jerusalem in the time of love, and thus taking her to wife. Also in Deut. xxii, 30, and xxvii, 20, a man guilty of incest is represented as one that uncovereth his father's wing, or skirt, because he meddles with that which is closed and legally sealed to all but the married pair. **Thou art a near kinsman**—A *go'el*, from whom I have a legal right to claim this relation.

10. **More kindness in the latter end**—כֶּדֶן, *kindness*, is often used in the sense of *piety*, moral and religious *goodness*. Such is the meaning here, and the passage should be read, *Thou hast made thy latter act of piety better than the former*. Her former act of piety was her devotion to the memory of her deceased husband and to her mother in law, and her forsaking of father and mother and native land to become a proselyte to the Hebrew faith. Her latter piety was shown, as Boaz proceeds to state, in her not following after young men to seek to win a youthful husband; but, in strict observance of the laws and customs of the Hebrew people, by coming and claiming him as her kinsman.

11. **A virtuous woman**—Literally, *a woman of strength*. It corresponds with the common expression, *man of valour*. Ruth was strong in all that con-

of my people doth know that thou art <sup>a</sup>a virtuous woman. 12 And now it is true that *I am thy* <sup>m</sup> near kinsman: howbeit <sup>n</sup>there is a kinsman nearer than I. 13 Tarry this night, and it shall be in the morning, *that* if he will <sup>o</sup>perform unto thee the part of a kinsman, well; let him do the kinsman's part: but if he will not do the part of a kinsman to thee, then will I do the part of a kins-

<sup>4</sup> Heb. *gate*.—<sup>i</sup> Prov. 12, 4.—<sup>m</sup> Verse 9.—<sup>n</sup> Chap. 4, 1.—<sup>o</sup> Deut. 25, 5; chap. 4, 5; Matt. 22, 24.

stitutes female excellence and worth. She was not merely *virtuous*, in the sense of chaste, but she was full of virtues. "Boaz, no doubt, knew her general character, and knew also that in the present instance she acted in accordance with the advice of her mother in law, who had taught her that she not only had a right to claim Boaz for her husband, but that she was precluded by the law of God from forming any other reputable connexion. Boaz also remembered that he was old, and she young and attractive; and, though from the heathen Moabites, yet she preferred to walk in the sober path of honest married life rather than to associate with the young and the gay, by whom, it is intimated, she had been tempted. He was therefore fully justified in ascribing to this very act an honourable and virtuous principle, notwithstanding the apparent violation of modesty and propriety; and in this he judged correctly, for such was the fact."—*Thomson*.

12. **There is a kinsman nearer than I**—From this it appears that Naomi had laboured under some mistake. Probably she was ignorant of the existence of a nearer kinsman than Boaz; or she may have known that nearer kinsman, and also that it would have marred his inheritance to have redeemed that of her husband, Elimelech. Compare chap. iv, 6.

13. **Tarry this night**—For it would have been dangerous for her to return alone to the city in the darkness of midnight; but in the early morning, before one can readily recognise another, women may be seen in the East going forth on some errand or work.

man to thee, <sup>as</sup> the LORD liveth: lie down until the morning. **14** And she lay at his feet until the morning: and she rose up before one could know another. And he said, 'Let it not be known that a woman came into the floor. **15** Also he said, Bring the <sup>veil</sup> that *thou hast* upon thee, and hold it. And when she held it, he measured six *measures* of barley and laid it on her: and she went into the city. **16** And when she came to her mother in law, she said, Who *art* thou, my daughter? And she

*p* Judges 8. 19; Jer. 4. 2.—*q* Rom. 12. 17; 14. 16; 1 Cor. 10. 32; 2 Cor. 8. 21; 1 Thess. 5. 22.

**14. Let it not be known**—Thus Boaz charged Ruth and whoever else might have known that she had been there, for both his reputation and hers would suffer if that fact at once became known.

**15. Bring the veil**—The long loose wrapper in which the eastern women envelope themselves when out of doors. Among the poorer classes its material is strong and coarse enough not to be at all damaged by the use here made of it. **Six measures**—How large the measures were we have no means of ascertaining, and conjecture is vain. The Chaldee paraphrase has the following: "He measured six seahs (nearly two bushels!) of barley, and placed it upon her, and she received strength from the Lord to carry it, and immediately it was said in prophecy that there should come of her the six righteous ones of the world, each one of whom should be blessed with six benedictions—David, and Daniel and his companions, and King Messiah." **She went into the city**—Rather, *He went*, etc., for the form of the verb is masculine, and the meaning is, that he gave her the barley and sent her away, and then he also went into the city.

**16. Who art thou, my daughter**—That is, In what character dost thou return—as the espoused of Boaz, or only still a desolate widow?

**18. Sit still**—Stay quietly at home. **How the matter will fall**—Whether that nearer kinsman will redeem thee, or yield his right to Boaz. **The man will not be in rest**—His actions and his oath (verse 13) show that he will quickly bring the matter to an issue.

told her all that the man had done to her. **17** And she said, These six *measures* of barley gave he me; for he said to me, Go not empty unto thy mother in law. **18** Then said she, 'Sit still, my daughter, until thou know how the matter will fall: for the man will not be in rest, until he have finished the thing this day.

#### CHAPTER IV.

**T**HEN went Boaz up to the gate, and sat him down there: and, behold, <sup>the</sup> kinsman of whom Boaz spake came

*5* Or, *sheet*, or, *apron*.—*r* Psa. 37. 3, 5; Isa. 30. 7.—*a* Chap. 3. 12.

#### CHAPTER IV.

**THE COUNCIL AT THE GATE OF BETH-LEHEM, 1-12.**

Closely connected with the customs and the law of levirate marriage was another law concerning the redemption of property. Jehovah claimed the land of Israel as his, and commanded that it should never be sold by his people. Therefore an inheritance was not allowed to pass permanently into the hands of another family than that whose original possession it was. If through poverty one was obliged to sell a piece of land from the family estate, (as Naomi, see verse 3,) it was the duty of the nearest kinsman to redeem it. He who acted as redeemer in such cases purchased, properly speaking, not the land itself, but the use of it until the next year of Jubilee. See the law, as detailed in Lev. xxv, 23-34. But in case the kinsman performed the double part of buying the property and marrying the widow, then the inheritance would pass to the offspring of that marriage, and thus the kinsman would build up his brother's house.

This chapter affords us a life-picture of an ancient court of justice assembled to arbitrate a case under the above-mentioned law. Every circumstance serves in some measure to illustrate the simplicity of that age.

**1. Went . . . up to the gate**—Not from the harvest field, for, according to chap. iii, 15, (see note,) he went into the city after he sent Ruth away; but he went up from his house in the city. The gate itself may have been on no higher

by; unto whom he said, Ho, such a one! turn aside, sit down here. And he turned aside, and sat down. **2** And he took ten men of the elders of the city, and said, Sit ye down here. And they sat down. **3** And he said unto the kinsman, Naomi, that is come again out of the country of Moab, selleth a parcel of land, which ~~was~~ our brother Elime-

b1 Kings 21. 9; Prov. 31. 23.—1 Heb. *I said I will reveal in thine ear.*

elevation than his own house, but, being the place of judgment, and therefore a place of honour in the eyes of the people, his going to it is spoken of as a going up. **Sat him down there**—As one that had an important case for judgment. From the earliest times the gates of cities were the places where the courts of justice were held. The custom probably grew out of the fact that the gates were places easy of access to all the people, and witnesses and other persons concerned could come there with least inconvenience. See note on Matt. xvi, 18. Compare also Genesis xxiii, 10, 18; xxiv, 20; Deut. xvi, 18–20; xvii, 8; Josh. xx, 4; 1 Kings xxii, 10. **Ho, such a one**—An idiomatic expression. **לְמוֹנִי אֶלְמוֹנִי**, *Pe-loni almoni*; that is, *Mr. Such a one, of such a place*. Boaz probably called the kinsman by his proper name, but the author of this book has substituted for it this idiomatic phrase.

**2. Elders of the city**—Whose years and judgment gave weight to all their decisions. Why **ten** were called does not appear, but perhaps that was the number required to constitute a court.

**3. Naomi... selleth a parcel of land**—According to the law, (Numbers xxvii, 8–11,) when a man died and left no son, his property passed to his daughter; if he had no daughter, it passed to his brethren; if he had no brethren, it passed to his father's brethren; and in case his father had no brethren, it passed to his next nearest kinsman. In no case did it pass to the wife of the deceased. Hence comes the question, What right had Naomi to sell Elimelech's property? The solu-

tion of the difficulty is probably this, that, as the law did not designate the time when the proper heirs took possession of the inheritance, custom did not allow it to pass to them while the widow of the deceased was living. Naomi therefore would have the control of Elimelech's property as long as she lived, and the selling of it was, as we have shown in the note at the head of this chapter, not a permanent disposal, but an annual renting of it till the year of jubilee.

c Jeremiah 32. 7, 8.—d Genesis 23. 13.—e Leviticus 25. 25.

**4. I thought to advertise thee**—Literally, as margin, *I said, I will reveal in thine ear*. That is, I will make known the matter to thee. **Before the inhabitants**—Those of the inhabitants of the city who are sitting here to witness the judgment of this case. The gate of the city was usually thronged by a concourse of people, who would naturally resort thither to while away their leisure hours, and hear all passing news. **If thou wilt not redeem**—The Hebrew has the third person, **לֹא יִקְדֹּם**, *if he will not redeem*.

This reading may be defended on the supposition that Boaz at this point of his discourse turned to the elders and spoke of his kinsman in the third person. But the English version is more natural, and is supported by the Septuagint and several Hebrew MSS. **I will redeem it**—It would add so much to his own estate to procure also the property of the deceased Elimelech. Not knowing the condition which Boaz makes known in the next verse, he supposed that he would only have to pay Naomi a certain annual allowance till her death, and then the inheritance would pass to him as the lawful heir.

est the field of the hand of Naomi, thou must buy *it* also of Ruth the Moabitess, the wife of the dead, 'to raise up the name of the dead upon his inheritance. 6 'And the kinsman said, I cannot redeem *it* for myself, lest I mar mine own inheritance: redeem thou my right to thyself; for I cannot redeem *it*. 7 'Now this *was the manner* in former time in Israel concerning redeeming and con-

cerning changing, for to confirm all things; a man plucked off his shoe, and gave *it* to his neighbour: and this *was* a testimony in Israel. 8 Therefore the kinsman said unto Boaz, Buy *it* for thee. So he drew off his shoe. 9 And Boaz said unto the elders, and *unto* all the people, 'Ye *are* witnesses this day, that I have bought all that *was* Elimelech's, and all that *was* Chilion's and Mahlon's,

\*Genesis 33. 8; Deuteronomy 25. 5, 6; chapter 2. 12; Matthew 22. 24.

g Chap. 3. 12, 13. — *h* Deut. 25. 7, 9. — *i* Gen. 28. 16, 18; Jer. 32. 10, 12.

5. **Thou must buy it also of Ruth**—The estate of Elimelech would have been Chilion and Mahlon's had they lived. Chilion's widow had gone to her mother's house in Moab, and perhaps married again, so that she had no legal claim on the property; but Mahlon's widow, Ruth, had clung to Naomi, and therefore while she lived had a share with her mother in law in Mahlon's inheritance. Naomi was too old to expect a husband, (chap. i. 12,) or to claim of her deceased husband's kinsmen the duty of the levirate marriage. But not so Ruth, who was young and beautiful, and had a right to ask in marriage the man who redeemed the inheritance of Mahlon. **To raise up the name of the dead**—According to the law (Deut. xxv, 6) the firstborn of the levirate marriage succeeded in the name of the deceased husband of his mother. Thus the family to whom the deceased belonged did not become extinct in Israel. See on verse 10.

6. **I cannot**—This kinsman already had, according to the Targum and the general supposition of interpreters, a wife and children. Accordingly, had he married Ruth, his children by her would have succeeded to Elimelech's estate, and so his **own inheritance** would not only have received no addition, but might have suffered much by having his time and attention largely drawn from it in care for the interests of another. Others suppose that it was Ruth's Moabitish nationality that formed the ground of this kinsman's refusal to marry her. The death of Elimelech's sons may have been popularly attributed to their marriage with Moabitish women, and this kinsman feared that by attempting to redeem

his relative's estate he would involve himself in like misfortunes.

7. **The manner in former time**—This remark implies that the custom was no longer in use when this book was written. **Concerning redeeming and concerning changing**—That is, concerning the buying and exchanging of property. **A man plucked off his shoe**—"The custom itself, which existed among the Indians and the ancient Germans, arose from the fact that fixed property was taken possession of by treading upon the soil; and hence taking off the shoe and handing it to another was the symbol of the transfer of a possession or right of ownership."—*Keil*. "The shoe symbolized a possession which one actually had, and could tread with his feet at pleasure."

—*Cassel*. **A testimony in Israel**—Rather, *an attested usage: a custom in Israel*. This custom, it will be observed, is not precisely the same as that recorded Deut. xxv, 9, in which the widow that claimed the right of marriage came into the presence of the elders and loosed the shoe, and spat in the face of the man who refused to marry her. This nearest kinsman of Elimelech could not properly marry Ruth, and therefore the transaction between him and Boaz at the gate of the city was but an honourable transfer to his relative of his right to redeem the inheritance. It was but an instance of the ancient Israelitish custom *concerning redeeming and changing*. But the custom of Deut. xxv, 9, is said to be still in use among the Jews in some localities, and Burckhardt tells us that the modern Arabs, in speaking of a repudiated wife, say, "She was my slipper; I have cast her off."

of the hand of Naomi. **10** Moreover Ruth the Moabitess, the wife of Mahlon, <sup>2</sup> have I purchased to be my wife, to raise up the name of the dead upon his inheritance, <sup>1</sup> that the name of the dead be not cut off from among his brethren, and from the gate of his place: <sup>2</sup> ye *are* witnesses this day. **11** And all the people that *were* in the gate, and the elders, said, *We are witnesses.*

<sup>1</sup> Gen. 29, 18, 19; Prov. 18, 22; 19, 14; Hos. 3, 2.  
<sup>2</sup> Deut. 25, 6.—<sup>m</sup> Isa. 8, 2, 3; Mal. 2, 14.—  
<sup>n</sup> Psa. 127, 3; 128, 3.—<sup>o</sup> Deut. 25, 9.

**10. That the name of the dead be not cut off**—The name of the child borne unto Boaz by Ruth was not called Mahlon, the name of the deceased husband, but Obed. Verse 17. To the question why this was so, Patrick answers that what Boaz did was in obedience to the law in Dent. xxv, 6, for he was not the brother of Mahlon, but only a remote kinsman, and therefore not bound by the strict letter of the law in giving a name to the child. But the passage in Dent. xxv, 6, need not be pressed to mean that, even if the redeemer be a brother, the child born of the levirate marriage must literally bear the name of the deceased brother; but rather, that all the facts of the case should be made known and preserved, as has been done in this history before us. Thus the name and memory of the dead Elimelech and of Mahlon were not cut off from among their brethren, nor from the gate of their native city, although the child of Ruth was not called after either of them.

**11. All the people... and the elders, said, We are witnesses**—"And thus," says Clarke, "the business was settled without lawyers or legal casuistry. A question of this kind in one of our courts of justice, in these enlightened times, would require many days' previous preparation of the attorney, and several hours' arguing between Counsellor *Botherum* and Counsellor *Borum*, till even an enlightened and conscientious judge would find it extremely difficult to decide whether Naomi might sell her own land, and whether Boaz or Peloni might buy it! O glorious uncertainty of modern law!" **Like Rachel and like Leah**—The

"The LORD make the woman that is come into thine house like Rachel and like Leah, which two did <sup>2</sup> build the house of Israel: and <sup>2</sup> do thou worthily in <sup>1</sup> Ephratah, and <sup>2</sup> be famous in Bethlehem: **12** And let thy house be like the house of Pharez, <sup>4</sup> whom Tamar bare unto Judah, of <sup>1</sup> the seed which the LORD shall give thee of this young woman.

<sup>2</sup> Or, *get thee riches, or, power.*—<sup>p</sup> Gen. 35, 16, 19.—<sup>3</sup> Heb. *proclaim thy name.*—<sup>q</sup> Gen. 38, 29; 1 Chron. 2, 4; Matt. 1, 3.—<sup>r</sup> 1 Sam. 2, 20.

two wives of Jacob, who were accounted mothers of all the tribes of Israel. Gen. xxix, xxx. **Which two did build the house of Israel**—That is, bore him offspring to establish his name. "By a common oriental metaphor, *house* is transferred to a family and children; and whoever begets children is said to build a house. Hence <sup>3</sup> *son*, comes from the idea of building; that is, of begetting. The same metaphor is elegantly carried out in Plautus, *Mos-tellarius*, 1, 2, 37."—*Gesenius*. So in modern times great lineal families are designated by this word; as, house of Bourbon, house of Brunswick. The passage in Plautus to which Gesenius here refers is as follows: "Now this I will say, that ye men may be compared to buildings, as long as parents are chiefly builders of children, and the foundation of children they do lay." **Do thou worthily**—Acquire power and influence. **Be famous**—Literally, *Call out a name*. That is, perpetuate thy name by means of a numerous posterity. **Ephratah... Bethlehem**—Different names of the same place, (Gen. xxxv, 19,) used here in the way of poetic parallelism.

**12. Whom Tamar bare unto Judah**—See the history, as given in Gen. xxxviii. There was a peculiar appropriateness in this allusion to Boaz's ancient ancestors, for Tamar's playing the harlot with Judah was not from lust on her part, but a forcing of him unawares to perform the part of a kinsman to her. His two sons Er and Onan had married her, and died leaving her childless. He then had promised her his younger son, but seems not to have kept his word, and therefore

**13** So Boaz \*took Ruth, and she was his wife: and when he went in unto her, 'the LORD gave her conception, and she bare a son. **14** And 'the women said unto Naomi, Blessed *be* the LORD, which hath not 'left thee this day without a \*kinsman, that his name may be famous in Israel. **15** And he shall be unto thee a restorer of *thy* life, and 'a nourisher of 'thine old age: for thy

\* Chap. 3. 11.—† Gen. 29. 31; 33. 5.—‡ Luke 1. 58; Rom. 12. 15.—§ Heb. *caused to cease unto thee*.—5 Or, *redeemer*.

she took the bold step to be redeemed by Judah himself from the lonely estate and condition of a childless widow. Nor was Pharez, the offspring of that connexion, ever regarded as illegitimate, but he figures most honourably in the genealogy of David and the Messiah.

#### MARRIAGE OF BOAZ AND RUTH, AND BIRTH OF OBED, 13-17.

**13. Boaz took Ruth**—Whatever scruples a pious Hebrew might have had about marriage with a Moabitess, Boaz could have had none in this case, inasmuch as Ruth was the widow of an Israelite, and had left her native land and kindred to become a proselyte to the Hebrew faith. Compare note on chap. i. 4.

**14. The women**—The women of Beth-lehem, Naomi's neighbours and friends. Verse 17. **Not left thee this day without a kinsman**—The kinsman or redeemer in this passage refers not to Boaz, but to the child born to Ruth, as is evident from the words that follow. **That his name may be famous**—Rather, *and may his name (that is, the child's name) be famous*; become honourably perpetuated by a numerous and worthy posterity in Israel.

**15. He shall be**—That is, the child shall be. Boaz was the *goël* or redeemer of Ruth, but the child Obed was the *goël* of the aged Naomi. **Restorer of thy life**—He shall make thee feel the glow of youthful life and joy again. **A nourisher of thine old age**—A source of comfort, since the birth of this son would take away the reproach of childlessness from her husband's family.

daughter in law, which loveth thee, which is \*better to thee than seven sons, hath borne him. **16** And Naomi took the child, and laid it in her bosom, and became nurse unto it. **17** \*And the women her neighbours gave it a name, saying, There is a son born to Naomi; and they called his name Obed: he *is* the father of Jesse, the father of David.

6 Heb. *to nourish*, Gen. 45. 11; Psa. 55. 22.—7 Heb. *thy gray hairs*.—† 1 Sam. 1. 8.—‡ Luke 1. 58, 59.

**Better...than seven sons**—Because through Ruth "the loss of her own sons had been supplied in her old age, and the prospect was now presented to her of becoming in her childless old age the tribe-mother of a numerous and flourishing family."—*Keil*. "It would seem as if there was already a kind of joyous foretaste of the birth and infancy which, in aftertimes, was to be forever associated with the name of Beth-lehem."—*Stanley*.

**17. There is a son born to Naomi**—The son of Ruth was called Naomi's, and that aged and childless widow herself rejoiced over the birth just as Rachel and Leah, who built the house of Israel, (verse 11,) rejoiced over the children borne them by Bilhah and Zilpah, their maid-servants. Gen. xxx, 1-13. By the birth of this child she was assured that the name of her precious dead would not be cut off from among their brethren. Verse 10. **They called his name Obed**—The name means, literally, *one who serves*; and, as the context seems to suggest, was given to the child of Ruth and Boaz because he *served* to gladden Naomi's old age. From this it appears that the law of Deut. xxv. 6, was not understood to mean that the first-born child of the levirate marriage must be called after the very name of the dead. See note on verse 10. **He is the father of Jesse, the father of David**—Thus at last is brought out fully and significantly the author's manifest object in writing this brief but deeply interesting history of Ruth. It throws a calm and peaceful light upon the ancestry of the greatest personage of Israelitish history.

**18** Now these *are* the generations of Pharez: \*Pharez begat Hezron, **19** And Hezron begat Ram, and Ram begat Aminadab, **20** And Aminadab begat

\* Nahshon, and Nahshon begat \* Salmon, **21** And Salmon begat Boaz, and Boaz begat Obed, **22** And Obed begat Jesse, and Jesse begat \* David.

© 1 Chronicles 2. 4, &c.; Matthew 1. 3.  
 y Numbers 1. 7.

8 Or, *Salmah*. — s Matthew 1. 4, &c.  
 a 1 Chron. 2. 15; Matt. 1. 6.

#### GENEALOGY OF DAVID, 18-22.

This genealogical table presents us with *ten* names, a round and even number; and this fact, taken in connexion with the well known love of the old Hebrews for a perfectly drawn, symmetrical family register, may at least suggest that some unimportant names have been designedly left out. This is most naturally to be supposed in a list that bridges over many hundred years. The position that every individual link in this ancestral chain, stretching back from David to Pharez, is given here, is an unwarrantable assumption, and utterly destitute of proof. We may, therefore, pass over without notice all questions of chronology which have been raised upon this genealogy. The passage appears again, with but trifling verbal differences, in Matthew's genealogy of Christ, (Matt. i. 3-6,) so that from a lofty spiritual point of view we may look upon it as a carefully finished document, looking not to David only, but also to Messiah. It is a noticeable fact, and worthy of special mention here, that the first two genealogies of Genesis—that of Cain (chap. iv. 17-22,) and that of Adam through Seth, (chap. v. 1-29,)—contain each precisely ten names.

**18. Pharez**—Son of Judah by his daughter in law Tamar. See Genesis xxxviii. 29. Thus David and Messiah trace their lineage directly up to Judah. **Hezron**—Mentioned in Gen. xlv. 12, and 1 Chron. ii. 5.

**19. Ram**—Or Aram, as in Matt. i. 3. **Aminadab**—He was father in law of Aaron. Exod. vi. 23.

**20. Nahshon**—Prince or chief captain of the tribe of Judah during the journeys of the wilderness, (Num. ii. 3,) and whose offering to the Lord among

other tribe-princes is described at Num.

vii. 12-17. **Salmon**—שִׁלֹן, *Salmah*;

whilst the name in the next verse is

שִׁלֹן, *Salmon*; whence Dr. Kennicott

conjectures that these are the names of two distinct persons, and that one link has been dropped out between Nahshon and Boaz, which might be thus supplied: *Nahshon begat Salmah, and Salmah begat Salmon, and Salmon begat Boaz*. Some names, doubtless, have been left out; but no weighty argument can be made from so slight a difference in the orthography of the names of persons.

**21. Salmon begat Boaz**—Matthew reads, Salmon begat Boaz of *Rachab*. It is not absolutely certain that this Rachab is the same as the Rahab who entertained the spies at Jericho, (Josh. ii. 1; Heb. xi. 31; James ii. 25,) but such is the ancient tradition and common belief; and, if true, it is very clear that one or more names have been omitted between Salmon and Boaz, who must have lived some two hundred or more years apart. That such omissions were sometimes intentionally made, a comparison of Ezra's genealogy, as given in Ezra vii. 1-5, with the fuller table of 1 Chron. vi. 3-15, will abundantly show. The same may be seen in Matthew's genealogy of Christ, (see notes on Matt. i. 17,) where, with a manifest effort to make the register bear the appearance of a symmetrical whole, and with noticeable respect for the sacred symbolism of numbers, he groups all the names from Abraham to Christ under three heads of fourteen generations each, though, as his own list shows, he has omitted several names, which may be supplied from the Old Testament tables.

# INTRODUCTION TO THE BOOKS OF SAMUEL.

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IN the Hebrew Manuscripts the two Books of Samuel form one undivided work, and their contents show that they properly belong thus together. The present division was first made by the Septuagint translators; it was afterwards adopted in the Vulgate, and was first introduced into the printed Hebrew Bibles at Venice in 1518. The division, however, was appropriately made at the account of Saul's death, which event formed a turning point in Israelitish history. The ancient title of the undivided work was "Book of Samuel," evidently so called because the first section is mainly devoted to the history of that saintly Judge and Prophet. Hence also the present name, Books of Samuel. In the Septuagint and Vulgate they are called the First and Second Books of Kings, because they record the origin and establishment of the Hebrew monarchy.

## Date.

The exact time of the composition of these books it is impossible to decide. Their language and style favour the idea of an early date, and, on the whole, present us with one of the purest specimens of Hebrew prose extant. There is an absence of Chaldaisms which specially distinguishes them from later writings of the Old Testament, and a simplicity and directness of narrative which belong to the Golden Age of Hebrew literature. "These books," says Dr. John Eadie, "bear the impress of a hoary age in their language, allusions, and mode of composition. The insertion of odes and snatches of poetry, to enliven and verify the narrative, is common to them with the Pentateuch. They abound in minute sketches and vivid touches. As if the chapters had been extracted from a diary, some portions are more fully detailed and warmly coloured than others, according as the original observer was himself impressed. Many of the incidents, in their artless and striking delineation, would form a fine study for a painter." But, though unquestionably ancient, they cannot be referred to a period earlier than the closing years of David's reign, and the very noticeable circumstance that they contain the last words of the king, but no mention of his death, forcibly suggests that they were completed in



substantially their present form while David was yet living, but "old and stricken in years." 1 Kings i, 1. But the remark in 1 Sam. xxvii, 6—"Ziklag pertaineth unto the kings of Judah unto this day"—seems to show that the author must have written his work after the division of the nation into two kingdoms, and, therefore, at the earliest, as late as the days of Rehoboam. This, however, is not conclusive evidence, for it is not at all unnatural or uncritical to suppose that this remark was added by a later hand. While, therefore, the exact age of these books cannot be determined, we do best to refrain from mere conjectures, and simply refer them to the period extending from David's last years to a time subsequent to the revolt of the ten tribes, but probably not later than the reign of Abijam, the son of Rehoboam—about 957 B. C. We may in substance adopt the noble words of Ewald, that "when the Books of Samuel were written the majestic forms of Samuel and David were not very far removed from the nation's memory, but only just raised above the misappreciation of their own time. Hence no portion of the Old Testament produces comparatively so satisfactory an effect on the historical inquirer as this does; for here we see the whole reality and truth of a great human scene peep out behind tradition, and discern historical greatness surrounded by all the fetters and limitations of its temporal conditions."

### Author.

If we are correct in assigning the work a date as early as that indicated above, then Jeremiah could not have been the author, as several eminent critics have supposed; nor could it have been the writer of the Books of Kings, as Jahn suggests; for, not to mention differences in style and plan of writing, the author of Kings must certainly have lived at a much later period than the date above given. An old opinion ascribes the authorship of these books to the joint labours of Samuel, Nathan, and Gad. It originated from the statement of 1 Chron. xxix, 29, which, translated literally, is, "The words (דְּבָרֵי) of David the king, the first and the last; behold, they are written in the words of Samuel the seer, and in the words of Nathan the prophet, and in the words of Gad the seer." The term דְּבָרֵי, *words*, here evidently means *history*. But what were the histories of Samuel, Nathan, and Gad? That they were works composed by these persons is as gratuitous an assumption as it would be to say that the history of David was a work composed by the king himself. The passage in Chronicles may indicate the sources, but it is not sufficient to decide the authorship of the Books of Samuel. Who the author was is a question that cannot now be answered.

### Sources.

The work bears many evidences of being a compilation out of pre-existing documents, and some of these sources may be indicated with tolerable certainty. The poetical compositions which are inserted in the history (namely, Hannah's song, 1 Sam. ii, 1-10, and David's elegies, 2 Sam. i, 19-27; iii, 33, 34, and psalms, in chaps. xxii and xxiii) may all have been taken from the Book of Jasher, from which David's elegy over Saul and Jonathan is professedly derived. Some of these songs, perhaps, like the chorus of the Hebrew women sung over David's first triumph, (1 Sam. xviii, 7,) were as familiar to the lips of Israel as household words, and were written down by our author from memory. The genealogical tables and lists of public officers (namely, of Elkanah, 1 Sam. i, 1; of Saul, ix, 1; of David's family, 2 Sam. iii, 2-5; v, 14-16; and officers, viii, 16-18; xx, 23-26; xxiii, 8-39) were, in all probability, taken from public registers and annals kept by the scribe and recorder of the king. These royal scribes (see notes at 2 Sam. viii, 16, 17) also wrote down the passing events of their times, and we may reasonably believe that their books became the principal authorities from which most of the historical works of the Old Testament written after the establishment of the Monarchy were compiled. Hence, too, most of the descriptive narratives may be regarded as substantially the accounts of eye-witnesses. In 1 Sam. x, 25 it is said that Samuel wrote a book descriptive of the manner of the kingdom, and that fact suggests that he may also have written other books, embodying, like those of the later prophets, important incidents of his own life and times. To such a work our author was, doubtless, largely indebted for the first twelve chapters of 1 Samuel. So also the histories of Nathan and Gad, which are mentioned in 1 Chron. xxix, 29, and noticed above, were probably narratives of the times of those prophets written by one of their contemporaries, if not by their own hands. All these documents, and perhaps many more, were at the service of the compiler of the Books of Samuel; and by their aid, as well as by the guidance of the Spirit, he seems to have wrought out his work with the design of furnishing the chosen people with a true account of the leading facts in the lives of Samuel, Saul, and David. In all this the devout believer sees the hand of God; and he believes not only that the sacred writer, whoever he was, wrote as he was moved by the Holy Spirit, but also that, while the earlier documents have been utterly lost, this work has been preserved to the Church by the gracious providence of God, and is "profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness." What an incalculable loss to the Church and the world would it be to be without these Books of Samuel!

### Contents.

The work is readily divided into three sections: the first containing the History of Samuel, 1 Sam. i-xii; the second the History of Saul, 1 Sam. xiii-xxxi; and the third the History of David, 2 Sam. i-xxiv. Saul, indeed, is introduced to us before 1 Sam. xiii, and David before 2 Sam. i; but they appear not as the great subjects of the history until the chapters indicated.

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# THE FIRST BOOK OF SAMUEL.

## CHAPTER I.

**N**OW there was a certain man of Ramathaim-zophim, of mount

*a* 1 Chron. 6. 27, 34.

### SECTION FIRST.

#### HISTORY OF SAMUEL.

#### CHAPTERS I-XII.

#### CHAPTER I.

#### SAMUEL'S BIRTH.

The opening chapters of First Samuel are invaluable for the light they shed upon the darkest period of Israelitish history. From the point of time with which they open there stretches backward into the age of the Judges a period of gloom, a time of comparative lawlessness and violence, yet also of rude simplicity and homeliness, of whose manners and condition we gather much knowledge from the account of Eli's administration. The history opens abruptly with the particulars of Samuel's birth, and leaves us, for our knowledge of its chronology, altogether to subsequent details. We find at the head of the sanctuary worship, holding the offices of both high priest and judge, a venerable man, far advanced in years, whose name has had no previous mention. He is of the house of Ithamar; but at the last historical notice of the subject the high priesthood was held by the house of Eleazar. How the change was effected we are nowhere told, and must be content to remain ignorant. It was, doubtless, effected amidst some of the disorders of the age of the Judges; perhaps, by unlawful means. See note on verse 9.

1. **Ramathaim-Zophim**—The name means, *the double height of the watchers*, and was probably so called because of two heights on which the city stood, or with which it was in some way as-

sociated. Some scholars are inclined to identify it with the modern *Soba*, some seven miles west of Jerusalem; but their opinion is based on the assumption that it is the same city where Saul was anointed, (chap. ix, 6,) an assumption that has no sufficient support. A comparison of this verse and verse 3 with verse 19 and with chap. ii, 11, makes it certain that Ramathaim-Zophim is the same as Ramah, but a fuller form of the name. Ramah was situated about five miles north of Jerusalem, and was not only the birthplace of Samuel, but his home through life, (vii, 17,) and the place of his death and burial. Chap. xxv, 1. The Hebrew name of this place, as well as its modern Arabic name *er Ram*, means *the height*, and this may explain the appended name **Zophim**, which means *watchers*, for the heights of Ramah would afford a fitting station for watchmen, who could from its heights command a wide prospect on every side, and see at a great distance any signal of danger or alarm that might be given. Compare "the field of Zophim on the top of Pisgah." Num. xxiii, 14. Others think that Zophim was the name of the country round Ramah, called after Zuph, one of Elkanah's ancestors. Hence "land of Zuph" in chap. ix, 5. **Mount Ephraim**—See note on Judges xvii, 1. **Son of Jeroham**—A comparison of this genealogy with 1 Chron. vi, 34, 35, shows that **Elkanah** (and therefore Samuel) was a descendant of Levi through Kohath. No other special notice is taken of Samuel's Levitical descent, because his work and authority as Reformer and Judge in Israel were not owing to

*b* Ruth 1. 2.

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Ephrathite: **2** And he had two wives; the name of the one *was* Hannah, and the name of the other Peninnah: and Peninnah had children, but Hannah had

c Exodus 23. 14; Deuteronomy 16. 16;  
Luke 2. 41.

this fact, but, rather, to his special divine call from the Lord. **An Ephrathite**—Grammatically, this word is in apposition with a **certain man**, that is, Elkanah. He was reckoned as to his civil standing with the tribe of Ephraim, for the Levites, having been set apart to the service of the sanctuary, had no separate portion of the Promised Land assigned to them, (Joshua xiv, 4,) but were reckoned to the tribes in which they had their homes. Ten cities were allotted to the children of Kohath, in the tribes of Ephraim, Dan, and Manasseh. Josh. xxi, 5.

**2. Two wives**—Such bigamy at this day, and in the light of a Christian civilization, would be criminal; but the ancient laws allowed it, and custom sanctioned it. But the practice was nearly always the occasion of domestic broils. Polygamy seems to have begun with Lamech, (Gen. iv, 19,) and it prevailed extensively in the patriarchal age. Jacob had two wives, and most of the ancient worthies had, besides the proper wife, one or more concubines. The great desire for offspring often prompted to this, as in the case of Abraham, (Gen. xvi, 2;) and it is generally supposed that Hannah was Elkanah's proper wife, but she proving barren, his desire for children led him to take Peninnah. According to the Talmud a man was bound, after ten years of childless conjugal life, to marry another wife, and if she proved barren he should marry even a third. And all this might be done without repudiation of the first wife. This great desire for offspring is generally supposed to have been inspired by the expectation of the Messiah, and the hope, which every Hebrew woman entertained, that she might be the mother of the Promised Seed. **Hannah had no children**—A great affliction to a Hebrew wife. But Hannah is on this account to be associated with other

no children. **3** And this man went up out of his city <sup>c</sup>yearly <sup>d</sup>to worship and to sacrifice unto the Lord of hosts in <sup>e</sup>Shiloh. And the two sons of Eli,

1 Heb. *from year to year*.—d Deut. 12. 5-7.  
e Josh. 18. 1.

saintly women—Sarah, (Gen. xvi, 1,) Rachel, (Gen. xxix, 31,) and Elizabeth, (Luke i, 7,) who yet, by the favour of God, became the most distinguished mothers in Israel. The ancient expositors represent Hannah as a type of the Christian Church, for a long time barren, and mocked by her rival the Jewish Synagogue, but at length triumphing over her rival, and bringing forth many children to the Lord. Compare chap. ii, 5.

**3. Went up . . . to worship . . . in Shiloh**—Shiloh is situated thirteen miles north of Ramah. At this place the tabernacle was set up after the Israelites had subdued and driven out the inhabitants of the land, (Josh. xviii, 1,) and here the tribes assembled "to worship and to sacrifice," according to the commandment of Deut. xii, 5-7; xvi, 16. Compare also Judges xxi, 19. So it was the Jerusalem before Jerusalem. **Lord of hosts**—The commonly used abbreviation of the fuller form **LORD God of hosts**, (Psa. lxxxix, 8; Jer. v, 14,) which ought everywhere to be rendered *Jehovah God of Hosts*, or *Jehovah of Hosts*. This expression occurs here for the first time, not being found in the earlier books; neither is it found in the writings of Job or Ezekiel, nor in the writings of Solomon. It designates Jehovah as Ruler of the whole universe, (Gen. ii, 1; Psa. xxxiii, 6,) who knows the number of the stars, (Psa. cxlvii, 4,) and guides them in their orbits, (Isa. xl, 26,) and whose army is composed of angels and saints in heaven and on earth. Gen. xxxii, 2; Exod. vii, 4; Deut. xxxiii, 2. It is significant that this name first occurs at the beginning of those books which treat of the Monarchy of Israel, as if to teach: Though Israel become a kingdom, and have an earthly sovereign, yet by this name—**JEHOVAH OF HOSTS**—let them remember that the Most High has "an ever-

Hophni and Phinehas, the priests of the Lord, *were* there. 4 And when the time was that Elkanah offered, he gave to Peninnah his wife, and to all her sons and her daughters, portions: 5 But unto Hannah he gave <sup>a</sup> a worthy portion; for he loved Hannah: <sup>b</sup> but the Lord had shut up her womb. 6 And her adversary also <sup>c</sup> provoked her sore, for to make her fret, because the Lord

<sup>f</sup> Deut. 12, 17, 18; 16, 11. — <sup>2</sup> Or, *a double portion*. — <sup>g</sup> Gen. 30. 2. — <sup>3</sup> Heb. *angered her*.

lasting dominion, and his kingdom is from generation to generation; and all the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing; and he doeth according to his will in the army of heaven and among the inhabitants of the earth."

Dan. iv, 35. **Hophni and Phinehas, ... priests of the Lord**—Eli was high priest, and held peculiar functions, (see on verse 9;) but he was, probably, too old and infirm to attend to all the duties of his high office. These two sons were therefore associated with him, as the sons of Aaron were associated with their father, in the holy service.

4. **Portions**—Parts of the flesh of the victims offered in sacrifice to the Lord. See Lev. vii, 15; Deut. xii, 7, 18. The law of the peace-offerings gave the breast and shoulder to the priest, and the fat to be burned, (Lev. vii, 31, 32;) but the rest was returned to him that offered it, and served for a feast of thanksgiving.

5. **A worthy portion**—Margin, *a double portion*. Heb., **מִנְהָ אֶחָת אַפִּים**, *a portion one of two faces*. It is difficult to decide the precise meaning. The Vulgate renders: *But he, being sorrowful, gave to Hannah one portion*; but though **אַפִּים** sometimes has the sense of *anger*, it never means *sorrow*, and the context shows that Hannah was the sorrowful one, not Elkanah. Some have thought that Hannah's portion was called a portion of *faces* because of some resemblance to the *show-bread*, which was called *bread of presence*, (**לֶחֶם פָּנִים**); and Clarke suggests that Elkanah gave Hannah *his own portion*, which might be called a *portion of presence* from its having been placed *before himself* as the person who

had shut up her womb. 7 And *as* he did so year by year, <sup>a</sup> when she went up to the house of the Lord, so she provoked her; therefore she wept, and did not eat. 8 Then said Elkanah her husband to her, Hannah, why weepest thou? and why eatest thou not? and why is thy heart grieved? *am* not I <sup>b</sup> better to thee than ten sons? 9 So Hannah rose up after they had eaten in

<sup>h</sup> Job 24. 21. — <sup>4</sup> Or, *from the time that she, &c.*; Heb. *from her going up*. — <sup>i</sup> Ruth 4. 15.

had offered the sacrifice. But such resemblance is far-fetched and inappropriate here. Better, then, to take the word **פָּנִים**, *two faces*, by synecdoche, for *two persons*—*a portion one of two persons*, that is, two persons' portion, enough for two. Accordingly, the marginal reading cited above conveys the true sense. He set before Hannah a portion as large as was set before the faces of two other persons. **For he loved Hannah**—Had a peculiar affection for her such as he had not for Peninnah, and he showed it as Joseph showed his special affection for Benjamin by sending him a mess five times as great as he set before the other brothers. Gen. xliii, 34.

6. **Her adversary**—Peninnah, who was jealous of Hannah because of the peculiar favours shown her. **Provoked her sore, to make her fret**—Tantalized her by parading sons and daughters before her eyes, and reminding her that she was barren.

7. **He did so year by year**—Elkanah yearly continued to show such special attention to Hannah as he and all his family went up to the tabernacle at Shiloh. **So she provoked her**—Peninnah likewise continued to tantalize Hannah for her barrenness. This provocation was the more keenly felt because barrenness was a reproach to women among the Jews. See Genesis xxx, 23; Luke i, 25.

8. **Better... than ten sons**—There is greater good in matrimonial concord than in mere fruitfulness.—*Grotius*.

9. **Hannah rose up**—To go to the tabernacle to pray before the Lord.

Verse 12. **Eli the priest**—**הַכֹּהֵן**, *the priest*, made thus definite by the article,



Shiloh, and after they had drunk. Now Eli the priest sat upon a seat by a post of <sup>the</sup> temple of the Lord. **10** And she <sup>was</sup> in bitterness of soul, and prayed unto the Lord, and wept sore. **11** And she <sup>vowed</sup> a vow, and said, O Lord of hosts, if thou wilt indeed <sup>look</sup> on the affliction of thine handmaid, and <sup>remember</sup> me, and not forget thine handmaid, but wilt give unto thine handmaid <sup>a</sup> man child; then I will give him unto the Lord all the days of his life, and <sup>there</sup> shall no

*k* Chap. 3. 3. — *l* Job 7. 11; 10. 1. — *5* Heb. *bitter of soul*. 2 Sam. 17. 8. — *m* Gen. 28. 20; Num. 30. 3; Judg. 11. 30. — *n* Gen. 28. 32; Exod. 4. 31; 2 Sam. 16. 12; Psa. 26. 18.

means the *high priest*, who was distinguished from the ordinary priests by being anointed in some peculiarly solemn manner, and therefore called *the anointed priest*, (Lev. iv, 3;) also by wearing a mitre, a breastplate, and a robe, (Exod. xxviii, 4, where see notes,) and by holding peculiar functions. Heb. ix, 7. Eli was a descendant of Ithamar, the younger son of Aaron. Eleazar, the elder son, had been inducted into the high priesthood on the death of his father on Mount Hor. Num. xx, 28. On what occasion or for what reason this honour was transferred to the line of Ithamar we are nowhere informed. Keil supposes "that at the death of the last high priest of the family of Eleazar, before the time of Eli, the remaining son was not equal to the occasion, either because he was still an infant, or too young and inexperienced to enter upon the office; and Eli, who was probably related by marriage to the high priest's family, and a vigorous man, was compelled by the circumstances to take the oversight of the congregation." The transfer may, however, in the lawless period of the Judges, have been brought about in a much less honourable and lawful way. Ewald supposes that Eli was in his youth a great hero and deliverer of the people, and by his remarkable prowess raised himself to the office of judge, and then "the office of high priest at Shiloh probably devolved upon him simply as a descendant of Aaron. For this office had then fallen so low, the disorganized and scattered state of the priestly class was so deep-

razor come upon his head. **12** And it came to pass, as she <sup>continued</sup> praying before the Lord, that Eli marked her mouth. **13** Now Hannah, she spake in her heart; only her lips moved, but her voice was not heard: therefore Eli thought she had been drunken. **14** And Eli said unto her, How long wilt thou be drunken? put away thy wine from thee. **15** And Hannah answered and said, No, my lord, I *am* a woman <sup>of</sup> a sorrowful spirit: I have drunk neither wine nor strong drink, but have <sup>poured</sup>

*o* Gen. 8. 1; 30. 22. — *6* Heb. *seed of men*. — *p* Num. 6. 5; Judg. 13. 5. — *7* Heb. *multiplied to pray*. — *8* Heb. *hard of spirit*. — *q* Psa. 62. 8; 142. 2.

rooted, that probably any descendant of Aaron who possessed much consideration with the people was readily acknowledged as high priest in Shiloh by all his adherents." From chap. iv, 18, we learn that he was also one of the Judges of Israel. **Sat upon a seat**—Hebrew, *upon the throne*; an elevated seat near the door of the tabernacle, where, as judge, he could hear the complaints of the people and render judgment, as well as preserve proper order at the holy place. **The temple of the Lord**—Called at verse 7, *the house of the Lord*. This was the enclosure of boards and curtains which contained the sacred shrines, of all which a minute description is given in Exod. xxv-xxvii, where see notes. It was carried with the Israelites in all their journeys, (Num. i, 50, 51,) until they set it up at Shiloh, (Josh. xviii, 1;) thence it seems to have been removed by David to Jerusalem, (2 Sam. vi, 17,) where it was superseded by the temple of Solomon. "The sanctuary itself," says Stanley, "was so encased with buildings as to give it the name and appearance of a *house or temple*." See on chap. iii, 15.

**11. All . . . his life, and . . . no razor . . . upon his head**—So he would differ from the ordinary Nazarite (compare Numbers vi) in that the vow was binding not for a certain number of days, but for his whole lifetime. Samson and John the Baptist are supposed to have been the only other examples of a Nazarite for life.

**15. Poured . . . soul**—Expressed the very earnest desires of her soul.

out my soul before the Lord. **16** Count not thine handmaid for a daughter of 'Belial: for out of the abundance of my 'complaint and grief have I spoken hitherto. **17** Then Eli answered and said, 'Go in peace: and 'the God of Israel grant thee thy petition that thou hast asked of him. **18** And she said, 'Let thine handmaid find grace in thy sight. So the woman 'went her way, and did eat, and her countenance was no more sad. **19** 'And they rose up in the morning early, and worshipped before the Lord, and returned, and came to their house to Ramah: and Elkanah 'knew Hannah his wife; and 'the Lord remembered her. **20** Wherefore it came

r Deut. 13. 13.—9 Or. *meditation*.—s Judg. 18. 6; Mark 5. 34; Luke 7. 50; 8. 48.—t Psa. 20. 4, 5.—u Gen. 33. 15; Ruth 2. 13.—v Eccles. 9. 7.—w Psa. 5. 3; 55. 17; Mark 1. 35.—x Gen. 4. 1.—y Gen. 30. 22.

**Before the Lord**—In the tabernacle, where the Divine Presence was wont to be manifested.

**16. A daughter of Belial**—The Hebrew word בְּלִיַּאל, *beliayāl*, rendered as a proper name here and frequently elsewhere in the Old Testament, means *worthlessness, lowness*. Our translators have rendered it variously—*wicked*, (Deut. xv, 9;) *evil*, (Psa. xli, 8;) *naughty*, (Prov. vi, 12;) *ungodly*, (Prov. xvi, 27;) and scholars are now generally agreed that it is nowhere to be taken as a proper name. It should here be rendered, *a daughter of worthlessness*, that is, a low, worthless, licentious woman, such as were those whom Eli's own sons corrupted. Chap. ii, 22. Hannah besought Eli not to class her among those wretched prostitutes.

**17. The God of Israel grant thee thy petition**—He knows not what that petition is, (compare verse 27,) but he is fully convinced of her earnestness and depth of grief, and he gives her his priestly benediction.

**20. Called his name Samuel**—This name (שְׁמוּאֵל) is a contraction of שְׁמוּאֵל הֵאָדָה, *heard of God*, and alludes to the fact that God heard Hannah's prayer for a child. Some derive the name from שְׁמוּאֵל, *name of God*, which etymology, though possible, does not well agree

to pass, <sup>10</sup> when the time was come about after Hannah had conceived, that she bare a son, and called his name <sup>11</sup> Samuel, *saying*, Because I have asked him of the Lord.

**21** And the man Elkanah, and all his house, 'went up to offer unto the Lord the yearly sacrifice, and his vow. **22** But Hannah went not up; for she said unto her husband, *I will not go up* until the child be weaned, and *then* I will 'bring him, that he may appear before the Lord, and there 'abide 'for ever. **23** And 'Elkanah her husband said unto her, Do what seemeth thee good; tarry until thou have weaned him; 'only the Lord establish his word. So the

10 Heb. *in revolution of days*.—11 That is, *Asked of God*.—2 Verse 8; Gen. 18. 19; Josh. 24. 15; Psa. 101. 2.—t Luke 2. 22.—v Verser 11, 28; chap. 2. 11, 18; 3. 1.—x Exod. 21. 6.—d Num. 30. 7.—e 2 Sam. 7. 25.

with the comment of the immediate text. The derivation from שְׁמוּאֵל הֵאָדָה, *asked of God*, though agreeing well with the comment of the context, is too artificial and farfetched. "The words **Because I have asked him of the Lord** are not an etymological explanation of the name, but an exposition founded upon facts. Because Hannah had asked him of Jehovah, she named him *the God-heard*, as a memorial of the hearing of her prayer."—*Keil*. "His name," says Smith, (Old Testament History,) "is expressive of the leading feature of his whole history, *the power of prayer*. Himself the child of prayer, he gained all his triumphs by prayer; he is placed at the head of those 'who called upon Jehovah and he answered them.'"

**SAMUEL'S DEDICATION TO THE LORD AT SHILOH, 21-28.**

**21. And his vow**—What this vow of Elkanah was we do not know, but it is generally supposed that, like Hannah's, it had reference to the child Samuel.

**22. Until the child be weaned**—Which in some cases was at the age of three years, (2 Maccabees vii, 27,) and so quite likely in the case of Samuel. **Abide for ever**—That is, as long as he shall live. Compare verse 11.

**23. Only the Lord establish his word**—What word Elkanah here re-

woman abode, and gave her son suck until she weaned him. **24** And when she had weaned him, she 'took him up with her, with three bullocks, and one ephah of flour, and a bottle of wine, and brought him unto the 'house of the Lord in Shiloh: and the child *was* young. **25** And they slew a bullock, and <sup>a</sup>brought the child to Eli. **26** And

<sup>f</sup>Deuteronomy 12. 5, 6, 11.—<sup>g</sup>Joshua 18. 1.  
—<sup>h</sup>Exod. 13. 3; 22. 29; 34. 19; Luke 2. 22.—  
<sup>i</sup>Genesis 42. 15; 2 Kings 2. 2, 4, 6.—<sup>k</sup>Matthew  
7. 7.—<sup>l</sup>Verses 11, 22.

fers to is not clear. Some, taking דבר, *word*, in the sense of *matter* or *thing*, a meaning which it sometimes has, paraphrase the sentence thus: The Lord carry out and perfect what he has begun in the case of this child. Others suppose that reference is made to some special revelation concerning the mission and destiny of Samuel, which the sacred writers have not recorded. But it is better to understand by *his word*, the benediction of Eli, verse 17—"the God of Israel grant thee thy petition." According to this view the parents of Samuel regarded the high priest's prayer as a prophecy—the word of God respecting Hannah's prayer for a child, and her vow to consecrate such child to the divine service.

**24. Three bullocks, and one ephah of flour, and a bottle of wine**—See the law of meat offerings. Num. xv, 1-13. Several ancient versions read, instead of three bullocks, *a bullock three years old*; but this is probably an error, for, according to Num. xv, 9, a single bullock required with it but three tenths of an ephah of flour, while Hannah took a whole ephah, enough for three offerings. **The child was young**—Probably three or four years old. Compare verse 22, and chap. ii, 18.

**25. Slew a bullock**—One of the three mentioned in the preceding verse. The Hebrew is אֶת־הַבָּקָר, *the bullock*, that is, the particular one with which the consecration of the child was associated. This mention of one by no means implies that there was only one, or that only one of the three was offered.

**26. As thy soul liveth**—A form of oath peculiar to the books of Samuel. The age of the judges was noticeably

she said, O my lord, 'as thy soul liveth, my lord, I *am* the woman that stood by thee here, praying unto the Lord. **27** 'For this child I prayed; and the Lord hath given me my petition which I asked of him: **28** 'Therefore also I have <sup>12</sup>lent him to the Lord; as long as he liveth <sup>13</sup>he shall be lent to the Lord. And he <sup>14</sup>worshipped the Lord there.

<sup>12</sup> Or, *returned him, whom I have obtained by petition, to the LORD.*—<sup>13</sup> Or, *he whom I have obtained by petition shall be returned.*—<sup>14</sup> Gen. 24. 26, 52.

an age of vows. **I am the woman**—Eli had, perhaps, forgotten her, but she had kept his words in her heart. So, often, the minister of God may utter his benediction, which, though forgotten by himself, lives in another memory, and causes untold comfort.

**28. Lent him to the Lord**—It is hardly proper to translate the word אָשַׁן, *to ask*, in any of its forms by *lend*.

It is used in the Hiphil form only here and Exodus xii, 36, and in that form means *to cause to ask*. So the passage in Exodus xii should be rendered, "And Jehovah gave the people favour in the eyes of the Egyptians, and they (the Egyptians) caused them (the Israelites) to ask." That is, the great favour which the Israelites received from the Egyptians *disposed* the former to ask of the latter such things as they desired of them; and so anxious were the Egyptians to hasten the departure of the Hebrews that they willingly presented them all they asked, even to the spoiling of themselves. Compare Exod. iii, 22. Accordingly we would translate this verse, *And I also cause him to ask of Jehovah all the days which he shall live; he is the asked of Jehovah.* To cause him to ask of Jehovah is the same as causing him to be in constant intercourse and favour with him, and this was to be Samuel's lot and destiny. Comp. note on verse 20, and chap. iii, 21. **He worshipped the Lord there**—The reference of *he* is obscure, leaving it doubtful whether Elkanah or Samuel is meant. *They worshipped*, that is, Elkanah and his wife, is the reading of some of the Hebrew MSS. and the Septuagint, Vulgate, Syriac and Arabic versions, and is much to be preferred.

## CHAPTER II.

## HANNAH'S SONG, 1-10.

"This prayer and song of Hannah," says Wordsworth, "is one of the golden links which connect the song of Sarah on the birth of Isaac (Gen. xxi, 6, 7) with the Magnificat of the Blessed Virgin. Luke i, 46-55. Another link is the triumphal song of Miriam, after the passage of the Red Sea. Exod. xv, 20, 21. Another is the song of Deborah, praising the Lord for delivering his people by the hand of a woman. Judg. v. All these poetic hymns of thanksgiving, uttered by women, are celebrations of joyful events, which are prophetic foreshadowings of the universal deliverance and victory achieved by the Promised Seed of the woman."

The subject-matter of this song seems not, at first sight, fully to accord with the occasion that called it forth. It is professedly a psalm of thanksgiving by which Hannah glorifies God for having given her a child, but, with the exception of a part of verse 5, it reads more like a war song of triumph than the rejoicing of a barren woman over the birth of a child. Hence certain modern critics have not hesitated to declare that it was composed for some other occasion, such as the victory of David over Goliath, or some other instance of Israelitish triumph, and that the compiler of the books of Samuel inserted it here in a wrong place. The mention of a king as the anointed of Jehovah, in verse 10, has also been used as an argument to prove that this song must be the production of an age at least as late as that of the Kings. But if we view this song as a prophetic utterance, spoken by inspiration from the Almighty, these difficulties vanish; and if, by comparing the similar songs of Mary and Zacharias, (Luke i,) we learn to appreciate the spiritual side of the prophecy, we shall see that, while this context acquaints us with the immediate occasion of this song, the song itself rises above the mere occasion, and, in the true spirit of prophecy, grasps a wider range of circumstances. And it was, doubt-

less, the high prophetic character of these songs that entitled them to a record in the sacred canon. The prophetic songs of Zacharias and Mary were occasioned by the birth of John Baptist and Jesus Christ, but their subject-matter has far more to do with the glorious results of John and Jesus' coming into the world. "The true characteristic of sacred poetry," says Wordsworth, "is that it is not egotistical. It merges the individual in the nation and in the church universal. Like a pebble cast into a clear and calm lake, it sends forth concentric rings of waves, ever enlarging towards the margin, so that the particular mercy to the individual produces ever-expanding undulations of praise." So with this prophetic song of Hannah. Samuel is the great historic character during whose ministry the government of Israel took the form of a monarchy, and it is fitting that this inspired song should rise above the immediate occasion of its first utterance, and in its prophetic vision celebrate the triumphs of the coming kingdom. The Targum goes so far in its explanation of this passage as to regard each separate verse as a distinct prophecy against some enemy of Israel. Thus the first verse indicates a triumph over the Philistines; the second alludes to the Assyrian army under Sennacherib; the third is against the Chaldeans under king Nebuchadnezzar; the fourth against the Greeks, etc. It is possible, indeed, that this may have been used as a triumphal song on great occasions of victory, such as occurred in the later history of Israel, and possibly a later hand may have added somewhat to it; but no less comprehensive a composition than this, which celebrates throughout the signal providences of God, could satisfy the demands of the spirit of prophecy over the birth of Samuel. When, therefore, we view it as an inspired psalm, whose prophetic range takes in the triumphs of that monarchy which was inaugurated by the ministry of Samuel, and found its culmination in the personal Messiah, the difficulties suggested above disappear. As a part of the interpretation

## CHAPTER II.

**A**ND Hannah <sup>a</sup>prayed, and said, <sup>b</sup>My heart rejoiceth in the LORD, <sup>c</sup>mine horn is exalted in the LORD; my mouth is enlarged over mine enemies; because I <sup>d</sup>rejoice in thy salvation.

1. Joyful is my heart in Jehovah,  
Exalted my horn in Jehovah;  
Opened wide is my mouth over my enemies,  
For I have rejoiced in thy salvation.
2. None is holy as Jehovah, for there is none besides thee,  
And no rock is as our God.
3. Continue not to speak arrogance, arrogance;  
Impudence has gone forth from your mouth;  
For a God of knowledge is Jehovah,  
And with him actions are weighed.

<sup>a</sup> Philipplans 4. 6. — <sup>b</sup> See Luke 1. 46, &c. —  
<sup>c</sup> Psalm 92. 10; 112. 9. — <sup>d</sup> Psalm 9. 14; 13. 5;  
20. 5; 35. 9.

**2** <sup>e</sup>There is none holy as the LORD: for there is <sup>f</sup>none besides thee: neither is there any rock like our God.  
**3** Talk no more so exceeding proudly; let not <sup>g</sup>arrogance come out of your mouth: for the LORD is a God of knowledge, and by him actions are weighed.

<sup>e</sup> Exod. 15. 11; Deut. 3. 24; 32. 4; Psa. 86. 8; 89. 6, 8. — <sup>f</sup> Deut. 4. 35; 2 Sam. 22. 32. — <sup>g</sup> Psa. 94. 4; Mal. 3. 13; Jude 15. — <sup>h</sup> Heb. *hard*.

of this magnificent ode, we give, in connexion with the text, perhaps as literal a version of the Hebrew as our language will permit.

1. **Hannah prayed**—As the lyric psalm of Habakkuk is called a prayer, (Hab. iii, 1,) although its language is that of adoration—and as some of David's psalms, which are really songs of praise, are called prayers, (Psa. lxxii, 20,) so this song of praise, in which Hannah pours out the strong feelings of her heart before God, is spoken of as an example of prayer. Adoration and praise are both, according to the Scriptures, legitimate parts of prayer. **My horn**—The horn is the weapon of those animals that bear it, and the symbol of strength, honour, and glory. See Deut. xxxiii, 17; Psalm lxxv, 4, 5. **Exalted... in Jehovah**—For he is the source of all strength and joy. Psalm xcii, 10. **Opened... is my mouth over my enemies**—I can now exult and sing in triumph over the jeers of Peninnah, and all who, like her, were wont to vex me, for it is more honourable to have one son consecrated to the service of the tabernacle than many living in comparative obscurity. This honourable triumph is a manifestation of thy salvation, O Jehovah.

2. **No rock is as our God**—No defence so strong, no place of refuge so secure, no shelter so inviting. Parties

threatened with danger were wont to fly for refuge to the fastnesses of the rocks. Chaps. xiii, 6; xxiv, 2. Hence God is called a rock of refuge, (Psa. xciv, 22,) a fortress of defence, (Psa. xxxi, 2, 3,) and a shelter from heat and storm. Psa. lxi, 2; Isa. xxxii, 2.

3. **Arrogance... Impudence**—Reference is here primarily to the haughty and impudent conduct of her adversary Peninnah, who had vexed her with taunting words. Chap. i, 6. **For** (introducing the reason for the reproof just given) **a God of knowledge is Jehovah**—The word rendered *knowledge* is in the plural ידעו, *knowledges*, *multifarious knowledge*, indicating the fulness of the Divine wisdom. **With him**—In his mind; by him. The Hebrew text (*kethib*) has לו, *not*, instead of י, *to or with him*, (*keri*), but with that reading no tolerable sense can be made from the passage without too great a departure from the natural meaning of the words. **Actions are weighed**—The actions of men, whether they be good or evil. Therefore arrogance and impudence in thought and action should be stopped, and all men fear Jehovah. Some interpreters, with less propriety, say that the actions of God are here meant; thus: *With him* (his own) *actions are established*.

4 <sup>b</sup> The bows of the mighty men *are* broken, and they that stumbled are girded with strength. 5 <sup>c</sup> *They that were full have hired out themselves for bread; and they that were hungry ceased:* so that <sup>d</sup> the barren hath borne seven; and <sup>e</sup> she that hath many children is waxed feeble. 6 <sup>f</sup> The Lord killeth,

and maketh alive: he bringeth down to the grave, and bringeth up. 7 The Lord <sup>g</sup> maketh poor, and maketh rich: <sup>h</sup> he bringeth low, and lifteth up. 8 <sup>i</sup> He raiseth up the poor out of the dust, and lifteth up the beggar from the dunghill, <sup>j</sup> to set *them* among princes, and to make them inherit the throne of

4. Bow-heroes are dismayed,  
And tottering ones are girded with power.
5. Full ones with bread are hired,  
And hungry ones cease, (from labour;)  
While the barren has borne seven,  
And she of many children pines away.
6. Jehovah kills and makes alive,  
Brings down to Sheol and brings up.
7. Jehovah makes poor and makes rich;  
He humbles, also he exalts.
8. He lifts from the dust the poor,  
From the dunghill he exalts the needy,  
To cause them to sit with nobles,  
And a throne of glory gives them as a possession.

<sup>k</sup> Psalm 37, 15, 17; 76, 3.—<sup>l</sup> Psalm 34, 10; Luke 1, 53.—<sup>m</sup> Psalm 113, 9.—<sup>n</sup> Isaiah 54, 1; Jeremiah 15, 9.

<sup>o</sup> Deut. 32, 39; Job 5, 18; Hos. 6, 1.—<sup>p</sup> Job 1, 21.—<sup>q</sup> Psa. 75, 7.—<sup>r</sup> Psa. 113, 7, 8; Dan. 4, 17; Luke 1, 52.—<sup>s</sup> Job 36, 7.

4. **Bow-heroes**—Heroes armed with the bow. Hebrew, קֶשֶׁת גִּבּוֹרִים חֲתִים, *bow of heroes dismayed*, the participle *dismayed* (חֲתִים) agreeing (by attraction) with *heroes*, not *bow*. The Israelitish mind was familiar with the instruments and imagery of war, and when the devout Hannah sings the triumphs of her soul she naturally uses imagery like this. **Tottering ones**—Those who are weary, feeble, faint, and just ready to fall, as Hannah was when the comforting words of the high priest (chap. i, 17) inspired her with new strength. See note on chap. i, 23.

5. **Full ones**—Those who are usually sated with an abundance of food. **With bread are hired**, or, *hire themselves out for bread*. They are glad if, by toil even, they can get but their daily food. **Hungry ones cease**—From their usual toils. They who were accustomed to labour hard for bread to satisfy their hunger now keep holiday; they cease to be what they were before. By this metaphorical lan-

guage, as well as by the positive statements immediately following, does Hannah still further contrast the changed circumstances of herself and her rival. **Seven**—That is, seven children. The number of fulness. Compare Ruth iv, 15. Up to this point the prophetess seems to have had her rival particularly in view; but throughout the rest of this sacred song she rises above things peculiar to herself alone, and celebrates the power and glory of God's universal providence.

6. **Kills and makes alive**—In his hand is the power of life and death. **Sheol** here evidently means the grave, as in Gen. xxxvii, 35; xlii, 38; but with the word is ever associated a dim and shadowy idea of a separate disembodied existence, the under-world, into which all the dead have gone.

8. **Lifts from the dust the poor**—Compare Psa. cxiii, 7, 8, which is borrowed from this prayer of Hannah. **A throne of glory**—A position of eminence and power. How many has God's providence raised up from obscurity to thrones of honour! Joseph, Gideon, Saul, David, Daniel, and others

glory: for 'the pillars of the earth are the Lord's, and he hath set the world upon them. 9 'He will keep the feet of his saints, and the wicked shall be silent in darkness; for by strength shall no man prevail. 10 The adversaries

of the Lord shall be 'broken to pieces; 'out of heaven shall he thunder upon them: 'the Lord shall judge the ends of the earth; and he shall give strength unto his king, and 'exalt the horn of his anointed.

For to Jehovah are the pillars of the earth,  
And he sets upon them the world.

9. The feet of his pious ones he will guard,  
And the wicked in darkness shall be dumb;  
For not by strength shall a man become mighty.
10. Jehovah!—they shall be dismayed who contend against him.  
Above him in the heavens he shall thunder.  
Jehovah shall judge the ends of the earth,  
And shall give strength to his king,  
And exalt the horn of his anointed.

† Job 38. 4-6; Psa. 24. 2; 102. 26; 104. 5; Heb. 1. 8.  
‡ Psa. 91. 11; 121. 3.

are examples. **To Jehovah**—Belonging to Jehovah; his work. **Pillars of the earth**—Supporters of the earth, foundations on which the world is represented as resting. A metaphorical way of representing Jehovah as the Creator and Upholder of all things.

9. **The feet of his pious ones he will guard**—That they may not wander into fatal errors. **Shall be dumb**—Filled with confusion of face, confounded, and destroyed. **Not by strength shall a man become mighty**—Not by his own strength, whether it consist in great physical force, deadly weapons, wealth, or influence among men. Goliath assumed to be mighty in himself, but David's mightiness was in Jehovah. Chap. xvii, 45.

10. **Above him**—Above the enemy who contends against God. **In the heavens he shall thunder**—As he did when the Philistines attacked Samuel and the Israelites. Chap. vii, 10, and references. **The ends of the earth**—The earth in its utmost extremities; the whole world. **His king and his anointed** are the same, and are to be understood, not of one particular king alone, but of Saul and David and their successors. It is not true, as some have affirmed, that this is the first time the word *משיח*, *anointed one*, is found in the Scriptures, for in Lev. iv, 3; v, 16, it is several times applied to the high priest. Neither is it to be

† Psa. 2. 9.—‡ Chap. 7. 10; Psa. 18. 13.—§ Psa. 96. 13; 98. 9.—|| Psa. 89. 24.

understood of Christ alone, for it is used of Saul, (chap. xxiv, 10,) and David, (2 Sam. xix, 21; xxii, 51,) and other Hebrew kings, (Psa. lxxxix, 38,) and even of Cyrus, the Persian conqueror. Isa. xlv, 1. But the Hebrew Monarchy, of which David was the brightest star, was a type of the Messiah's kingdom, and culminated at last in the Messiah himself. Hence Jehovah's promises of salvation to David, his anointed, were also extended "to his seed for evermore." Psa. xviii, 50; compare 2 Sam. vii, 12-16. Thus we see how, in the spirit of inspiration, this song of Hannah looks far into the future, and catches glimpses even of Messiah's day.

#### SAMUEL'S YOUTHFUL MINISTRY—THE WICKEDNESS OF ELI'S SONS, 11-26.

Observe in the following account how the piety of Samuel and the wickedness of Eli's sons are mentioned in immediate connexion with each other, as if to call attention to the contrast, and to show how the saintliness of the one and the worthlessness of the others were developed in the midst of holy ministrations. To the one the sacred services were a savour of life unto life, to the others of death unto death. Hophni and Phinehas waxed great in wickedness, while Samuel grew in favour both with Jehovah and with men.

11 And Elkanah went to Ramah to his house. <sup>a</sup>And the child did minister unto the Lord before Eli the priest. 12 Now the sons of Eli <sup>b</sup>were <sup>c</sup>sons of Belial; <sup>d</sup>they knew not the Lord. 13 And the priest's custom with the people <sup>e</sup>was, <sup>f</sup>that, when any man offered sacrifice, the priest's servant came, while the flesh was in seething, with a fleshhook of three teeth in his hand; 14 And he struck <sup>g</sup>it into the pan, or kettle, or caldron, or pot; <sup>h</sup>all that the fleshhook brought up the priest took for himself. So they did in Shiloh unto all the Israelites that came thither. 15 Also before they <sup>i</sup>burnt the fat, the priest's servant came, and said to the man that sacrificed, Give flesh to roast for the priest; for he will not have sodden flesh of thee,

<sup>a</sup> Verse 18; chap. 3. 1.—<sup>g</sup> Deut. 13. 13.—<sup>b</sup> Judg. 2. 10; Jer. 22. 16; Rom. 1. 28.—<sup>c</sup> Exod. 29. 27, 28; Lev. 7. 34; Isa. 56. 11; Mal. 1. 10; 2 Pet. 2. 13, 15.—<sup>d</sup> Lev. 3. 8-5, 16; Rom. 16. 18; Phil. 3. 19; Jude 12.

11. **The child did minister**—In such a way as was proper for a child, and in such services as he could perform, such as lighting the lamps, (chap. iii, 3), and opening the doors of the tabernacle. Chap. iii, 15. **Before Eli**—Under his oversight and care.

12. **Sons of Belial**—Worthless, good-for-nothing fellows. See note on chap. i, 16. **Knew not the Lord**—Had no reverence for his worship, and no deep sense of the Divine holiness.

13. **The priest's custom with the people**—The sacrilegious custom here described had been profanely introduced in the time of the Judges, and was a sad departure from the law, which gave only certain specified portions to the priests, and required the fat to be burned on the altar. Lev. vii, 29-34. **A fleshhook of three teeth**—"The three-pronged fork which fishes up the seething flesh is the earliest type of grasping at pluralities and church-preferments by base means. For students of ecclesiastical history, Hophni and Phinehas are characters 'of great and instructive wickedness.' They are the true exemplars of the grasping and worldly clergy of all ages."—Stanley.

17. **The young men**—Eli's sons, Hophni and Phinehas. **Men**—The con-

duct of these young men brought reproach upon the whole sacred service; and, indeed, there is nothing that tends more directly to bring religion itself into contempt, and to multiply infidels and scoffers, than open wickedness in the ministers of the altar. 18. **Girded with a linen ephod**—The ephod of the high priest was a shoulder-dress of *fine linen*, cunningly wrought, having two parts, and girded around the body below the arms. See Exod. xxviii, 6-8. This ephod of Samuel was probably of the same shape, but of different material. He was permitted in his early childhood to wear a garment so nearly like that of the high priest because his was a special case, and he was to be in lifelong communication with Jehovah. 19. **Made him a little coat**—Probably designed for use when not engaged in the service of the sanctuary. How artlessly this token of a mother's tenderness and love is mentioned. 20. **The Lord give thee seed... for the loan**—Literally: *May Jehovah establish unto thee a seed from this woman in the place of the one asked for*, (that is, Samuel), *which was asked for of Jehovah*, (by both Elkanah and Hannah.) Compare the note on chap. i, 28. Eli here prays that other children may be granted to these pious parents to com-

<sup>2</sup> Hebrew, *as on the day*.—<sup>c</sup> Genesis 6. 11.—<sup>d</sup> Malachi 2. 8.—<sup>e</sup> Verse 11.—<sup>f</sup> Exodus 28. 4; 2 Samuel 6. 14.—<sup>g</sup> Chapter 1. 3.—<sup>h</sup> Genesis 14. 19.—<sup>i</sup> Or, *petition which she asked*, &c.—<sup>j</sup> Chapter 1. 28.



they went unto their own home. **21** And the Lord <sup>a</sup> visited Hannah, so that she conceived, and bare three sons and two daughters. And the child Samuel <sup>b</sup> grew before the Lord. **22** Now Eli was very old, and heard all that his sons did unto all Israel; and how they lay with <sup>c</sup> the women that <sup>d</sup> assembled at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation. **23** And he said unto them, Why do ye such things? for <sup>e</sup> I hear of your evil dealings by all this people. **24** Nay, my sons; for *it is* no good report that I

<sup>k</sup> Gen. 21. 1. — <sup>l</sup> Verse 26; Judg. 13. 24; chap. 8. 19; Luke 1. 80; 2. 40. — <sup>m</sup> See Exod. 38. 8. — <sup>n</sup> Hebrew, *assembled by troops*. — <sup>o</sup> Or, *I hear evil words of you*.

pensate them for the one now dedicated to the Lord, and verse 21 shows that this prayer of the high priest was answered as speedily as the one recorded in chap. i, 17.

**22. The women that assembled at the door**—All classes of women, young and old, assembled at Shiloh for the purpose of worship, as Hannah did, and some were probably there employed in some kind of service for the tabernacle; but neither this passage nor Exod. xxxviii, 8, sustains the notion of some, that there was a regularly constituted order of female ministers or deaconesses that served at the tabernacle. Women may, indeed, have done some things to aid the sanctuary worship, but they certainly never constituted a sacred order of ministers in ancient Israel. "When we find the sons of Eli corrupting the women that assembled by troops at the door of the tabernacle, it seems very probable that they were imitating the conduct of the priests of Ashtoreth or of Baalpeor, with whom such license was a part of religious service."—*Wilkins's Essay on Phenicia and Israel*.

**23. Why do ye such things**—The fond father merely remonstrates and reasons, but young men so deeply sunken in sin as were Hophni and Phinehas are not to be benefitted or reclaimed by kind moral suasion alone. He should have put forth the hand of his authority as judge, to punish severely such violence and crime.

**25. If one man sin against another**—Better and literally, *if man sins*

hear: ye make the Lord's people <sup>a</sup> to transgress. **25** If one man sin against another, the judge shall judge him: but if a man <sup>b</sup> sin against the Lord, who shall entreat for him? Notwithstanding, they hearkened not unto the voice of their father, <sup>c</sup> because the Lord would slay them. **26** And the child Samuel <sup>d</sup> grew on, and <sup>e</sup> was in favour both with the Lord, and also with men.

**27** And there came a man of God unto Eli, and said unto him, Thus saith the Lord, <sup>f</sup> Did I plainly appear

<sup>g</sup> Or, *to cry out*. — <sup>h</sup> Num. 15. 30. — <sup>i</sup> Josh. 11. 20; Prov. 15. 10. — <sup>j</sup> Verse 21. — <sup>k</sup> Prov. 3. 4; Luke 2. 32; Acts 2. 47; Rom. 14. 18. — <sup>l</sup> 1 Kings 13. 1. — <sup>m</sup> Exod. 4. 14, 27.

**against man. The judge shall judge him**—Hebrew, *God will judge him*; that is, by the properly constituted authorities, the priests, Levites, and judges. See Deut. xvii, 8–13. Eli himself was such a judge, and intimates to his sons that in sins of man against man he might hear testimony and decide, and in rendering his judgment be partial and kind to the offender; but in sins against Jehovah he could not render judgment, but the offended Majesty of heaven would take the judgment into his own hands. **If a man sin against the Lord, who shall entreat for him**—This question was not put for the purpose of eliciting a direct answer, but to lead these wicked sons to reflection. Yet even such solemn appeals failed. **Because the Lord would slay them**—*וַיִּפֶּן לְהַמִּיתָם*, *was inclined to kill them*.

He had already given them over to judicial blindness. They had made themselves vessels of wrath fitted to destruction, and therefore God had resolved to destroy them.

**26. The child Samuel grew**—Whilst Eli's sons grew in wickedness, Samuel grew in grace and wisdom. See introductory note before verse 11.

**GOD'S DENUNCIATORY MESSAGE TO ELI.**  
27–36.

**27. A man of God**—Either an angel from heaven, as was the one who appeared to Manoah and his wife, (Judges xiii, 8,) or a prophet, (1 Kings xiii, 1,) like unto Shemaiah or Elijah.

unto the house of thy father, when they were in Egypt in Pharaoh's house? **28** And did I choose him out of all the tribes of Israel to be my priest, to offer upon mine altar, to burn incense, to wear an ephod before me? and did I give unto the house of thy father all the offerings made by fire of the children of Israel? **29** Wherefore kick ye at my sacrifice and at mine offering, which I have commanded in my habitation; and honourest thy sons above me, to

*Exod. 28. 1, 4; Num. 16. 5; 18. 1, 7.—u Lev. 2. 3, 10; 6. 11; 7. 7, 8, 34, 35; 10. 14, 15; Num. 5. 9, 10; 18. 8-19.—v Deut. 32. 15.—w Deut. 12. 5, 6.*

1 Kings xii, 22, 17, 18. The expression is that commonly used of a prophet, an inspired human messenger, and is doubtless to be so understood here. This was before the age of prophets, and this man of God appears in the sacred history, like Melchizedek, without father, without mother, without beginning of days or end of life, and so may be regarded as a permanent type of that prophetic order that subsequently arose in Israel, and, by warnings and threatenings, rebuked the wickedness of the people, even in high places, and zealously guarded the interests of the theocracy. He bears no name, but, otherwise, his sudden appearance and fearful message at a time when prophecy was almost unknown in Israel. (chap. iii, 1, note,) are about as remarkable as the saintly appearance of Melchizedek in Abraham's day. **Thy father**—Aaron. **When they were in Egypt in Pharaoh's house**—God revealed himself to Aaron in Egypt when he sent him in the wilderness to meet Moses. (Exod. iv, 27,) and as his mother and sister were intimate with members of the royal family, (Exod. ii, 9, 10,) so Aaron himself may have had some particular service or position in Pharaoh's house. But *Pharaoh's house* may mean the nation over whom he ruled.

**28. Did I choose him... my priest**—Compare Exod. xxviii. **All the offerings made by fire**—Aaron and his sons had oversight of all the offerings of the altar. Num. xviii, 7.

**29. Kick ye at my sacrifice**—Literally, *Why trample ye under foot*, that is,

make yourselves fat with the chiefest of all the offerings of Israel my people? **30** Wherefore the Lord God of Israel saith, \*I said indeed *that* thy house, and the house of thy father, should walk before me for ever: but now the Lord saith, \*Be it far from me; for them that honour me \*I will honour, and \*they that despise me shall be lightly esteemed. **31** Behold, \*the days come, that I will cut off thine arm, and the arm of thy father's house, that there shall not

*Exod. 29. 9.—y Jer. 18. 9, 10.—z Psal. 18. 20; 91. 14.—a Mal. 2. 9.—b 1 Kings 2. 27; Ezek. 44. 10; see chap. 4. 11, 18, 30; 14. 3; 22. 18, &c.*

despise, treat with contempt, my sacrifices? Eli treated with contempt the offerings by allowing his sons to desecrate the holy service when he had the authority and power to punish them as their sins deserved. In this way he virtually honoured his sons more than God. According to verses 15 and 16, they appropriated the most choice of the offerings to themselves, thus *making themselves fat* at the expense and reproach of Israel and God. **Habitation**—The tabernacle, the immediate dwelling place of Jehovah.

**30. Should walk before me for ever**—See Exod. xxix, 9; xl, 15, and Num. xxv, 13. **But now... Be it far from me**—What then! Is God unfaithful to his promises? By no means, for his administration is based upon the following rule, which is a settled principle of the divine government: **Them that honour me I will honour**, etc. Though his promises, as in this case, or his denunciations, as in the case of Nineveh, (Jonah iii, 4,) seem to be absolute and irrevocable, yet they must always be studied in the light of this rule. Still, though the descendants of Eli lost their part in this promise to Aaron, that promise was confirmed in Zadok and his sons, of the line of Eleazar. See note on verse 35.

**31. Cut off thine arm**—To cut off one's arm is to deprive him of strength and render him helpless. Thus was Eli's house disabled. Compare Job xxii, 9; Psal. xxxvii, 17; Zech. xi, 17. **Not be an old man in thine house**—Because the rest of his family should die in the flower of their age. Verse 33.

be an old man in thine house. **32** And thou shalt see 'an enemy in my habitation, in all *the wealth which God shall give Israel*: and there shall not be 'an old man in thine house for ever. **33** And the man of thine, *whom* I shall not cut off from mine altar, *shall be* to consume thine eyes, and to grieve thine heart:

<sup>7</sup> Or, *the affliction of the tabernacle, for all the wealth which God would have given Israel.*—<sup>c</sup> See Zech. 8. 4.

**32. Thou shalt see an enemy—**There can be given no satisfactory exposition of this verse as it stands in the authorized version, or by understanding either Samuel or Zadok to be the *enemy* referred to. The marginal reading gives a far better sense to the first part of the verse—*Thou shalt see the affliction of the tabernacle*; but what follows—for *all the wealth which God would have given Israel*—makes no sense, and has no sufficient warrant in the Hebrew text. The word **כִּנּוּ**, which is rendered *give* both in the text and margin, means *to be good, cheerful, glad*; and, in the Hiphil form, *to cause to be good, cheerful*, etc. Thus in Prov. xv, 13, our translators have rendered it *maketh cheerful*—"A merry heart maketh a cheerful countenance." We would therefore translate the passage thus: *Thou shalt see an affliction of the habitation (tabernacle, as in ver. 29) in all which made Israel glad.* That which above all things else made Israel glad and joyous was the possession of the ark of the covenant. Witness the joyful shout of the army when it was brought into their camp at Ebenezer, (chap. iv, 5,) and the joys of Israel when David brought it to Jerusalem. 2 Sam. vi. The greatest calamity that could befall the tabernacle was the loss of the ark, the symbol of the Divine presence; and Eli lived to see that bitter affliction, (chap. iv, 11, 18,) which was emphatically an *affliction of the tabernacle in respect to* (**כִּנּוּ**) *all that was wont to make Israel glad.* His sudden death, when he heard that the ark was captured, was as much as to say, If the ark is lost ALL is lost. So bitter an affliction was this to the nation that it was chronicled as "the captivity of the land." See note, Judges xviii, 30.

and all the increase of thine house shall die 'in the flower of their age. **34** And this *shall be* 'a sign unto thee, that shall come upon thy two sons, on Hophni and Phinehas; 'in one day they shall die both of them. **35** And 'I will raise me up a faithful priest, *that shall do according to that which is* in mine

<sup>8</sup> Hebrew, *men.*—<sup>d</sup> 1 Kings 13. 3.—<sup>e</sup> Chapter 4. 11.—<sup>f</sup> 1 Kings 2. 35; 1 Chronicles 29. 23; Ezekiel 44. 15.

**33. And the man of thine—**The meaning is, I will not cut off all thy posterity from the altar service, but there will be always remaining some, who shall witness in sorrow and grief the fulfilment of this judgment against the house of their father. Abiath, the grandson of Eli, seems to have succeeded him in the priesthood, (chap. xiv, 3:) after him Ahimelech, (xxii, 11,) and next Abiathar, whom Solomon thrust out of the priesthood in fulfilment of this prophecy. 1 Kings ii, 27. Eli's eyes and heart were thus consumed in the posterity that succeeded him, none of whom lived to old age, but all died in the bloom of manhood. See still other woes foretold in verse 36.

**34. And this . . . a sign—**The death of Hophni and Phinehas in one day should be a sign that all these woful predictions should surely come to pass.

**35. I will raise me up a faithful priest—**By this "faithful priest" some have understood Samuel, and others Zadok, while a few argue that both of them may be intended. Samuel, indeed, succeeded Eli as judge of Israel, and during his lifetime the Aaronic priesthood seems to have fallen into neglect; but it is certain that neither he nor his descendants were established in the priesthood, so that it cannot be said that God "built him a sure house." Therefore it is better to understand Zadok to be this faithful priest. As a part of this prophecy received its fulfilment in the thrusting out of Abiathar, so this verse was fulfilled in the consecration of Zadok. 1 Kings ii, 35; 1 Chron. xxix, 22. Zadok was a descendant of Aaron through Eleazar, (1 Chron. xxiv, 3,) and therefore God's promise to Aaron was not made void by the impiety of Eli's sons, for in Zadok

heart and in my mind: and <sup>a</sup>“I will build him a sure house; and he shall walk before <sup>b</sup>mine anointed for ever.” 36 <sup>c</sup>“And it shall come to pass, *that* every one that is left in thine house shall come and crouch to him for a piece of silver and a morsel of bread, and shall say, <sup>d</sup>“Put me, I pray thee, into <sup>e</sup>one of the

<sup>a</sup> 2 Sam. 7. 11, 27; 1 Kings 11. 38. — <sup>b</sup> Psa. 2. 2; 18. 50. — <sup>c</sup> 1 Kings 2. 27. — <sup>d</sup> Heb. *Join*.

Eleazar's posterity were established forever. Compare Num. xxv, 11–13. It is also well worthy of notice that in the temple of Ezekiel's vision, which symbolizes the spiritual Church of the then future, the sons of Zadok are named as priests. Ezek. xl, 46; xliii, 19; xliv, 15; xlviii, 11. **He shall walk before mine anointed for ever**—Before David, Solomon, and the later kings of Judah, until the passing away of the Hebrew monarchy before the Messianic kingdom, in which Christ himself is prophet, priest, and king.

36. **Every one that is left in thine house**—Eli's posterity should not be utterly cut off; but even after the deposition of Abiathar they would linger as mendicants around the faithful priest, and beg of him a pittance of money and of bread, or petition for some work pertaining to the priesthood, that would yield them food. Even after the seventy years' exile we find descendants of Ithamar among the priests who returned with Ezra from Babylon. Ezra viii, 2. “See,” says Dr. A. Clarke, “the sin and its punishment. They formerly pampered themselves, and fed to the full on the Lord's sacrifices; and now they are reduced to a morsel of bread. They fed themselves without fear; and now they have cleanness of teeth in all their dwellings. They wasted the Lord's heritage; and now they beg their bread!”

### CHAPTER III.

#### SAMUEL'S CALL, 1–21.

1. **Samuel ministered**—See note on chap. ii, 11. According to Josephus, Samuel was now about twelve years old. **The word of the Lord was precious in those days**—יָקָר,

priests' offices, that I may eat a piece of bread.

### CHAPTER III.

**AND** <sup>a</sup>the child Samuel ministered unto the Lord before Eli. And <sup>b</sup>the word of the Lord was precious in those days; *there was* no open vision. 2 And it came to pass at that time,

10 Or, *somewhat about the priesthood*. — <sup>a</sup> Chap. 2. 11. — <sup>b</sup> Psa. 74. 9; Amos 8. 11; ver. 21.

*precious, costly*: an epithet applied frequently to very rare and costly stones. 2 Sam. xii, 30; 1 Kings x, 2; 1 Chron. xx, 2; Ezek. xxvii, 22. The meaning is that direct revelations from God had become exceedingly rare, and this fact was owing to the lamentable sinfulness of the priesthood and the people. As sinfulness in the individual heart drives away the Holy Spirit, so in the Hebrew nation it drove away the spirit of prophecy. A direct communication from God at such a time would truly be a *precious thing*. Unless we reckon Deborah, who is called a prophetess, (Judges iv, 4,) so far as we know only two prophets had appeared in Israel (see Judges vi, 8, and 1 Sam. ii, 27) during the period that intervened between the time of Moses and this call of Samuel. **No open vision**—Literally, *No divine communication was spread*; that is, published abroad, made known. If, perchance, God revealed himself to pious individuals here and there, he gave them private revelations; but the persons thus honoured were not thereby constituted public prophets, nor sent to publish their communications to the people. In the midst of such spiritual darkness Samuel arose as a new luminary in Israel.

2. **It came to pass at that time**—Not the night following the day on which the man of God appeared to Eli, (ii, 27,) as Drusius, Patrick, and others suppose, for, as a part of this call of God to Samuel contained a prophecy against Eli, it is probable that some considerable time had elapsed since the man of God delivered his message; but the words *at that time* (Heb., *in that day*) refer more naturally to the period designated by *those days* in the first verse, when the word of God was rare, than to any particular day or part of a day.

O. T.

when Eli *was* laid down in his place, and his eyes began to wax dim, *that* he could not see; 3 And ere the *lamp* of God went out 'in the temple of the LORD, where the ark of God *was*, and Samuel was laid down to *sleep*; 4 That the LORD 'called Samuel: and he answered, Here *am* I. 5 And he ran unto Eli, and said, Here *am* I; for thou calledst me. And he said, I called not; lie down again. And he went and laid down. 6 And the LORD called yet again, Samuel: and Samuel arose and went to Eli, and said, Here *am* I; for thou didst call me. And he answered, I called not, my son; lie down again. 7 'Now Samuel 'did not yet know the LORD, neither was the word of the LORD yet revealed unto him. 8 And the LORD called Samuel again the third time.

c Gen. 27. 1; 48. 10; chap. 2. 22; 4. 15.—  
d Exod. 27. 21; Lev. 24. 3; 2 Chron. 13. 11.—  
e Chap. 1. 9.—f Exod. 3. 4; Psa. 99. 6; Acts 9. 4; 1 Cor. 12. 6; Gal. 1. 15, 16.—1 Or, *Thus did Samuel before he knew the LORD, and before the word of the LORD was revealed*

**In his place**—In his sleeping apartment, either in the court of the tabernacle or near by it. **His eyes began to wax dim**—By reason of old age. This statement seems to be introduced here to explain why Samuel ran so hastily to Eli when he heard his name called, as though he supposed the high priest, being partially blind, needed his assistance.

3. **Ere the lamp of God went out**—Before the dawning of the day. Compare Exod. xxvii, 21.

4. **The Lord called Samuel**—In an audible voice, by pronouncing his name. Compare Gen. xxii, 1; Exod. iii, 4.

7. **Samuel did not yet know the Lord**—The first part of this verse is explained by the second. Samuel knew not the Lord in the way of receiving divine communications from him, for, as already stated, such communications were at that time rare.

10. **The Lord came, and stood**—From verse 15 we learn that Samuel beheld a *vision* as well as heard a voice, and, therefore, it is most natural to understand the words *came and stood* as designating a visible appearance. God was not only *personally* but *visibly* there, either in human form (Gen. xviii, 2, 33; Josh. v, 13-15) or

And he arose and went to Eli, and said, Here *am* I; for thou didst call me. And Eli perceived that the LORD had called the child. 9 Therefore Eli said unto Samuel, Go, lie down: and it shall be, if he call thee, that thou shalt say, 'Speak, LORD; for thy servant heareth. So Samuel went and lay down in his place. 10 And the LORD came, and stood, and called as at other times, Samuel, Samuel. Then Samuel answered, Speak; for thy servant heareth. 11 And the LORD said to Samuel, Behold, I will do a thing in Israel, 'at which both the ears of every one that heareth it shall tingle. 12 In that day I wi' perform against Eli 'all *things* which 'have spoken concerning his house: 'when I begin, I will also make an end. 13 'For I have told him that I will 'judge his

unto him.—g See Acts 19. 2.—h Exod. 20. 10; Psa. 85. 8; Isa. 6. 8; Dan. 10. 19; Acts 9. 6.—  
i 2 Kings 21. 12; Jer. 19. 3.—k Chap. 2. 30-36.  
—2 Heb. *beginning and ending*.—3 Or, *And I will tell him, &c.*—l Chap. 2. 29-31, &c.—  
m Ezek. 7. 3; 18. 30.

in some angelic or surprising manifestation. Exod. iii, 2-6. Hitherto Samuel had *seen* nothing, but had only heard the voice. Thrice the voice had called, and thrice the child had gone to Eli, supposing he had called. All this served as preparation for the vision, not only rousing Eli from his thoughtlessness, and putting his mind in a state of anxious expectation, but also impressing Samuel with a feeling that something remarkable was pending. Having thus prepared the way, the Lord not merely *called as at other times*, but he also *came and stood*, that is, revealed himself by some visible manifestation; and this, perhaps, so awed and surprised the child that he omitted the name of the LORD from the answer which Eli had directed him to make in case he heard the voice again.

11. **Shall tingle**—With horror and alarm. As a loud, sharp, discordant note thrills one's ears with pain, so the bitter tidings of Israel's woe in the judgment about to fall on Eli's house would shock all Israel. Compare the similar use of this proverbial saying in 2 Kings xxi, 12; Jer. xix, 3.

12. **All...I have spoken**—In the message recorded chap. ii, 27-36. **Begin...make an end**—That is, com-

house for ever for the iniquity which he knoweth; because "his sons made themselves 'vile, and he "restrained them not. 14 And therefore I have sworn unto the house of Eli, that the iniquity of Eli's house "shall not be purged with sacrifice nor offering for ever. 15 And Samuel lay until the morning, and opened the doors of the house of the LORD. And Samuel feared to show Eli the vision. 16 Then Eli called Samuel, and said, Samuel, my son: and he answered, Here am I. 17 And

n Chap. 2. 12, 17, 22.—4 Or, *accursed*.—  
5 Heb. *frowned not upon them*.—o Chap. 2.  
23, 25.—p Num. 15. 30, 31; Isa. 22. 14.—q Ruth  
1. 17.—6 Heb. *so add.*—7 Or, *word*.

mencing and finishing all. I will execute what I have spoken against Eli's house completely—from beginning to end.

15. **Doors of the house**—"Originally, when the tabernacle was simply a tent, travelling with the people from place to place, it had only curtains at the entrance to the holy place and court. But when Israel had become possessed of fixed houses in the land of Canaan, and the dwelling-place of God was permanently erected at Shiloh, instead of the tents that were pitched for the priests and Levites, who encamped round about during the journey through the desert, there were erected fixed houses, which were built against or inside the court, and not only served as dwellings for the priests and Levites who were officiating, but were also used for the reception and custody of the gifts that were brought as offerings to the sanctuary. These buildings, in all probability, supplanted the original tent-like enclosure around the court; so that, instead of the curtains at the entrance, there were folding *doors*, which were shut in the evening and opened in the morning."—*Keil*. **Samuel feared to show Eli the vision**—His fear arose from the sad and dreadful nature of what the Lord had told him. The word *vision* implies something more than a mental process. It was an external appearance. See note on verse 10.

17, 18. **What is the thing that... said unto thee**—It will be observed that the English version supplies the

he said, *What is the thing that the LORD hath said unto thee?* I pray thee hide *it* not from me: "God do so to thee, and "more also, if thou hide *any* 'thing from me of all the things that he said unto thee. 18 And Samuel told him "every whit, and hid nothing from him. And he said, "It is the LORD: let him do what seemeth him good. 19 And Samuel "grew, and "the LORD was with him, "and did let none of his words fall to the ground. 20 And all Israel "from Dan even to Beer-sheba knew that Samuel *was* "established to be

8 Heb. *all the things*, or, *words*.—r Job 1. 21; 2. 10; Psa. 39. 9; Isa. 39. 8.—s Chap. 2. 21.—t Gen. 22. 2, 21, 23.—u Chap. 9. 6.—v Judg. 20. 1.—9 Or, *faithful*.

words *the LORD*, but in his question Eli seems to have intentionally omitted the subject of the verb *said*. His words imply that he himself was uncertain who had called Samuel. He was doubtless strongly persuaded that it was Jehovah, for this had been his conviction when the child came to him the third time, (verse 8,) but not until Samuel had **told him every whit**,

(verse 18—*כָּל־הַדְּבָרִים*, *all the words*, that is, the entire communication of verses 11–14,) was he absolutely sure; then **he said, It is the Lord**, and bowed in humble submissiveness before the sad and solemn prophecy. If he had entertained any doubts respecting the message of chap. ii, 27–36, all doubt must have vanished now, as that message received confirmation through the child Samuel, whose word he could not doubt.

19. **Let none of his words fall to the ground**—Let none of his prophecies fail of fulfilment, so that it soon became known, far and near, that he was a divinely accredited prophet, and all his sayings surely came to pass. Compare chap. ix, 6.

20. **From Dan even to Beer-sheba**—Dan, elsewhere called also Laish, (Judges xviii, 29,) was situated about twenty-five miles north of the Sea of Galilee, and Beer-sheba in the south of Palestine, toward the borders of Arabia. These places served to designate the two extremities of the land of Israel. Compare Judges xx, 1; 2 Sam. iii, 10; xvii, 11; xxiv, 2, 15; 1 Kings iv, 25.

a prophet of the Lord. **21** And the Lord appeared again in Shiloh: for the Lord revealed himself to Samuel in Shiloh by "the word of the Lord.

20 Verses 1, 4.

### 21. The Lord appeared again—

Rather, *continued to appear*; that is, from time to time. **Revealed himself**—Discovered himself, or was unveiled.

"The Lord *uncovered the ear*—such is the literal expression; a touching and significant figure, taken from the manner in which the possessor of a secret moves back the long hair of his friend, and whispers into the ear thus laid bare the word that no one else may hear. It is a figure which precisely expresses the most universal and philosophical idea conveyed by the term *Revelation*, thence appropriated in the theological language both of East and West."

*Stanley. By the word of the Lord*

—By communications like the one just related. Literally, the expression is, *In the word of the Lord*. The word of the Lord was the very element in which he lived. Thus was Samuel caused to ask of Jehovah, that is, caused to be in continued intercourse with him, as he himself might ever be reminded by his very name. See note on chap. i, 28. Accordingly, the word of the Lord was no longer so costly and rare as it had previously been in Israel, (verse 1,) for throughout the land Samuel was known to habitually receive communications from Jehovah. "He is, also, the first instance of a prophet gradually raised for his office from the earliest dawn of reason. His work and his life are the counterparts of each other. With all the recollections of the ancient sanctuary impressed upon his mind, with the voice of God sounding in his ears, not, as in the case of the elder leaders and teachers of his people, amidst the roar of thunder and the clash of war, but in the still silence of the tabernacle, ere the lamp of God went out, he was the more fitted to meet the coming crisis, to become himself the centre of new institutions which should themselves become venerable as those in which he had been himself brought up."—*Stanley*.

### CHAPTER IV.

**AND** the word of Samuel <sup>1</sup> came to all Israel. Now Israel went out against the Philistines to battle, and

1 Or, *came to pass*. Heb. *was*.

### CHAPTER IV.

CAPTURE OF THE ARK, AND DEATH OF ELI'S SONS, 1-11.

This section records the beginning of the downfall of Eli's house, and that bitter affliction of the tabernacle—the loss of the sacred ark. See note on chap. ii, 32. Led by Jehovah's word, as communicated through Samuel, Israel goes out to battle with the Philistines; but it is that it may be made to feel its utter weakness without Jehovah's constant aid. The impiety of the nation demanded a signal chastisement, especially in the persons of its religious leaders, and Divine Wisdom saw fit to inflict it in the way here recorded. In the first engagement four thousand Hebrews are left dead upon the field. The survivors hasten to their camp, and whilst all hearts are quaking with terror, or quailing under a sense of bitter loss, the elders hold a speedy consultation. It was probably a midnight conference. They feel that Jehovah is not with them as he had been with their fathers, but they vainly imagine that to have the ark of the covenant among them will be to have a talisman against all possibility of failure. Delusive trust! They had yet to learn that in a wicked age, and under the ministry of a flagitious priesthood, Jehovah's presence may forsake even the sacred symbols. The ark was brought, and with it Eli's sons, but Jehovah came not.

**1. The word of Samuel came to all Israel. Now Israel went out against the Philistines**—Some have thought that the first sentence of this verse belongs to the narrative of the preceding chapter, and the English version gives countenance to this view. But let the words *and* and *now* (in the Hebrew the same word, <sup>1</sup>) be transposed, and the meaning of the sacred writer will be more readily seen. *Now the word of Samuel came to all*

pitched beside <sup>a</sup>Eben-ezer: and the Philistines pitched in Aphek. **2** And the Philistines put themselves in array against Israel: and when <sup>a</sup>they joined battle, Israel was smitten before the Philistines: and they slew of <sup>a</sup>the army in the field about four thousand men. **3** And when the people were come into the camp, the elders of Israel said, <sup>b</sup>Wherefore hath the Lord smitten us to day before the Philistines? Let us <sup>c</sup>fetch the <sup>c</sup>ark of the covenant of the Lord out of Shiloh unto us, that, when it cometh among us, it may save us out of the hand of our enemies. **4** So the people sent to Shiloh, that they might bring from thence the ark of the

<sup>a</sup> Chap. 5. 1; 7. 12.—<sup>2</sup> Heb. *the battle was spread*.—<sup>3</sup> Heb. *the array*.—<sup>b</sup> Psa. 74. 1, 11; Isa. 58. 2.—<sup>c</sup> Heb. *take unto us*.—<sup>c</sup> Num.

Israel, and Israel went, etc.; that is, Israel went out to battle in accordance with the word of Samuel, or by reason of his word. Perhaps they were encouraged by the appearance of the prophetic gift in Israel. Hence their wonder and surprise on being defeated. Verse 3. The Israelites had now for a long time been under the yoke of the Philistines, and it seems to have been the same subjection from which Samson began to deliver them, (Judges xiii, 5,) but from which they were not entirely freed until the time of Samuel. Chap. vii, 13, 14. The severe losses of this battle were doubtless providentially designed to teach Israel important lessons; and the captured ark, by its effect upon the Philistines and their gods, magnified the name of Jehovah among the heathen more than its remaining in the tabernacle could have done. Therefore we need not wonder that the word of God, through Samuel, counselled Israel to go forth even to this disastrous battle. **Eben-ezer**—This name was given to the place at a later day, after Jehovah had given Israel a signal victory over the Philistines. Chap. vii, 12. Its mention here, and in chap. v, 1, before the place had received the name, would naturally be made by an author writing at a later period, when this had become the common and well-known name of the place. Both **Eben-ezer** and **Aphek** must have been situated

covenant of the Lord of hosts, <sup>d</sup>which dwelleth *between* <sup>e</sup>the cherubim: and the two sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas, *were* there with the ark of the covenant of God. **5** And when the ark of the covenant of the Lord came into the camp, <sup>f</sup>all Israel shouted with a great shout, so that the earth rang again. **6** And when the Philistines heard the noise of the shout, they said, <sup>g</sup>What *meaneth* the noise of this great shout in the camp of the Hebrews? And they understood that the ark of the Lord was come into the camp. **7** And the Philistines were afraid; for they said, God is come into the camp. And they said, Woe unto us! for there hath not been

10. 33; Deut. 31. 26; Josh. 4. 7; Heb. 9. 4.—<sup>d</sup> 2 Sam. 6. 2; Psa. 80. 1; 99. 1.—<sup>e</sup> Exod. 25. 18, 22; Num. 7. 89.—<sup>f</sup> Judg. 15. 14.—<sup>g</sup> Exod. 32. 17, 18.

some few miles north or northwest of Jerusalem, but their exact locality has not been decided.

**3. Wherefore**—Having undertaken the battle at the word of the Lord by Samuel, they had not dreamed of defeat, for why should God counsel them to go to war, and then deliver them over to defeat by a heathen foe? **Let us fetch the ark**—Their fathers conquered the Midianites when they carried them into the war "the holy instruments," (Num. xxxi, 6,) and Jericho fell when the ark was carried around it, (Josh. vi,) and they now vainly suppose that the same ark will surely save them from the hand of the foe. Previous to this, at the time of the Benjamite war, the ark had been removed from Shiloh, and abode for a time at Beth-el. Judges xx, 27. Then, as now, the Israelites were counselled of God to go to war, but were nevertheless defeated. But then, as now, they were also themselves not without sin, and their arrogance and self-confidence needed to be deeply humbled.

**4. Between the cherubim**—The word *cherubim* is plural, and needs not the final *s*, as some Bibles have. For the allusion, see Exod. xxv, 22.

**5. All Israel shouted**—As many a modern army has done, and must naturally do in time of peril, at the sight of a mighty reinforcement. They felt confident now that victory would perch upon their banners.



such a thing <sup>a</sup> heretofore. **8** Woe unto us! who shall deliver us out of the hand of these mighty Gods? these *are* the Gods that smote the <sup>b</sup> Egyptians with all the plagues in the wilderness. **9** <sup>c</sup> Be strong, and quit yourselves like men, O ye Philistines, that ye be not servants unto the Hebrews, <sup>d</sup> as they have been to you: <sup>e</sup> quit yourselves like men, and fight. **10** And the Philistines fought, and <sup>f</sup> Israel was smitten, and they fled every man into his tent: and there was a very great slaughter; for there fell of Israel thirty thousand footmen. **11** And <sup>g</sup> the ark of God was taken; and <sup>h</sup> the

two sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas, <sup>i</sup> were slain.

**12** And there ran a man of Benjamin out of the army, and <sup>j</sup> came to Shiloh the same day with his clothes rent, and <sup>k</sup> with earth upon his head. **13** And when he came, lo, Eli sat upon <sup>l</sup> a seat by the wayside watching: for his heart trembled for the ark of God. And when the man came into the city, and told <sup>m</sup> it, all the city cried out. **14** And when Eli heard the noise of the crying, he said, What *meaneth* the noise of this tumult? And the man came in hastily, and told Eli. **15** Now Eli was ninety

<sup>5</sup> Hebrew, *yesterday*, or, *the third day*.—<sup>a</sup> Exodus 7. 5; Psalm 78. 43, 51.—<sup>i</sup> 1 Corinthians 16. 13.—<sup>k</sup> Judges 13. 1.—<sup>6</sup> Hebrew, *be men*.—<sup>l</sup> Verse 2; Leviticus 26. 17; Deuteron-

omy 28. 25; Psa. 78. 9, 62.—<sup>m</sup> Chap. 2. 32; Psa. 78. 61.—<sup>n</sup> Chap. 2. 34; Psa. 78. 64.—<sup>7</sup> Heb. *died*.—<sup>o</sup> 2 Sam. 1. 2.—<sup>p</sup> Josh. 7. 6; 2 Sam. 13. 19; 15. 32; Neh. 9. 1; Job 2. 12.—<sup>q</sup> Chap. 1. 9.

**8. These mighty Gods**—These Philistines speak the language of polytheists, not knowing that the God of Israel is ONE LORD. **Smote the Egyptians with all the plagues**—The word rendered *plagues* means literally *smiting, slaughter*, and special reference is made to the destruction of Pharaoh and his army in the Red Sea, which was on the border of the desert. In Exod. xiii, 20; xiv, 3, 11, 12, the Egyptian shore of the Red Sea is called *the wilderness*. The other plagues of Egypt may also be included, and the phrase **the wilderness** need not be pressed, as though these Philistines in such an allusion must needs make precise statements.

**10. Fled every man into his tent**—That is, to his own home. A large proportion of the Israelitish people dwelt in tents. Compare Josh. xxii, 7; 1 Kings xii, 16. The Israelites were utterly routed, and fled pellmell from field and camp—an army completely panic-stricken and demoralized.

#### THE BITTER TIDINGS, 12–22.

We might search the fields of literature in vain to find a more touching picture of human calamity and distress than these ten verses give us. The aged Eli, feeble and decrepit under the weight of eight and ninety years, goes forth from his place in the tabernacle and sits down by the wayside, where he may catch the first message from the battle. All the city is waiting the re-

sult in breathless expectation, and his heart is trembling for the safety of the ark. Perhaps it was taken away from Shiloh without his counsel or against his will. But though his anxiety to hear the first message leads him out by the wayside, the messenger seems to have rushed by him, intentionally, perhaps, knowing that the awful tidings would break the old man's heart. But he soon hears the bitter wail of lamentation that rises from the city, and the messenger, coming into his presence, rapidly but impressively tells his woful tale. Eli's trembling bosom throbs with wild intensity, but he still bears up until he hears it said, "The ark of God is taken!" Then burst the heart that had so long been sorrow-stricken, and, falling backwards from his seat, the venerable priest and Judge expired.

Then followed in another part of Shiloh another scene of woe. It was the mournful death of the wife of Phinehas. The bitter tidings brought on her travail pains, and these ended in death. No comforting words of surrounding friends could inspirit her, and with her dying breath she gave her child a name that would forever suggest to the memory of the living the bitter losses of that dreadful day.

**12. His clothes rent, and . . . earth upon his head**—Usual signs of calamity and grief. Compare Josh. vii, 6; 2 Sam. xiii, 19; xv, 32.

**14. The man came in**—Into some place by the gate of the city to which

and eight years old; and 'his eyes were dim, that he could not see.

**16** And the man said unto Eli, *I am* he that came out of the army, and I fled to day out of the army. And he said, "What<sup>r</sup> is there done, my son? **17** And the messenger answered and said, Israel is fled before the Philistines, and there hath been also a great slaughter among the people, and thy two sons also, Hophni and Phinehas, are dead, and the ark of God is taken. **18** And it came to pass, when he made mention of the ark of God, that he fell from off the seat backward by the side of the gate, and 'his neck brake, and he died: for he was an old man, and heavy. And he had judged Israel forty years.

<sup>r</sup> Chap. 3. 2.—<sup>s</sup> Heb. *stood*.—<sup>s2</sup> Sam. 1. 4.  
<sup>9</sup> Heb. *is the thing*.—<sup>t1</sup> Pet. 4. 17, 18.—<sup>10</sup> Or, *to cry out*.—<sup>11</sup> Heb. *were turned*.

Eli seems to have hastened when he heard the crying.

**15. Eyes were dim**—Literally: *And Eli (was) a son of ninety and eight years, and his eyes stood*, that is, became fixed; "spoken of a person afflicted with a disease of the eye, in which the pupil becomes fixed, so as no longer to contract and dilate."—*Gesenius*.

**17. The messenger answered and said**—The simple, direct, and yet climactic way in which the messenger tells his tale of sorrow has attracted the notice of all critics. How few the words used to relate all the items of this thrilling message! How each successive statement rises in the announcement of a still severer loss! First he says: **Israel is fled before the Philistines**—This was the beginning of sorrows. **A great slaughter among the people**—This was worse than flight, and the cause of lamentation in thousands of Israelitish homes. **Thy two sons also, Hophni and Phinehas, are dead**—Most terrible tidings for a devoted father! And perhaps those sons had gone forth to the field of battle despite the father's prayer and entreaties. Thus was fulfilled the prophecy of the man of God who had before announced the downfall of his house, (chap. ii, 34,) and this was to be for Eli the sign of yet heavier woes. **The ark of God is taken**—This was the calamity of the tabernacle in that

**19** And his daughter in law, Phinehas' wife, was with child, *near*<sup>10</sup> to be delivered: and when she heard the tidings that the ark of God was taken, and that her father in law and her husband were dead, she bowed herself and travailed; for her pains<sup>11</sup> came upon her. **20** And about the time of her death<sup>12</sup> the women that stood by her said unto her, Fear not; for thou hast borne a son. But she answered not,<sup>13</sup> neither did she regard it. **21** And she named the child<sup>14</sup> *Ichabod*, saying, "The glory is departed from Israel: because the ark of God was taken, and because of her father in law and her husband. **22** And she said, The glory is departed from Israel: for the ark of God is taken.

<sup>u</sup> Gen. 35. 17.—<sup>12</sup> Heb. *set not her heart*.—<sup>13</sup> That is, *Where is the glory?* or, *There is no glory*.—<sup>v</sup> Chap. 14. 3.—<sup>w</sup> Psa. 26. 8; 78. 61.

which was Israel's highest hope and glory. Chap. ii, 32. The ark was the symbol of the Divine Presence, and its loss foreshadowed, in Eli's mind, the utter destruction of his nation and the abolishment of Jehovah's covenant with them. In Judges xviii, 30, this capture of the ark is called "the captivity of the land," so deeply was it, from the theocratic standpoint, identified and associated with the highest interests and holiest hopes of all Israel. And the wickedness of his sons had been largely the cause of all this woe! All these thoughts, and many more, rushed in upon his mind as the last terrible announcement fell upon his ear, and his enfeebled constitution and trembling heart could not endure the shock.

**21. She named the child**—Though unable to answer or regard the words of comfort given by the bystanders, (verse 20,) she sufficiently aroused herself at the last moment to give her child a name. **Ichabod**—אִיכָבֹד,

*Where the glory?* equivalent to a negative statement, *no glory, inglorious*. Sad name for one to bear through life, a constant reminder of Israel's shame and woe! This dying mother shows an example of profoundest affection for the cause of God. Though Israel's armies fly, and thousands are slain, and among them her own husband, yet, like Eli, her grief is rather that the ark of God is taken.

The preceding chapters present to us the character of Eli in three different aspects: (1.) *The devoted high priest.* He takes particular interest in Hannah when he understands her sorrows, and bestows upon her his priestly benediction, (i, 17; ii, 20;) he tenderly reminds his sons of their awful responsibilities before God, (ii, 25;) he bows in humble submissiveness to the prophecy of his downfall, (iii, 18,) and shows his profound devotion to God by his anxiety for the ark, and his sudden fall and death at the tidings of its capture. We can find in him no indication of hypocrisy, or lack of faith in God. (2.) *The partial judge.* He judged Israel forty years, and, on the whole, was probably careful and just. We first meet with him sitting on his throne at the door of the tabernacle, where he appears quick to discern and reprove improprieties, (i, 14,) and this may be regarded as a fair example of his usual administration. But his partiality appears when his own sons are the offenders. Though their sins are black and dreadful, defiling the holy place and making even the offerings an abomination, yet he deals with them only by counsel and reproof. Chap. ii, 22-25. He should have used his power and authority as judge to correct such flagrant abuses and punish the impious offenders, even though they were his own flesh and blood. But they were his darling sons, and he forbore. (3.) *The unduly affectionate father.* Eli let his paternal love run away with his judgment; his fondness for his sons restrained him from the exercise of proper parental authority. We quote with admiration the excellent remarks of Adam Clarke: "Many fine families have been spoiled, and many ruined, by the separate exercise of these two principles. Parental affection, when alone, infallibly degenerates into foolish fondness: and parental authority frequently degenerates into brutal tyranny when standing by itself. The first sort of parents will be loved without being respected; the second sort will be dreaded, without either respect or esteem. A father may be as fond of his offspring as Eli, and his chil-

dren be sons of Belial; he may be as authoritative as the grand Turk, and his children despise and plot rebellion against him. But let parental authority be tempered with fatherly affection, and let the rein of discipline be steadily held by this powerful but affectionate hand, and there shall the pleasure of God prosper; there will he give his blessing, even life for evermore."

## CHAPTER V.

### THE ARK OF GOD AMONG THE PHILISTINES, 1-12.

The Philistine conquerors are soon to find that the ark is for them a fearful booty. With great rejoicing they carry it to their great idol's temple, as if to say, Our God is mightier than the mighty God of Israel, and we will dedicate the ark to him. But miserable honours await Dagon, and fearful plagues visit his worshippers. Terror-smitten, they carry the ark from one place to another, supposing that change of locality might check its power for evil, but all without avail, for the presence of the ark spreads plague and terror everywhere.

Here we may see why Jehovah permitted the ark to fall into the hands of these idolaters. It would prove to them, in their own land, that Jehovah's power was not in sword, nor bow, nor chariot; that the ark alone, the mere symbol of his presence, could be used by him to crush their Dagon, and smite their land and its inhabitants with plagues. Nor was this capture of the ark without its salutary lessons for Israel. They never afterwards attempted to put it to a superstitious use. Their priests had defiled the tabernacle by their impiety, and had committed sacrilege in their use of the offerings. The sanctuary seems to have become totally neglected by several of the tribes of Israel, for as "men abhorred the offering of the Lord" (chap. ii, 17) at Shiloh, they turned to the practice of sacrificing on high places; or else, like Micah, (Judges xvii, 5,) made a tabernacle of their own with graven images, and set up an independent worship. Thus Israel failed to es-

## CHAPTER V.

**A**ND the Philistines took the ark of God, and brought it \*from Eben-ezer unto Ashdod. **2** When the Philistines took the ark of God, they brought it into the house of <sup>b</sup>Dagon, and set it

<sup>a</sup> Chap. 4. 1; 7. 12.—<sup>b</sup> Judges 16. 23.

tablish a central seat of worship, as well as a central government; the Levitical service became disorganized, and the worship at Shiloh a reproach; and the Lord allowed the ark of his presence to be taken from them as a judgment for their sins. Compare *Ps. lxxviii*, 56-66.

"The loss and the recovery of the ark," says Milman, "would tend powerfully to consolidate the disorganized realm. The tidings of that awful calamity, the capture of the ark, the seeming abandonment of his people by their God, would sound like a knell in the heart of every one born of Israel. From the foot of Lebanon to the edge of the desert, from the remotest pastures of Gilead to the seacoast of Asher, the dormant religious feeling would be stirred to its depths. Even those who had furtively cast their grain of incense on the altar of Baal would be roused by the terrible shock, and prostrate themselves in penitence, if not in despair. That universal religious movement, from grief, from shame, from fear, would be maddened to tumultuous excitement at the tidings, as rapidly, as widely spread, of the restoration of the inappreciable treasure—Jehovah's return in all his power and majesty to the center of his chosen people."

**1. From Eben-ezer unto Ashdod**—A distance of nearly thirty miles. Ashdod—in Greek, Azotus (*Acts viii*, 40)—was one of the five chief cities of Philistia, (*Josh. xiii*, 3,) and the principal seat of the worship of Dagon.

**2. House of Dagon**—Hebrew, *Beth-Dagon*; not here the name of a city, as at *Josh. xv*, 41, and *xix*, 27, but the house or temple (*1 Chron. x*, 10) in which Dagon was worshipped. The Philistines placed the ark in Dagon's temple as a dedicatory offering to their god, who had gotten them their victory. Dagon was the great national god of the Philistines. His image bore the body

by Dagon. **3** And when they of Ashdod arose early on the morrow, behold, Dagon <sup>a</sup>was fallen upon his face to the earth before the ark of the Lord. And they took Dagon, and <sup>d</sup>set him in his place again. **4** And when they arose

<sup>c</sup> *Isa. 19. 1; 46. 1, 2.*—<sup>d</sup> *Isa. 46. 7.*



DAGON, FROM A TEMPLE AT NIMROUD.

of a fish, and the face and hands of a man. Various representations of this idol have been found on the Assyrian monuments, and in them all the characteristic feature is the figure of a fish. See note and cut at *Judges xvi*, 23.

**3. Dagon... fallen upon his face...** before the ark—Not only will Jehovah not give his glory to another, nor his praise to graven images, but he will make idols themselves fall before him (*comp. Isa. xix. 1; xlv. 1, 2.*) and there by proclaim that he alone is God. **Set**

early on the morrow morning, behold, Dagon *was* fallen upon his face to the ground before the ark of the Lord; and \*the head of Dagon and both the palms of his hands *were* cut off upon the threshold; only *the stump of Dagon* was left to him. **5** Therefore neither

*o* Jer. 50. 2; Ezek. 6. 4, 6; Micah 1. 7. — *1* Or, *the fishy part.* — *f* See Zeph. 1. 9. — *g* Verses

him in his place again.—Not knowing the cause of his fall, but perhaps supposing that it was by accident. How dim and low their notions of Deity!

**4. Only the stump of Dagon was left to him.**—רַק דָּגוֹן נִשְׁאַר עָלָיו, *only*

*Dagon was left upon him*; Septuagint, *only the spine (πάγος) of Dagon was left*; marginal reading, *only the fishy part was left*. Those parts of the idol which resembled man, namely, the head and hands, were smitten off by Jehovah's power, and thrown upon the sill of the door which led into the apartment of the temple where the idol stood; so there was left upon the pedestal only that part of the image which resembled a fish, and from which the idol received its characteristic name, Dagon.

**5. Neither the priests of Dagon, nor any... tread on the threshold**—They deemed that place, on which the nobler portions of their god had fallen, a spot too holy for human feet to press. Here behold the blind infatuation of idolatry! They should have acknowledged Dagon's nothingness before Jehovah, and have said that his head and hands, after such disgrace, were only to be trodden under foot, like the threshold of a door; but they only make this disgrace of their idol an occasion of plunging into deeper superstition.

**6. Hand of the Lord was heavy upon them of Ashdod.**—Not only did Dagon suffer shame, but the persons and lands of his worshippers were visited with plagues. **Destroyed them.**—Made them desolate and terror-stricken by fearful diseases on their bodies, and wasting devastation in their fields. The Hebrew word may be rendered, *He caused them to be amazed*, that is, by the fearful judgments with which he afflicted them. **Emerods.**—There is some uncertainty as to the nature of the dis-

the priests of Dagon, nor any that come into Dagon's house, 'tread on the threshold of Dagon in Ashdod unto this day. **6** But \*the hand of the Lord was heavy upon them of Ashdod, and he <sup>b</sup>destroyed them, and smote them with <sup>c</sup>emerods, *even* Ashdod and the coasts

7, 11; Exod. 9. 8; Psa. 82. 4; Acts 13. 11. — *h* Chap. 6. 5. — *i* Deut. 28. 27; Psa. 78. 66.

ease here indicated. The more proper English word is *hemorrhoids*, from the Greek αἱμορροῖς, *a flow of blood*. Accordingly, Josephus and some English commentators understand it here to mean dysentery. Josephus says: "God sent a very destructive disease upon the city and country of Ashdod, for they died of the dysentery and flux, a sore distemper, that brought death upon them very suddenly; for before the soul could, as usual in easy deaths, be well loosed from the body, they brought up their entrails, and vomited up what they had eaten, and what was entirely corrupted by the disease." But verse 12 clearly shows that the disease was not necessarily fatal. A more plausible explanation is, that which makes the word mean *bleeding piles*, and this is favoured by the English and several ancient versions of verse 9, where see note. The Hebrew word is the plural of עָפַל, *a hill*, and, used to designate

some disease of the body, it would most naturally mean some rising or swelling of the flesh. Hence Gesenius, Fürst, and Keil appropriately render the word by *tumours* or *boils*. In chap. vi, 11, 17, the word מַחֲרִים is used, whose root, according to Fürst, means *to glow, to burn, to kindle*, and may therefore be properly rendered *inflammatory tumours*. The Masoretes have substituted this latter word in the *keri* for עָפַלִּים, perhaps, as some suggest, to make the reading more euphemistical. In verse 9 the disease is spoken of as *a breaking out*, (נִשְׁתַּר,) an expression most naturally used of boils or tumours. We may safely conclude, therefore, that the word has essentially this sense. See further on verse 9. **Ashdod and the coasts thereof.**—These words are grammati-

thereof. **7** And when the men of Ashdod saw that *it was* so, they said, The ark of the God of Israel shall not abide with us: for his hand is sore upon us, and upon Dagon our god. **8** They sent therefore and gathered all the lords of the Philistines unto them, and said, What shall we do with the ark of the God of Israel? And they answered,

*k* Deut. 2. 15; chap. 7. 13; 12. 15.

cally in apposition with **them**, and are added to indicate the extent of the plague. The Septuagint, evidently in anticipation of what is said in chap. vi. 5, adds the following: "And in the midst of that region were produced mice, and there was a great confusion of death in the city." Besides this, the Vulgate also has, "The villas and fields in the midst of that region burst up." These are doubtless interpolations from other passages, though Thenius takes them as evidences of corruption in the Hebrew text.

**7. The ark...shall not abide with us**—To idolaters, whether they be Israelitish or Philistine, Jehovah's presence is a fearful scourge, and in idolatry they can have ease only by sending Him away.

**8. They sent**—Feeling now that, though they had vanquished the Israelites, they could not endure the severe hand of their God, the lords of the Philistines come together in solemn convocation, and the great question before them is: **What shall we do with the ark of the God of Israel**—Their prize has become a sore burden on their hands, and they know not how to dispose of it. At length they decide: **Let the ark...be carried about unto Gath**—They seem to have imagined that the difficulty might have arisen from some local cause, and that a change of place might disarm the ark of its power. The site of Gath has long remained unknown. In 1857 Rev. J. L. Porter explored Philistia in special search of it, and supposes he has identified it with Tell-es-Safeh, which is situated ten miles east of Ashdod, and nearly the same distance south of Ekron.

**9. Hand of the Lord was against the city**—In Gath, as in Ashdod, the

Let the ark of the God of Israel be carried about unto Gath. And they carried the ark of the God of Israel about *thither*. **9** And it was so, that, after they had carried it about, <sup>1</sup>the hand of the Lord was against the city <sup>1</sup>with a very great destruction: and <sup>2</sup>he smote the men of the city, both small and great, and they had emerods in their secret parts.

<sup>1</sup> Verse 11.—<sup>2</sup> Verse 6; Psa. 78. 66.

presence of the ark was the cause of plagues. **A very great destruction**—Rather, *a very great consternation*; that is, by reason of the fearful plagues it spread. מְהוֹמָה is from הוּמָה, to agitate, to throw into commotion; Septuagint, *τάραχος, tumult, commotion*; compare הָשִׁיחַ, to amaze, in verse 6. **In their**

**secret parts**—These words are adopted from the ancient versions, (Septuagint, Chaldee, Vulgate,) but have nothing to support them in the Hebrew text. Literally the Hebrew, as we render, stands thus: *And there broke out on them boils*. But what part of the body was thus affected we are not informed. The versions above named, and rabbinical tradition, however, with singular unanimity, represent the disease as affecting the *anus*. Hence the plausibility of rendering עֲפָלִים *bleeding piles*. This is supposed to receive support from Psa. lxxviii, 66, where it is said, in reference to this very judgment, *He smote his enemies in the hinder parts*. But אַחֲרֵי, translated *hinder parts*, may

more properly be rendered *back*, or *backwards*, as is done by De Wette, Lengerke, and Alexander, in their works on the Psalms. There is nothing, therefore, in the Hebrew Scriptures to sustain the reference of this disease to any one particular part of the body. For aught that appears to the contrary, these *swellings* or *boils* may have broken out all over the body. It may, perhaps, be worth noticing in this connexion that Herodotus (1.105) mentions a plague, which he calls the *female disease*, (θῆλειαν νόσον,) as being inflicted by a goddess of the Philistines upon some Scythians who plundered her ancient temple at Ascalon. According to Hippocrates, this disease

**10** Therefore they sent the ark of God to Ekron. And it came to pass, as the ark of God came to Ekron, that the Ekronites cried out, saying, They have brought about the ark of the God of Israel to <sup>a</sup>us, to slay us and our people.

**11** So they sent and gathered together all the lords of the Philistines, and said, Send away the ark of the God of Israel, and let it go again to his own place, that it slay <sup>a</sup>us not, and our people: for there was a deadly destruction throughout all the city; <sup>a</sup>the hand of God was very heavy there. **12** And the men that died not were smitten with the emerods: and the cry of the city went up to heaven.

<sup>2</sup> Heb. *me, to slay me and my*.—<sup>3</sup> Heb. *me not, and my*.—<sup>n</sup> Verses 6, 9.—<sup>a</sup> Gen. 41. 8;

came from continual exercise on horseback, and resulted in the loss of virility, whereupon the victims clothed themselves in the attire, and betook themselves to the habits and employments, of women.

**10. They sent the ark. . . to Ekron**—A city some ten miles north of Gath. Compare Josh. xiii, 3. From city to city does the ark of Jehovah spread terror and confusion.

**11. A deadly destruction throughout all the city**—מָוֶמָה מָוֶמָה, *confusion of death in all the city*; that is, consternation caused by many sudden deaths. Ekron, as well as Gath and Ashdod, is smitten with the plague, and many die. Therefore they abandon all hopes of keeping their prize within their borders, and at once resolve to send it away to its own place.

## CHAPTER VI.

RETURN OF THE ARK TO KIRJATH-JEARIM, vi, 1-vii, 1.

**1. Seven months**—"So enfeebled and debased was Israel by their sins, that they durst not or would not attempt to recover it. God displayed his own power by bringing back the ark, not by the hands of Israel, but by those of his enemies."—*Wordsworth*.

**2. The priests and the diviners**—These were the sacred orders among the Philistines, as the sacred scribes and magicians were among the Egyptians. Gen. xli, 8; Exod. vii, 11.

## CHAPTER VI.

**A**ND the ark of the Lord was in the country of the Philistines seven months. **2** And the Philistines <sup>a</sup>called for the priests and the diviners, saying, What shall we do to the ark of the Lord? tell us wherewith we shall send it to his place. **3** And they said, If ye send away the ark of the God of Israel, send it not <sup>b</sup>empty; but in any wise return him <sup>c</sup>a trespass offering: then ye shall be healed, and it shall <sup>d</sup>be known to you why his hand is not removed from you. **4** Then said they, What shall be the trespass offering which we shall return to him? They answered, Five golden emerods, and five golden

Exod. 7. 11; Dan. 2. 2; 5. 7; Matt. 2. 4.—<sup>b</sup> Exod. 23. 15; Deut. 16. 16.—<sup>c</sup> Lev. 5. 15, 16.—<sup>d</sup> Ver. 9.

**Wherewith we shall send**—That is, with what kind of a present. **To his place**—The land of Israel. They had already fully resolved to send the ark back, but they wished to be careful about the manner of their sending it, lest further woes afflict them.

**3. Send it not empty**—That is, send it not without an offering. Compare Exod. xxiii, 15. **Return him a trespass offering**—The Hebrew is emphatic—*by all means return him a trespass offering*. On the trespass offering see Lev. v, vi. They doubtless meant to render the God of Israel this offering as a satisfaction for their offence in carrying his ark out of its own land. **Then ye shall be healed**—It is better to render this as a conditional sentence, *then may ye be healed*, etc., for from verse 9 we infer that these diviners still suspected that it was only by chance that they were smitten.

**4. Five golden emerods, and five golden mice**—Perhaps these Philistine soothsayers had heard the history of the brazen serpent, (Num. xxi, 4-9,) and therefore supposed that the wrath of Israel's God might be appeased by talismans. At all events, it was a common custom among the heathen nations of antiquity to make use of such talismanic offerings as a preservative against evil. Apollonius of Tyana is said to have made a brazen scorpion and set it on a pillar in the city of Antioch, whereupon the

mice, <sup>a</sup>according to the number of the lords of the Philistines: for one plague was on <sup>1</sup>you all, and on your lords. **5** Wherefore ye shall make images of your emerods, and images of your mice that <sup>1</sup>mar the land; and ye shall <sup>a</sup>give glory unto the God of Israel: peradventure he will <sup>b</sup>lighten his hand from off you, and from off <sup>1</sup>your gods, and from off your land. **6** Wherefore then do ye harden your hearts, <sup>a</sup>as the Egyptians and Pharaoh hardened their hearts? when he had wrought <sup>a</sup>wonderfully among

<sup>a</sup>See verses 17, 18; Josh. 13. 3; Judg. 3. 3.—<sup>1</sup>Heb. *them*.—<sup>f</sup>Chap. 5. 6.—<sup>g</sup>Josh. 7. 19; Isa. 42. 12; Mal. 2. 2; John 9. 24.—<sup>h</sup>See chap. 5. 6, 11; Psal. 89. 10.—<sup>i</sup>Chap. 5. 3, 4, 7.

scorpions of that country all vanished. See many examples given in Kitto's "Daily Bible Illustrations." Had the ark remained in their own country, these talismans would, of course, have been set up in their midst; but when the ark was sent away, they deemed it most proper to send them along with it into its own land. The annexed cut



GREEK VOTIVE TABLET.

is a picture of a Greek votive tablet in the British Museum. It is thought to present the lower part of the face of a woman who, healed of an affection of the nose or mouth, had caused this tablet to be placed in the temple of some god in token of her gratitude for her healing. **According to the number of the lords**—One golden mouse and one golden boil for each of the five confederate cities, and golden mice for other cities besides these. See verses 17, 18.

**5. Images of your mice that mar the land**—This plague is here for the first time distinctly mentioned, though something of the kind is implied, chap. v, 6, where the *coasts* of Ashdod are said to have been smitten. A sudden and rapid increase of this little animal in seven months might be

them, <sup>1</sup>did they not let <sup>a</sup>the people go, and they departed? **7** Now therefore make <sup>a</sup>a new cart, and take two milch kine, <sup>a</sup>on which there hath come no yoke, and tie the kine to the cart, and bring their calves home from them: **8** And take the ark of the Lord, and lay it upon the cart; and put <sup>a</sup>the jewels of gold, which ye return him <sup>a</sup>for a trespass offering, in a coffer by the side thereof; and send it away, that it may go. **9** And see, if it goeth up by the way of his own coast to <sup>b</sup>Beth-shemesh, *then* <sup>4</sup>he

<sup>k</sup>Exod. 7. 13; 8. 15; 14. 17.—<sup>2</sup>Or, *reproach fully*.—<sup>l</sup>Exod. 12. 31.—<sup>3</sup>Hebrew, *them*.—<sup>m</sup>2 Sam. 6. 3.—<sup>n</sup>Num. 19. 2.—<sup>o</sup>Verses 4, 5.—<sup>p</sup>Josh. 15. 10.—<sup>4</sup>Or, *it*.

a sore plague indeed to the harvest fields of the Philistines. "Of all the smaller *rodentia* which are injurious, both in the fields and in the woods, there is not," says Professor Bell, "one which produces such extensive destruction as this little animal when its increase, as is sometimes the case, becomes multitudinous." **You... your gods... your land**—Their persons were plagued with boils, their gods with disgrace, and their land with mice.

**6. As the Egyptians**—The miracles of the exodus had been noised abroad among many nations, and inspired them with a fear of Jehovah. See chap. iv, 8; Josh. ii, 10; ix, 9.

**7. A new cart**—Compare 2 Sam. vi, 3. An old vehicle, or one used for meaner purposes, would not accord with the sacredness of the ark. **Two milch kine**, (cows,) **on which... no yoke**—And therefore not likely, in the natural course of things, to be at once docile and tractable. **Bring their calves home from them**—Which would add still more to the difficulty of drawing them away from their own fields.

**8. Jewels of gold**—Rather, *vessels of gold*; that is, the golden images mentioned in verse 4. **A coffer**—A chest, or box. They did not venture to open the ark and put the golden vessels in it, but placed them in a chest beside it.

**9. His own coast**—The land of the ark, the same as *his place*, in verse 2. **Beth-shemesh**—Situated about seven miles southeast of Ekron; it was a



hath done us this great evil: but if not, then 'we shall know that *it is* not his hand *that* smote us; it *was* a chance *that* happened to us. **10** And the men did so; and took two milch kine, and tied them to the cart, and shut up their calves at home: **11** And they laid the ark of the LORD upon the cart, and the coffer with the mice of gold and the images of their emerods. **12** And the kine took the straight way to the way of Beth-shemesh, *and* went along the highway, lowing as they went, and turned not aside *to* the right hand or *to* the left; and the lords of the Philistines went after them unto the border of Beth-shemesh. **13** And *they* of Beth-shemesh *were* reaping their wheat harvest in the valley: and they lifted up their eyes, and saw the ark, and rejoiced to see *it*. **14** And the cart came into the field of Joshua, a Beth-shemite, and stood there, where *there was* a great

*q* Verse 3. — *r* Exod. 20. 24; Judges 6. 26; 21. 4; 2 Sam. 24. 22, 25; 1 Kings 18. 30, 35.

border city of the tribe of Judah, (Josh. xv, 10,) and one allotted to the Levites. Josh. xxi, 16. It was identified by Dr. Robinson, in 1838, with the modern Ain Shems. **A chance**—An accident; a fortuitous event. There still lingered in some minds the thought that possibly the ark was not the cause of their troubles.

**12. The kine took the straight way**—Literally, *were straight in the way on the way of Beth-shemesh, in a highway they continued going and lowing*. This wondrous sign was evidence, beyond all possibility of doubt, that it was Jehovah's hand that had smitten Philistia, her people, and her gods. **The lords of the Philistines went after them**—Their eyes had never witnessed a sight like this before, and they were anxious to see it to the end.

**14. And they**—Namely, the Levites mentioned in the next verse, for probably a large proportion of the Beth-shemites were Levites.

**15. The Levites took down**—We have already noticed that Beth-shemesh was a city of the Levites, (see on verse 9.) There was fitness in the kine stopping and standing still, when they had brought the sacred treasure to those whose duty it was to look after it.

stone: and they clave the wood of the cart, and 'offered the kine a burnt offering unto the LORD. **15** And the Levites took down the ark of the LORD, and the coffer that *was* with it, wherein the jewels of gold *were*, and put *them* on the great stone: and the men of Beth-shemesh offered burnt offerings and sacrificed sacrifices the same day unto the LORD. **16** And when 'the five lords of the Philistines had seen *it*, they returned to Ekron the same day. **17** 'And these *are* the golden emerods which the Philistines returned for a trespass offering unto the LORD; for Ashdod one, for Gaza one, for Ashkelon one, for Gath one, for Ekron one; **18** And the golden mice, *according to* the number of all the cities of the Philistines *belonging to* the five lords. *both* of fenced cities, and of country villages, even unto the 'great stone of Abel, whereon they set down the ark of the LORD: *which stone*

*s* Joshua 13. 3. — *t* Verse 4.  
5 Or, great stone.

**16. Returned to Ekron the same day**—Which might easily be done, providing they knew the route—the distance being only seven miles. "It might be said, by those ignorant of the country, that the whole distance being a level plain, there was no great miracle needed to secure the safe transmission of the ark over this comparatively short distance; but let them make a similar experiment, and stake their scepticism upon its success, if they have the courage to do so, or let them even try to reach Ain Shems themselves without a guide, and see how they will succeed."—*W. M. Thomson*.

**18. Both of fenced cities, and of country villages**—From which it appears that many more images of the mice were sent than of the boils. Perhaps the plague of mice had marred the whole land, while that of boils was confined to the places where the ark had been. This statement is not a contradiction of verse 4, as Thenius asserts, but additional information which the writer paused not there to record. **Even unto the great stone of Abel**—וְעַד אֶבֶל, *and unto Abel*. Instead of אֶבֶל, *Abel*, two codices of Kennicott and one of De Rossi read אֶבֶן, *a stone*, as in verses 14 and 15, and this read-

*remaineth* unto this day in the field of Joshua, the Beth-shemite. **19** And <sup>u</sup>he smote the men of Beth-shemesh, because they had looked into the ark of the LORD, even he smote of the people fifty thousand and threescore and ten men: and the people lamented, because the LORD had smitten *many* of the people with a great slaughter.

<sup>u</sup> See Exod. 19, 21; Num. 4, 5, 15, 20; 2 Sam. 6, 7.

ing is sustained by the Septuagint and Chaldaic versions, and is most probably the true one. If, now, we simply change the pointing of **וְיָ**, *unto*, to

**וְיָ**, *a witness*, we relieve the latter part of this verse of all the obscurity that clings to it in the English version. Thus amended it reads: *And a witness is the great stone whereon they set down the ark of the Lord unto this day, in the field of Joshua, the Beth-shemite*; that is, the stone is a witness unto this day of the facts related in verses 14–18. This construction has the sanction of Thenius and Keil.

**19. He smote the men of Beth-shemesh, because they had looked into the ark**—Some irregularities may be observed in their hastily using the cart for their wood, and milch kine for a burnt offering; but these may be apologized for on the supposition that the cart and kine could never be put to nobler uses, and might, if preserved, be put to meaner and upworthy usage. But to *look into the ark*, which implies the removal of the cover and the golden cherubim, (Exod. xxv, 20, 21,) and to do this in the open field, and in full view of all the multitudes that came flocking in from the surrounding harvest fields—this was the foulest kind of sacrilege, and justly merited the severest judgment of Heaven. **Fifty thousand and threescore and ten men**—It is possible, indeed, that the remarkable events here described might have called together such an immense host as is here named, but it is extremely improbable, and the message sent to the inhabitants of Kirjath-jearim, (verse 21,) which was only six or seven miles distant, implies that they had not until then heard of the

**20** And the men of Beth-shemesh said, *Who is able to stand before this holy LORD God? and to whom shall he go up from us?* **21** And they sent messengers to the inhabitants of *Kirjath-jearim*, saying, *The Philistines have brought again the ark of the LORD; come ye down, and fetch it up to you.*

<sup>v</sup> 2 Sam. 6, 9; Mal. 3, 2.—<sup>w</sup> Josh. 18, 14; Judges 18, 12; 1 Chron. 13, 5, 6.

return of the ark from Philistia. The Septuagint has the same as the Hebrew, but other versions vary. Syriac and Arabic, *Five thousand and seventy*. Chaldee, *Of the elders of the people seventy men, and of the congregation fifty thousand*. Vulgate, *Of the people (populo) seventy men, (viro,) and fifty thousand of the common people, (plebis.)* An old Rabbinical tradition, with which some more modern expositors partially coincide, says that only seventy men were slain, but, being elders or chief men, they were of as much importance as fifty thousand ordinary persons. But such explanation is hardly worth recording. The Hebrew is, literally, *he smote among the people seventy men, fifty thousand men*, and some explain this as meaning *seventy men of fifty thousand*; but this leaves the main difficulty of the passage unsolved, namely, how to account for the presence of fifty thousand men. There is, probably, a corruption in the text. Three codices of Kennicott, and Josephus, omit the words *fifty thousand men*, and it is, perhaps, best to regard them as an interpolation.

**20. Who is able to stand**—For Israelite as well as Philistine is smitten by the presence of the holy shrine. **To whom shall he go up from us**—Who next will dare take charge of him?

**21. Kirjath-jearim**—A city about seven miles northeast of Beth-shemesh, and the nearest large town on the way from Beth-shemesh to Shiloh. This may have been one reason why the Beth-shemites sent thither for men to come down and fetch up the ark. Ancient Kirjath is represented by the modern village Kuriet-el-Enab, "city of grapes." See note on Josh. ix, 17.

## CHAPTER VII.

**A**ND the men of \*Kirjath-jearim came, and fetched up the ark of the Lord, and brought it into the house of \*Abinadab in the hill, and sanctified Eleazar his son to keep the ark of the Lord.

*a* Chapter 6. 21; Psalm 132. 6.  
b 2 Sam. 6. 4.

## CHAPTER VII.

1. This verse belongs to the narrative of the sixth chapter, and should not have been separated from it. **Brought it into the house of Abinadab in the hill**—Why the ark was not taken back to Shiloh and placed in the tabernacle we are nowhere informed. Some have supposed that that place was destroyed by the Philistines after the capture of the ark, and others that it had been so profanely desecrated by the wickedness of Eli's sons as to be no longer an appropriate place for it. Its location in the house of Abinadab, who was, perhaps, a Levite, and the consecration of Eleazar to keep it, were probably all done by the advice and direction of Samuel. Here the ark remained until David removed it to Jerusalem. 2 Sam. vi.

**THE GREAT DELIVERANCE AND REFORM UNDER SAMUEL, 2-17.**

2. **Twenty years**—A period of silence in the history of Israel. What notable events occurred and what Samuel did during these twenty years are largely matters of conjecture. Some suppose that this period was nearly simultaneous with the twenty years of Samson's judgeship. Judges xv, 20. This opinion claims no certain proof in the biblical record; only it is probable that the forty years of Philistine oppression (Judges xiii, 1) from which Samson began to deliver Israel is the same oppression which was completely removed by the instrumentality of Samuel, as recorded in this chapter. Samson's authority as judge was confined to southwestern Israel, and probably never came in contact with that of either Eli or Samuel. There is nothing at war with the supposition that two or more judges in Israel were contemporary. In our Introduction to Judges

2 And it came to pass, while the ark abode in Kirjath-jearim, that the time was long; for it was twenty years: and all the house of Israel lamented after the Lord. 3 And Samuel spake unto all the house of Israel, saying, If ye do \*return unto the Lord with all your hearts,

*c* Deut. 30. 2-10; 1 Kings 8. 48; Isa. 55. 7;  
Hos. 6. 1; Joel 2. 12.

we have shown that the officers of Israel bearing that title, and raised up of God from time to time to deliver the people from their oppressors, were not regular national governors, whose authority extended over all the land.

During these twenty years Samuel was not idle. He was known to be a prophet of Jehovah, and often acted as judge, but probably most of his time was spent in retirement and in founding the schools of the prophets. See on chap. x, 5. When Shiloh was made desolate he probably took care to preserve the precious records of the law, of which he doubtless made much use in teaching the younger prophets who gathered around him. Of Samuel's marriage and domestic life we know nothing; but we know that his sons walked not after the pattern of their father's piety. Chap. viii, 3. The worship of Baal and Ashtaroth crept in among the people, and the ark remained in obscurity at Kirjath-jearim. **Lamented after the Lord**—This both Gesenius and Fürst render, *assembled themselves after Jehovah*. But no sufficient reason is given for taking the Hebrew word וַיִּתְּנוּ in this sense of *assembling together*. To be sure, the Niphal form occurs here only, but the Kal form, in Ezek. xxxii, 18, and Micah ii, 4, means *to wail, to lament*, and, therefore, with Thenius and Keil, we adhere to the common translation. The people remembered how gloriously the Lord had manifested himself to Israel in former years, and therefore they lamented after the Lord, that is, longed for his glory to appear again.

3. **Samuel spake**—His words of warning and reproof had probably been instrumental in causing the lamentation after the Lord just referred to. Upon their showing proper signs of repentance and humiliation he comes

then "put away the strange gods and 'Ashtaroth from among you, and 'prepare your hearts unto the LORD, and 'serve him only: and he will deliver you out of the hand of the Philistines. 4 Then the children of Israel did put away <sup>b</sup>Baalim and Ashtaroth, and served the LORD only. 5 And Samuel said, 'Gather all Israel to Mizpeh, and I will pray for you unto the LORD. 6 And they gathered together to Mizpeh, <sup>a</sup>and drew water, and poured *it* out before

the LORD, and <sup>a</sup>fasted on that day, and said there, "We have sinned against the LORD. And Samuel judged the children of Israel in Mizpeh. 7 And when the Philistines heard that the children of Israel were gathered together to Mizpeh, the lords of the Philistines went up against Israel. And when the children of Israel heard *it*, they <sup>a</sup>were afraid of the Philistines. 8 And the children of Israel said to Samuel, <sup>1</sup>Cease not to cry unto the LORD our God for us, that he

<sup>d</sup> Gen. 35. 2; Josh. 24. 24, 25. — <sup>e</sup> Judges 2. 13. — <sup>f</sup> 2 Chron. 30. 19; Job 11. 13, 14. — <sup>g</sup> Deut. 6. 13; 10. 20; 13. 4; Matt. 4. 10; Luke 4. 8. — <sup>h</sup> Judges 2. 11. — <sup>i</sup> Judges 20. 1; 2 Kings 25. 23.

<sup>k</sup> 2 Sam. 14. 14. — <sup>l</sup> Neh. 9. 1, 2; Dan. 9. 3-5; Joel 2. 12. — <sup>m</sup> Judges 10. 10; 1 Kings 8. 47; Psa. 108. 4. — <sup>n</sup> Neh. 9. 27. — <sup>o</sup> Hebrew, *Be not silent from us from crying.* — <sup>p</sup> Isa. 37. 4.

forth to lead them in the great work of reform.

4. **Baalim and Ashtaroth**—Male and female deities of several of the neighbouring nations, especially of the Zidonians. See on Judges ii, 11-13. Israel repeatedly fell into the worship of these idol gods.

5. **Mizpeh**—A city of Benjamin, (Josh. xviii, 26,) principally celebrated for the events recorded in this chapter, and for the inauguration of Saul. Chap. i, 17. At this place, also, the tribes had once before assembled to counsel revenge on Gibeah for the abuse of the Levite and his concubine, (Judges xx, 1,) and here Gedaliah briefly ruled as governor of the Jews left in the land after the Babylonian exile. 2 Kings xxv, 23. Its site is a point yet in dispute. Robinson and others place it at the modern Neby Samwil, five miles northwest of Jerusalem; but Thomson has doubts of his correctness, ("Land and Book," vol. ii, p. 545), and more recently Stanley has suggested Scopus, a height about a mile north of Jerusalem. This latter position is advocated by Dr. Bonar and George Grove, (in Smith's Dictionary,) but Neby Samwil is best supported by all the evidence in the case. **I will pray for you**—The penitence and obedience shown by their putting away the false gods (verse 4) encouraged the holy prophet to intercede for them, and the result showed that the inworking prayer of a righteous man availeth much. James v, 16.

6. **Drew water, and poured it out before the Lord**—Dr. Kitto thinks

that this act was the confirmation of an oath—a solemn vow; and tells us that such is an oriental method of confirming an oath or a promise. But, in the absence of any analogous custom recorded in Scripture, (and we have there many forms for oaths,) we adhere to the more common interpretation, and understand this pouring out of water as a symbolical action indicating their humiliation and contrition before God. Thus the Targum paraphrases it: *They poured out their heart like water in penitence before the Lord.* In accordance with this imagery Hannah is said, in the sorrow of her spirit, to have poured out her soul before the Lord. Chap. i, 15. Compare also Lam. ii, 19, and Psa. xxii, 14; lxii, 8. **Fasted**—A further sign of their repentance and humiliation. **And Samuel judged... in Mizpeh**—He declared to them the greatness of their sins, the necessity of their reformation, and the methods by which such reformation must be accomplished. He also, perhaps, gave judgment on individual cases of difficulty.

7. **The Philistines went up against Israel**—They suspected that the great gathering at Mizpeh was for purposes of war, and these lords were anxious to nip such rebellion in the bud. **Afraid**—They felt their own weakness, and remembered how long the Philistines had oppressed them.

8. **Cease not**—The marginal reading is more accurate, *Be not silent from us from crying.* They now feel that if deliverance comes at all, it must come from Jehovah.

will save us out of the hand of the Philistines. **9** And Samuel took a sucking lamb, and offered it for a burnt offering wholly unto the LORD: and Samuel cried unto the LORD for Israel; and the LORD heard him. **10** And as Samuel was offering up the burnt offering, the Philistines drew near to battle against Israel: but the LORD thundered with a great thunder on that day upon the Philistines, and discomfited them; and they were smitten before Israel. **11** And

*p* Psa. 99. 6; Jer. 15. 1.—*2 Or, answered.*—*q* See Josh. 10. 10; Judges 4. 15; 5. 20; chap. 2. 10; 2 Sam. 22. 14, 15.

**9. A sucking lamb**—טֵלֶה חֶלֶב, *a lamb of milk*, that is, young and tender, only seven or eight days old, (Lev. xxii, 27,) such "being the most suitable to represent the nation that had wakened up to new life through its conversion to the Lord, and was, as it were, newborn."—*Keil*. **A burnt offering wholly**—Not cut up and divided, as sacrificial victims often were, but offered entire. We need not suppose that Samuel offered this burnt-offering with his own hand, and thus assumed a function of the priesthood. The coöperation of the priests on such occasions being generally understood, no particular reference to that fact was here necessary. Samuel stood by and blessed the sacrifice. Compare chap. ix, 13, and note.

**10. The Lord thundered with a great thunder**—Rather, *with a great voice*. Thus in Samuel's day was Hannah's prophecy fulfilled. Chap. ii, 10. Compare also the marginal references. This amazing miracle was wrought in answer to Samuel's prayer, and was a confirmation of his words to Israel as recorded in verse 3. It showed, too, that the Jehovah of the exodus was still powerful to save his people and confound their enemies.

**11. Israel...pursued the Philistines**—The Israelites followed up this victory which the Lord had gained for them, and thus mightily profited by the Divine interposition. **Until...under Beth-car**—The site of Beth-car is unknown, but must have been off to the west or southwest of Mizpeh, perhaps as far as the great plain of Philistia.

the men of Israel went out of Mizpeh, and pursued the Philistines, and smote them, until they came under Beth-car. **12** Then Samuel took a stone, and set it between Mizpeh and Shen, and called the name of it Eben-ezer, saying, hitherto hath the LORD helped us. **13** So the Philistines were subdued, and they came no more into the coast of Israel: and the hand of the LORD was against the Philistines all the days of Samuel. **14** And the cities which the Philistines

*r* Gen. 28. 18; 31. 45; 35. 14; Josh. 4. 9; 24. 26.—*3* That is, *The stone of help*: chap. 4. 1.—*s* Judges 13. 1.—*t* Chap. 13. 5.

*Under Beth-car* may imply that this place was situated on some eminence; or the meaning may be *below*, that is, beyond, Beth-car. We may reasonably suppose that the men of Israel continued their pursuit for several days, not giving it over until they had gained from the Philistines all that they had lost through them aforetime.

**12. Shen**—This word signifies *a tooth*, and seems to have been the name of some projecting eminence or rock having the form of a tooth. Its situation is now unknown. **Eben-ezer**—*Stone of help*; a monument to remind Israel that their victories were of the Lord. At this very spot the ark was captured twenty years before, and here it is notable that God now gives them such a wondrous triumph. The contrast between the two events is full of rich suggestions.

**13. Came no more into the coast of Israel**—They did not succeed in regaining what they had lost in Israel; they came no more as they had been wont to come, driving Israel before them and bringing them into subjection. The passage does not mean that the Philistines made no further attempt to enter the territory of Israel, for the contrary is implied in the words that immediately follow. **The hand of the Lord was against the Philistines all the days of Samuel**—They made repeated attempts to regain their lost cause, and Saul kept up a constant war against them all his days, (chap. xiv, 52,) but not until after the death of Samuel did they enter triumphantly the coasts of Israel. Chap. xxxi, 1. While the holy Samuel lived,

had taken from Israel were restored to Israel, from Ekron even unto Gath; and the coasts thereof did Israel deliver out of the hands \*of the Philistines. And there was peace between Israel and the Amorites. **15** And Samuel \*judged Israel all the days of his life. **16** And

u Judges 4. 17; Psa. 106. 34.—v Verse 6; chap. 12. 11; Judges 2. 16.

all their efforts to conquer Israel resulted in defeat. He thus completed the deliverance which Samson began many years before. Judges xiii, 5.

**14. From Ekron even unto Gath**—That is, all the cities within a supposed boundary line running from one of these places to the other, but not including these places themselves, for it nowhere appears that Ekron and Gath had ever hitherto been in possession of the Israelites. **Peace between Israel and the Amorites**—This signal fact is mentioned because the Amorites were the most powerful of the Canaanitish nations, and therefore the historical importance of such a peace between them and Israel. Some expositors understand that the word Amorites here designates all the Canaanitish nations besides the Philistines. They were overawed by the great victory of Israel, and thought it wise to make peace with them.

**15. All the days of his life**—Though Saul superseded him in the government, and was recognised as the anointed king of Israel, yet Samuel never lost his influence over the people; and for him Saul ever had the profoundest reverence. So he actually executed the office of judge to the day of his death. See note at the beginning of chap. xii.

**16. Beth-el. . . Gilgal. . . Mizpeh**—These places, with Ramah, he seems to have designated as places where he might be found at certain stated seasons of each year, and where the people from the neighbouring districts might resort unto him for counsel or judgment. On *Beth-el*, see Genesis xxviii, 19, and Joshua vii, 2. There were three places that bore the name of *Gilgal*: one, in the western part of Central Palestine, was a royal city of the Canaanites, whose king had been

he went from year to year \*in circuit to Beth-el, and Gilgal, and Mizpeh, and judged Israel in all those places **17** And \*his return *was* to Ramah; for there *was* his house; and there he judged Israel; and there he \*built an altar unto the Lord.

4 Heb. *and he circuited*.—w Chap. 8. 4. w Judges 21. 4.

overthrown by Joshua, (Josh. xii, 23;) another was at the site of the modern Jiljilia, about half way between Jerusalem and Shechem; and the third was in the plains of Jericho. This last is the Gilgal mentioned in this verse, and was the most celebrated of the three. Here the Israelites first pitched their camp when they entered the Land of Promise, and here the tabernacle probably remained during the wars of the Conquest, and until it was set up at Shiloh. It was ever regarded by Israel as a sacred place. See on Josh. iv, 19; ix, 6. So Samuel, leaving his house at Ramah, would pass northwards to Beth-el, thence southeasterly to Gilgal, and thence westwards to Mizpeh, from which place it would be an easy **return to Ramah**. On Mizpeh, see verse 5.

**17. There was his house**—See on chap. i, 1. He probably lived at Shiloh till the time of Eli's death, and then, upon the desolation of the tabernacle, he returned to the home of his infancy, and made it his permanent residence. **There he built an altar**—For the principal seat of his judicial ministry must not be without the holy service. The law required all sacrifices to be offered at the tabernacle, Deut. xii, 13, 14; but after the ark and tabernacle had become separated, and Shiloh lay desolate, there seems to have been a feeling that now that law was not binding. See note on chap. ix, 12. And doubtless the shameful conduct of many of the priests at Shiloh had driven not a few in Israel to sacrifice elsewhere, even before the ark was captured. It is possible, however, that Samuel had the tabernacle removed at this time from Shiloh to Ramah. At a later time it was at Nob, (chap. xxi, 1-7,) and still later at Gibeon. 1 Kings iii, 4.

## CHAPTER VIII.

## THE DEMAND FOR A KING, 1-22.

Samuel's declining years, and the perversion of justice sadly manifest in the administration of his sons, were the immediate occasion of Israel's demand for a king. Possibly there were suspicions abroad that Samuel meant to make his judgeship hereditary. But there were other and deeper reasons for the demand for a king. Repeated attacks from the Philistines, who were loth to lose their power over Israel, and a knowledge of warlike intentions on the part of the king of Ammon, (chapter xii, 12,) made them anxious for a military chieftain like the kings of the neighbouring nations. Their ideal king seems to have been a mighty warrior, of great physical powers, and skilled in all manner of strategy. They would have him judge the people, and at the same time be ever on the watch against hostile invasions.

But there were deeper, though more remote, reasons for a modification—a revolution even—in the form of the Israelitish government. We do not understand that it was the purpose or desire of Jehovah to have his people permanently governed by a class of rulers like the Judges, who had no constitutional authority over all the tribes. These officers, as we have shown in the Introduction to the Book of Judges, were extraordinary ministers, raised up by the special providence of God to meet existing emergencies, but formed no permanent part of the machinery of the Hebrew government as contemplated in the Laws of Moses. The Law prescribed no specific form of government, but was full of suggestive principles, which should have guided the people long before the time of Samuel into the adoption of a constitution that would have secured them national unity. It was surely no design of the Lord for the Israelitish nation to continue a loose confederacy, racked with sectional feuds and tribal jealousies, as was largely the case during the period of the Judges. This state of things was both a national

weakness and a sin. The Law made it very prominent that there should be a central seat of worship—a place which the Lord should "choose out of all the tribes to put his name there." Deut. xii, 5, 11, 14; xvii, 8, etc. It was also clearly intimated that there should be a supreme civil and executive authority, having the same seat and centre—a supreme court of appeals. Deut. xvii, 8, 9. Besides this, there were to be "judges and officers" in all the gates of Israel. Deut. xvi, 18. The provision suggested by Jethro, (Exod. xviii, 21,) and adopted by Moses, for selecting able and God-fearing men out of all the people, "to be rulers of thousands, and rulers of hundreds, rulers of fifties, and rulers of tens," contemplated also, by necessary implication, a supreme judge and national executive, and it needed no additional revelation from God to inform Israel that such a national executive would be required just as much after Moses' death as before. God never meant to rule Israel any more than other nations without the instrumentality of human agency. Absurdly have some writers seemed to assume that the Israelitish Theocracy was a government in which Jehovah was the sole and immediate governor, and that this form of government came to an end after the election of Saul. But Jehovah governed the Israelitish nation after the establishment of the monarchy just as truly as he did before. He always governs among the nations, so far as civil government extends, by means of human agents. And yet he never prescribed for any nation, not even for Israel, a specific form of civil government. He has plainly shown that the "powers that be," whether represented by Saul, or David, or Solomon, or Cesar, "are ordained of God." He has revealed certain great principles of truth and justice which all nations are bound to observe, but his dealings with ancient Israel have made very plain and prominent this lesson—that to nations themselves is left the responsibility of choosing the form of government by which they will be ruled.

## CHAPTER VIII.

**A**ND it came to pass, when Samuel was old, that he <sup>a</sup>made his <sup>b</sup>sons judges over Israel. **2** Now the name of his firstborn was <sup>c</sup>Joel; and the name

<sup>a</sup> Deut. 16. 18; 2 Chron. 19. 5.—<sup>b</sup> See Judges 10. 4; 12. 14, compared with 5. 10.—<sup>c</sup> 1 *Vashni*,

The elders of Israel were, doubtless, aware that, according to God's own word, kings were to proceed from Abraham. Gen. xvii, 6, 16. Balaam also had prophesied of a sceptre yet to rise in Israel. Num. xxiv, 17. Moses had made provision in the Law (Deut. xvii, 14-20) for the appointment and guidance of a king in Israel, should the people choose to establish a monarchy. So we are not to blame these elders for the choice of a monarchical form of government, for they might have naturally inferred from the ancient prophecies that God intended that a monarchy should rise in Israel. Their sin in asking for a king is to be seen in the spirit of disaffection with which they asked, and their implied reflection on Jehovah's mercy and care in raising up for them deliverers when they were about to sink under the bitter oppression of foreign powers. It was for this culpable ingratitude, and their tendency to heathenish customs, manifest in the demand for a king *like all the nations*, that Jehovah, with abundant reason, declared, (verse 7,) "They have rejected me."

None can properly question the right of a nation to modify or change its form of government. Such a revolution, when it becomes a desire of the great body of the people, and can be effected peacefully and by general consent, as was the case in Israel, should always result in good. So it did in Israel's case. Saul's reign was indeed a failure, for God gave that king in his anger to scourge his people for their ingratitude, and desire to be like the heathen. But David's reign, and the greater part of Solomon's, were the greatest triumph and glory of Israelitish history. Under them the kingdom became a mighty civil and religious power, and made an indelible impression of its worth and excellency

of his second, Abiah: *they were judges in Beer-sheba*. **3** And his sons <sup>a</sup>walked not in his ways, but turned aside <sup>b</sup>after lucre, and <sup>c</sup>took bribes, and perverted judgment. **4** Then all the elders of

1 Chron. 6. 28.—<sup>a</sup> Jer. 22. 15-17.—<sup>b</sup> Exod. 18. 21; 1 Tim. 3. 3; 6. 10.—<sup>c</sup> Deut. 16. 19; Psa. 13. 5.

on all the contemporaneous nations of antiquity.

The sins of Solomon's old age, and the wickedness of subsequent godless kings, brought sorrow and calamity on the nation, but that was not the fault of the form of government. God himself declared at the time of Saul's election that obedience and virtue would insure the divine blessing on both king and people. Chap. xii, 14. But when the wicked are in power the whole land must mourn; and sin and forgetfulness of God, who should ever be duly recognised as Supreme Ruler, will ruin any nation, whatever its form of government.

**1. Made his sons judges**—Not with authority equal to his own, but assistant judges, who might attend to judicial matters in remote places, to which Samuel's age prevented his going. "As we do not find that either God or the people censured him for making his sons judges in Israel, we may infer that he had properly educated them, and that they appeared well qualified for the office, and were appointed to it for the good, and by the approbation of the people."—*Scott*. At the same time there is not sufficient reason to believe that Samuel designed to make the judgeship hereditary, and expected his sons to succeed him in the government of Israel. See on chap. xii, 2.

**2. In Beer-sheba**—Their chief seat was there, as Samuel's was at Ramah. Probably the recovery under Samuel of many cities from the Philistines (chap. vii, 14) made it expedient to have some kind of magistrates appointed in the southern part of the country.

**3. Turned aside after lucre... took bribes... perverted judgment**—Three evils which cannot be too strongly reprobated in a judge. The



Israel gathered themselves together, and came to Samuel unto Ramah, **5** And said unto him, Behold, thou art old, and thy sons walk not in thy ways: now <sup>1</sup>make us a king to judge us like all the nations. **6** But the thing <sup>2</sup>displeased Samuel, when they said, Give us a king to judge us. And Samuel prayed unto the Lord. **7** And the Lord said unto

<sup>1</sup>Verses 19, 20; Deut. 17. 14; Hos. 13. 10; Acts 13. 21.—<sup>2</sup> Hebrew, *was evil in the eyes of*

Hebrew word *עַיִן*, here translated

*lucre*, means properly *ill-gotten gain*—that which is obtained by violence or fraud. The judge who covetously puts his hand on ill-gotten gain will be easily overcome with bribery, and he who takes bribes will necessarily pervert judgment and truth.

**5. Make us a king**—What higher tribute of esteem and confidence could a people show their governor than to submit entirely to his hands the reorganization of their government, and the selection and appointment of a king? They probably wished to follow the law of Moses, (Deut. xvii, 15,) "Thou shalt in any wise set him king over thee whom the Lord thy God shall choose," and they knew no other way of ascertaining the Lord's choice than by this holy prophet. But this action seems to have been attended with a clamorous and mandatory spirit which was displeasing in the sight of God and of Samuel. **Like all the nations**—Perhaps their heathen neighbours had taunted them as being a nation without a king, and therefore they aspired to rival these nations in the appearance of worldly power and grandeur. "The Eastern mind is so essentially and pervadingly regal that to be without a sovereign is scarcely an intelligible state of things to an Oriental, and the Israelites must have had occasion to feel that the absence of a king gave them an appearance of inferiority in the eyes of their neighbours, incapable of understanding or appreciating the special and glorious privileges of their position. Even good men, able to appreciate the advantages of existing institutions, would eventually become weary of a peculiarity which the na-

Samuel, Harken unto the voice of the people in all that they say unto thee: for <sup>1</sup>they have not rejected thee, but <sup>2</sup>they have rejected me, that I should not reign over them. **8** According to all the works which they have done since the day that I brought them up out of Egypt even unto this day, wherewith they have forsaken me, and served

*Samuel.*—<sup>1</sup> See Exodus 16. 8.—<sup>2</sup> Chapter 10. 19; 12. 17, 19; Hosea 13. 10, 11.

tions would obtusely persist in regarding as discreditable."—*Kittó*.

**6. The thing displeased Samuel**—The elders presented the matter very skilfully to Samuel, implying (verse 5) that they would be quite content if they could always have him for their ruler, or be sure that he would have a worthy successor; yet Samuel felt personally affronted, and could not but see that there was among the people a growing disaffection with the manner of their government.

**7. They have not rejected thee, but . . . me**—These words imply that in his intercourse with Jehovah Samuel had complained that the people had rejected him, and were dissatisfied with his administration; but it was rather against the Theocracy itself that their disaffection lay. They failed to understand or acknowledge that their misfortunes came not from lack of power and care on the part of Jehovah, but because of their own sins. Had they humbly and devoutly inquired the will of God in the matter, and asked for a governor after his own heart, and not after the model of the heathen powers, a most propitious change might have been effected in their form of government. To punish them for their ingratitude and disaffection he gave them a king in his anger, and took him away in his wrath. Hos. xiii, 11.

**8. According to all the works**—All their rebellions and murmurings since the time of the exodus had been provocations to their Divine King, and now they add to all these offences by demanding the government of a human king. This being the case, Jehovah cannot now grant the desired change, except after solemn protest.

other gods, so do they also unto thee. **9** Now therefore <sup>3</sup>hearken unto their voice: <sup>4</sup>howbeit yet protest solemnly unto them, and <sup>1</sup>show them the manner of the king that shall reign over them. **10** And Samuel told all the words of the Lord unto the people that asked of him a king. **11** And he said, <sup>2</sup>This will be the manner of the king that shall reign over you: <sup>1</sup>He will take your sons, and appoint them for himself, for his chariots, and to be his horsemen; and some shall run before his chariots. **12** And he will appoint him captains over thousands, and captains over fifties, and will set them to ear his ground, and to reap his harvest, and to make his instruments of war, and instruments of his chariots. **13** And he will take your daughters to be confectionaries, and to

be cooks, and to be bakers. **14** And <sup>2</sup>he will take your fields, and your vineyards, and your oliveyards, even the best of them, and give them to his servants. **15** And he will take the tenth of your seed, and of your vineyards, and give to his <sup>2</sup>officers, and to his servants. **16** And he will take your menservants, and your maidservants, and your goodliest young men, and your asses, and put them to his work. **17** He will take the tenth of your sheep: and ye shall be his servants. **18** And ye shall cry out in that day because of your king which ye shall have chosen you; and the Lord <sup>2</sup>will not hear you in that day. **19** Nevertheless the people <sup>2</sup>refused to obey the voice of Samuel; and they said, Nay; but we will have a king over us; **20** That we also may be

<sup>3</sup>Or, obey.—<sup>4</sup>Or, notwithstanding when thou hast solemnly protested against them, then thou shalt show, &c.—<sup>1</sup>Verse 11.—<sup>2</sup>See Deut. 17. 15, &c.; chap. 10. 25.

<sup>1</sup>Chapter 14. 52.—<sup>2</sup>m 1 Kings 21. 7; see Ezekiel 46. 18.—<sup>3</sup>Hebrew, *eunuchs*, Genesis 37. 36.—<sup>4</sup>n Proverbs 1. 25-26; Isaiah 1. 15; Micah 3. 4.—<sup>o</sup>Jer. 41. 16.

**9. Protest solemnly**—Their ill-judged notions of a monarchy needed rebuke, and a monarchical form of government has its peculiar dangers. Israel must not take the responsibility of adopting that form of government without solemn warning as to the possible, and even probable, consequences. **The manner of the king**—The powers and privileges which a king will think it his right to exercise. See next verse. **That shall reign over them**—If we render this, as is equally proper, *that may reign over them*, the sense will be more plain. The Lord would fully warn his people of the possible dangers of a human monarchy, but he does not say that the king must necessarily, or would certainly, exercise despotic power and purposely afflict the people. It is clear from this passage that Jehovah did not favour Israel's adoption of a monarchical form of government. But his wisdom and power did not interfere with their free action. The nation had long suffered from the neglect to fix upon a central place of worship, and the lack of a strong national government, whose proper authority should be heeded in every part of the land.

**11. This will be the manner of the king**—מִשְׁפָּט, judgment, right,

*claim*. The judgment or manner of the king is what he would claim as his prerogative and right. Verses 11-17 contain a statement of what an eastern king, like those of the nations around Israel, would claim. The items of his claim (which extends both to the *persons* and *property* of his subjects) may be classified thus: 1. Over their *persons*; to seize them arbitrarily for his court-servants and attendants, (ver. 11.) and appoint them to his military, agricultural, mechanical, or domestic service, (verses 12, 13.) 2. Over their *property*, whether it consist in lands, harvests, slaves, or beasts. Verses 14-17. Here are presented the main features of an *absolute monarchy*; but observe, they are set forth as the possible manner or judgment of the king himself, not as divine or God-given rights which every king must claim. In Deut. xvii, 16-20, we learn that the king of Jehovah's choice must in divers ways be limited in his power.

**18. Ye shall cry out in that day**—By this dark picture of regal prerogative Samuel hopes that the people will withdraw their request for a king like those of the nations.

**19. The people refused to obey**—They had counted the cost, and were willing to submit to regal exactions for

like all the nations; and that our king may judge us, and go out before us, and fight our battles. **21** And Samuel heard all the words of the people, and he rehearsed them in the ears of the Lord. **22** And the Lord said to Samuel, Harken unto their voice, and make them a king. And Samuel said unto the men of Israel, Go ye every man unto his city.

## CHAPTER IX.

**N**OW there was a man of Benjamin, whose name was <sup>a</sup> Kish, the

<sup>p</sup> Verse 5.—<sup>q</sup> Verse 7; Hos. 13. 11.—<sup>a</sup> Chap. 14. 51; 1 Chron. 8. 33; 9. 39.

the sake of having a government like the nations around them. "On this Samuel sorrowfully dismissed them to their homes, that he might have time to take the necessary measures for effecting this great change."—*Kitto*.

## CHAPTER IX.

THE ANOINTING OF SAUL, ix, 1-27-  
x, 1-16.

In this chapter we are introduced to him who figures in the following history as the first king of Israel. But Samuel is yet the chief ruler, and Saul does not appear as reigning and exercising all his regal prerogatives until in chap. xiii, after the prophet Samuel has given his last public counsel and exhortation to the assembled nation.

1. **A man of Benjamin**—The smallest of the tribes, and the one lately devastated by civil war, (Judges xx,) has the honour of giving the first king to Israel; but the subsequent conduct and tragic death of Saul made that honour a reproach. **Kish, the son of Abiel**—On this genealogy, see chap. xiv, 50, and 1 Chron. viii, 33; ix, 39. **Zeror, Bechorath, and Aphiah** are not mentioned elsewhere. **A mighty man of power**—A man of wealth, as Boaz, (Judges ii, 1,) and also, probably, a man of great physical strength. This latter quality would account for the strength and size of his son Saul.

"When Saul speaks of his family as least of all the families of Benjamin, (verse 21,) it does not follow that Kish was not a powerful chieftain—Gibeah apparently belonged to him—but that

son of Abiel, the son of Zeror, the son of Bechorath, the son of Aphiah, <sup>1</sup>a Benjamite, a mighty man of <sup>2</sup>power. **2** And he had a son, whose name was Saul, a choice young man, and a goodly: and ~~there was~~ not among the children of Israel a goodlier person than he: <sup>b</sup>from his shoulders and upward ~~he was~~ higher than any of the people. **3** And the asses of Kish Saul's father were lost. And Kish said to Saul his son. Take now one of the servants with thee, and arise, go seek the asses. **4** And he

1 Or, the son of a man of Jemini.—2 Or, substance.—b Chap. 10. 23.

as Benjamin was but a small tribe, so the division of it to which Saul belonged was not that which held the foremost rank. In Saul's history we find an undesigned corroboration of the narrative in Judges xx, xxi. Benjamin, according to Num. xxvi, 38-40, was divided into six or seven families—probably the latter number. But Saul's family, that of Matri, (chap. x, 21,) is not one of them. Doubtless when the tribe was reduced to six hundred men several of the old families were obliterated, and in course of time new ones took their place."—*R. P. Smith's Bampton Lecture for 1869*.

2. **A choice young man, and a goodly**—In the vigour and prime of early manhood, and of a beautiful countenance. **Higher than any of the people**—Great respect was paid by the ancients to a noble presence. Herodotus (iii, 20) says of the Ethiopians: "They confer the sovereignty upon the man whom they consider to be of the largest stature, and to possess strength proportionable to his size."

3. **One of the servants**—Traditionally believed to have been Doeg the Edomite, afterwards chief herdsman of Saul. Chap. xxi, 7. His being "detained before the Lord" at Nob shows him to have been religiously disposed, and this may account for his knowledge of the seer Samuel. See on verse 6. **Go seek the asses**—"Among cattle in the East at all times, and especially in times ere horses were in use for riding, asses were of very much importance; and when, therefore, it was found one morning that some of Kish's

passed through mount Ephraim, and passed through the land of *Shalisha*; but they found *them* not: then they passed through the land of *Shalim*, and *there they were* not: and he passed through the land of the Benjamites, but they found *them* not. 5 And when they were come to the land of Zuph, Saul

c 2 Kings 4. 42.

asses were missing, Saul himself, accompanied by a servant, at once set out in search of them. If such an incident now happened in Palestine, it would be at once concluded that the animals had been stolen; and it speaks well for the state of society in the time of Samuel that this suspicion never crossed the mind of Saul or his father. It was simply concluded that the asses had strayed."—*Kitto*.

4. **Mount Ephraim**—See note on Judges xvii, 1. There is great uncertainty in respect to this route of Saul after his father's asses. He undoubtedly started from Gibeah, where was his home, (x, 26,) and, *passing through or over* (עבר) mount Ephraim, he must have gone in a northwesterly direction. In the absence of any evidence to the contrary, we naturally understand the land of *Shalisha* to be the country around Baul-shalisha, mentioned 2 Kings iv, 42, and which, according to Eusebius and Jerome, was situated fifteen Roman miles north of Lydda, or Diospolis—the modern Ludd. Near this spot three water-courses unite in one large stream known as the Wady Kurawa, and hence, perhaps, the name *Shalisha*—land of three. From this point we can trace their course only by conjecture, for the land of *Shalim* is unknown, and the land of the *Benjamites* is literally the land of *Yemini*, and may, perhaps, have lain outside of the territory of Benjamin. If, however, the land of *Yemini* here means the territory of Benjamin, then the most probable conjecture is, that from the neighbourhood of Ludd they fetched a circuitous course, first easterly and then south, passing through the land of Benjamin somewhere east of Gibeah.

5. **Land of Zuph**—Perhaps so called after one of Samuel's ancestors

said to his servant that *was* with him. Come, and let us return; lest my father leave *caring* for the asses, and take thought for us. 6 And he said unto him, Behold now, *there is* in this city a man of God, and *he is* an honourable man; \*all that he saith cometh surely to pass: now let us go thither; perad-

d Deut. 33. 1; 1 Kings 13. 1.—e Chap. 3. 19.

who bore this name. Chap. i, 1. It must have been situated south of Jerusalem, for when Saul started for his home in Gibeah he passed by Rachel's sepulchre. Chap. x, 2. We find a slight trace of the word in the modern Soba, which some regard as the Ramathaim-Zophim of chap. i, 1; and probably the land of Zuph extended from this place southwards beyond Bethlehem.

6. **In this city**—The city here referred to could not have been Ramah, Samuel's home, as most commentators have assumed, for that lay five miles north of Jerusalem, (see note on chap. i, 1,) and Saul and his servant were now somewhere in the vicinity of Rachel's tomb. Chap. x, 2. What city it was we are nowhere told. But if it was not Samuel's place of residence, how did Saul's servant know that Samuel was there? This question we can answer only by conjecture, and the most plausible conjecture is, that this servant had heard on their route, or before they left Gibeah, that Samuel was to be at this city at this time. He seems to have had considerable knowledge of Samuel's history and character, and would, therefore, naturally inform himself of his movements. See note on verse 3. From verse 12 we also learn that the prophet's visit to the place in question was a hasty one, for he had come to the city on that day, and the maidens tell Saul and his servant to hasten if they would see him, implying that if they did not make haste he might depart from the city before they arrived. This place, being not far from Rachel's tomb, could not have been either of the cities mentioned chap. vii, 16, 17, and regularly visited by Samuel in his yearly circuit. His going aside, therefore, from his usual

venture he can show us our way that we should go. 7 Then said Saul to his servant, But, behold, *if* we go, 'what shall we bring the man? for the bread <sup>is</sup> spent in our vessels, and *there is* not a present to bring to the man of God: what <sup>have</sup> we? 8 And the servant answered Saul again, and said, Behold, <sup>I</sup> have here at hand the fourth part of a shekel of silver: *that* will I give to the man of God, to tell us our way.

<sup>f</sup> See Judg. 6. 18; 13. 17; 1 Kings 14. 3; 2 Kings 4. 42; 8. 8.—<sup>g</sup> Hebrew, *is gone out of*, &c.—<sup>4</sup> Heb. *is with us*—<sup>5</sup> Heb. *there is found in my hand*.—<sup>g</sup> Gen. 25. 22.

circuit to bless the sacrifice in this more southern city may have caused special notices of it to be spread in that part of the country, and thus Saul's servant might have gained his information.

7. **What shall we bring the man**—"Then, as now, in the East, it would have been the height of rudeness and indecorum for any one to present himself before a superior or equal, especially if he had any request to make, without some present, more or less, according to his degree—not by any means as a fee or bribe, but in testimony of his homage, his respect, or his compliments."—*Kitto*. See biblical examples of this custom in chap. x. 27, and the marginal references there.

8. **The fourth part of a shekel of silver**—About fifteen cents.

9. **Beforetime in Israel**—A long time before our historian wrote. According to some exegetes, this verse is an interpolation by a later writer; but if the books of Samuel were written, as we have supposed, (see Introduction,) about the time of Rehoboam or of his son Abijam, the historian himself may properly have spoken of a custom of Samuel's time as prevailing *beforetime in Israel*, for Rehoboam reigned nearly a century after the death of Samuel.

**A Prophet... a Seer**—According to the strict etymology of these words a prophet (*nabi*) is *one who announces* a divine oracle, a seer (*roeh*) *one who sees* some supernatural vision, or sees in some marvellous or supernatural way. The former would thus take his name from the fact of his communicating a divine message to others; the latter from the manner of his receiving

9 (Beforetime in Israel, when a man <sup>went</sup> to inquire of God, thus he spake, Come, and let us go to the seer: for *he that is now called* a Prophet was beforetime called <sup>a</sup> Seer.) 10 Then said Saul to his servant, <sup>Well</sup> said; come, let us go. So they went unto the city where the man of God *was*. 11 *And* as they went up <sup>the</sup> hill to the city, <sup>they</sup> found young maidens going out to draw water, and said unto them, Is

<sup>h</sup> 2 Sam. 24. 11; 2 Kings 17. 13; 1 Chron. 26. 28-29, 29; 2 Chron. 16. 7, 10; Isa. 30. 10; Amos 7. 12.—<sup>6</sup> Heb. *Thy word is good*.—<sup>7</sup> Heb. *in the ascent of the city*.—<sup>4</sup> Gen. 24. 11.

a divine revelation. Seer is said to have been the more ancient or archaic name, but Abraham was called a prophet, (Gen. xx. 7,) and in the days of Asa, king of Judah, more than a hundred years after Samuel, Hanani was called a seer. 2 Chron. xvi. 7. The Septuagint reads: "The prophet the people (*ὁ λαός*) were formerly accustomed to call the seer," as if seer was the popular as well as the ancient name. Probably the name of seer lingered long after the name of prophet became the more common and popular title, for no common word goes out of use but by slow degrees. Samuel's honoured ministry seems to have wrought this change of names. When he appeared in Israel the word of God was rare; there was no open vision. Chap. iii. 1. But there were probably plenty of seers—men not endowed with the divine gift of prophecy, nor established as prophets of Jehovah, as Samuel was, but shrewd and practiced observers of men and things, who were skilled in solving many of the doubts and difficulties of the common people. These were not honoured with the lofty title of prophet, which the people of that time associated only with such saintly personages as Moses and Abraham, for the seers probably pretended to no divine mission or special inspiration from Jehovah. But from Samuel's time onward the Lord spake often by prophets, and that office and order became an institution in Israel to offset the dangerous tendencies of the monarchy; and so the name *seer* gradually became obsolete.

11. **Young maidens going out to draw water**—Like Rebekah (Genesis

the seer here? **12** And they answered them, and said, He is; behold, *he is* before you: make haste now, for he came to day to the city; for *there is a* sacrifice of the people to day *in the high place*: **13** As soon as ye be come into the city, ye shall straightway find him, before he go up to the high place to eat: for the people will not eat until he come, because he doth *bless the sacrifice; and afterwards they eat that be bidden*. Now therefore get you up; for about *this time ye shall find him*. **14** And they went up into the city: *and when they were come into the city, behold, Samuel came out against them, for to go up to the high place*. **15** *Now the Lord had told Samuel in his ear a day*

*8* Gen. 31. 54; chap. 16. 2.—*8* Or, *feast*.—*21* Kings 3. 2.—*m* Matt. 26. 26; Mark 6. 41; 1 Cor. 10. 30; 1 Tim. 4. 4.—*9* Heb. *to day*.—*n* Chap. 15. 1; Acts 13. 21.

xxiv. 15) and the daughters of Jethro. Exod. ii. 16.

**12. Make haste now**—For if ye do not see him before he goes up to the high place to bless the sacrifice and eat, ye may not be able to hold any private interview with him at all. See on verse 6. **Sacrifice... in the high place**—The law ordained, (Lev. xvii, 3-9; Deut. xii, 5-14,) and it was remembered in the days of Joshua, (Josh. xxii, 29,) that all burnt offerings must be offered upon one common altar. But the tribes of Israel failed both to drive out their heathen foes from the land, and to ascertain that central seat of worship where it would please Jehovah to record his name. And hence the practice of sacrificing in other places sprang up almost of necessity. The acts of Gideon (Judges vi, 25, 26) and of Elijah (1 Kings xviii, 30-32) received the divine approval, for they were to serve special purposes in bringing judgments upon the worship of Baal. But in the days of Samuel Shiloh was desolate, the ark of the covenant was in Kirjath-jearim, and as yet there was no single place where Jehovah had recorded his name, and which he had designated as the one sole place where he would be pleased with sacrifice. Accordingly Samuel and the people are not to be censured for sacrificing in the high place. See 1 Kings iii, 2.

before Saul came, saying, **16** To-morrow about this time I will send thee a man out of the land of Benjamin, *and thou shalt anoint him to be captain over my people Israel, that he may save my people out of the hand of the Philistines: for I have looked upon my people, because their cry is come unto me*. **17** And when Samuel saw Saul, the Lord said unto him, *Behold the man whom I spake to thee of! this same shall reign over my people*. **18** Then Saul drew near to Samuel in the gate, and said, Tell me, I pray thee, where the seer's house is. **19** And Samuel answered Saul, and said, *I am the seer: go up before me unto the high place; for ye shall eat with me to day, and to*

*10* Hebrew, *revealed the ear of Samuel*, chap. 20. 2.—*o* Chap. 10. 1.—*p* Exod. 2. 25. 3. 7, 9.—*q* Chap. 16. 12; Hos. 13. 11.—*11* Hebrew, *restrain in*.

**13. He doth bless the sacrifice**—We are not to suppose that Samuel offered the sacrifice himself, for he was not a priest, (see note on chap. vii, 9,) but, as Scott well says, "he poured out fervent prayers to the Lord for acceptance, and for his blessing on the service as a religious ordinance to the good of the souls, as well as on the food for the refreshment of the bodies, of those present."

**15. The Lord had told Samuel**—Probably in direct answer to prayer. For after the prophet had dismissed the people at Ramah (chap. viii, 22) he undoubtedly prayed God to show him the person to be anointed as the first king of Israel.

**16. Save my people out of the hand of the Philistines**—This does not imply that Israel was now in subjection to the Philistines, for after the triumph of Mizpeh (chap. vii) the Philistines were not successful in their attempts to invade the land of Israel as long as Samuel lived; but this verse, as well as chap. vii, 13, shows that the Philistines continually harassed Israel by attempts to regain their lost dominion over them. **I have looked upon my people**—With an eye of compassion, and with intent to help them.

**18. The seer's house**—The house where he abides while in the city; the place he temporarily makes his home.

morrow I will let thee go, and will tell thee 'all that *is* in thine heart. 20 And as for *'*thine asses that were lost <sup>12</sup>three days ago, set not thy mind on them; for they are found. And on whom *'is* all the desire of Israel? *Is it* not on thee, and on all thy father's house? 21 And Saul answered and said, "Am not I a Benjamite, of the 'smallest of the tribes of Israel? and "my family the least of all the families of the tribe of Benjamin? wherefore then speakest thou <sup>13</sup>so to me? 22 And Samuel took Saul and his servant, and brought them into the parlour, and made them sit in the chiefest place among them that were bidden, which

r 1 Cor. 14. 25.—s Verse 3.—12 Heb. *to day three days*.—t Chap. 8. 5, 19; 12. 13.—u Chap. 15. 17.—v Judges 20. 46, 47, 48; Psa. 68. 27.

20. **Thine asses . . . are found**—This must have convinced Saul that a true seer looked upon his heart. **All the desire of Israel**—Israel's desire was for a king, and Samuel sees that Saul is the man to meet this desire. It is nowise improbable that Saul, the goodly, broad-shouldered youth of Gibeah, had already been talked of as a proper candidate for king, and many eyes in Israel had turned towards him with special interest. A man of great physical power and tall and commanding presence was the popular ideal of a king. And Saul filled this ideal well.

21. **Smallest of the tribes**—And once almost annihilated by the tribal war. Judges xx. Saul is now little in his own eyes, but elevation to power developed in him a spirit of insubordinate ambition and pride. Chap. xv, 17.

22. **Parlour**—**לשכָּה** is rendered *chamber*, 2 Kings xxiii, 11; Neh. xiii, 5; Jer. xxxv, 4; Ezek. xl, 45, 46. Here it means the dining room set apart for Samuel and the thirty distinguished guests—chief citizens of the place—who were invited to eat with him. The rest of the people probably ate of the sacrifice in the open air.

23. **The cook**—**טבח**, *the slaughterer*.

He who had the whole charge of the preparation, not only of the *cooking*, but also of the *butchering*.

24. **The shoulder**—Or *leg*, (**שׁוֹק**).

Whether of the fore or hind quarter, or from the right or left side, we are not

were about thirty persons. 23 And Samuel said unto the cook, Bring the portion which I gave thee, of which I said unto thee, Set it by thee. 24 And the cook took up <sup>14</sup>the shoulder, and *that* which *was* upon it, and set *it* before Saul. And Samuel said, Behold that which is <sup>14</sup>left! set *it* before thee, *and* eat: for unto this time hath it been kept for thee since I said, I have invited the people. So Saul did eat with Samuel that day. 25 And when they were come down from the high place into the city, Samuel communed with Saul upon <sup>15</sup>the top of the house. 26 And they arose early: and it came

v Judges 6. 15.—13 Heb. *according to this word*.—s Lev. 7. 32, 33; Ezek. 24. 4.—14 Or, *reserved*.—v Deut. 22. 8; 2 Sam. 11.2; Acts 10.9.

told. The older interpreters supposed it not to have been the right shoulder, because that was given to the priests. Lev. vii, 32. But it is possible that on this occasion Samuel, as president of the sacrifice, was honoured by receiving the portion usually given to the priests, and had ordered it to be reserved for the distinguished stranger whom the Lord had told him he would send that day. **And that which was upon it**—Interpreters have understood this variously, as the *broth*, (Maurer,) *caul*, (Clarke,) *kidney*, (Thenius,) *thigh*, (Targum.) Harmer understands that the shoulder was covered over with butter and milk—a great delicacy in

the East. Luther translates **הַעֲלִיָּה**, *what hung to it*; and Keil explains it as such of the fat upon the flesh as was not intended for the altar. This last is, perhaps, the most simple explanation, but there is nothing in the passage or context to decide the precise meaning.

25. **From the high place into the city**—So the place of this sacrifice was outside of the city, and apparently on a hill overhanging it. **Communied with Saul upon the top of the house**—The flat roofs of oriental houses were places of evening recreation as well as sleeping places. Otto Von Gerlach supposes that the topics of this conversation upon the roof were "the deep religious and political degradation of the people of God, the oppression by the

to pass about the spring of the day, that Samuel called Saul to the top of the house, saying, Up, that I may send thee away. And Saul arose, and they went out both of them, he and Samuel, abroad. **27** And as they were going down to the end of the city, Samuel said to Saul, Bid the servant pass on before us, (and he passed on,) but stand thou still <sup>15</sup>a while, that I may show thee the word of God.

## CHAPTER X.

**T**HEN <sup>a</sup>Samuel took a vial of oil, and poured <sup>it</sup> upon his head, <sup>b</sup>and

<sup>15</sup> Hebrew, *to day*.—<sup>a</sup> Chap. 9. 16; 16. 13; 2 Kings 9. 3, 6.—<sup>b</sup> Psa. 2. 12.—<sup>c</sup> Acts 13. 21.—<sup>d</sup> Deut. 32. 9; Psa. 78. 71.

heathen, the causes of the inability of the Israelites to stand before their foes, the necessity for a conversion of the people, and the want of a leader who was entirely devoted to God."

**26. Called Saul to the top of the house**—Rather, *called unto Saul on the roof*, for Saul had probably slept on the roof, and Samuel below.

**27. Bid the servant pass on before us**—For he did not wish Saul's anointing to be yet made public.

## CHAPTER X.

Here is an unfortunate division of chapters, harshly breaking in upon a deeply interesting narrative.

1. **A vial of oil**—The Hebrew is emphatic—*the flask of the oil*; probably the holy anointing oil described Exod. xxx. 23–33, which Samuel had prepared for this express purpose. **Poured it upon his head**—Among the Hebrews this solemn ceremony had hitherto been used only on the priests, and the holy places and vessels of the sanctuary. Its application to the king would, therefore, serve to show that he was a sacred personage, and that the monarchy, like the priesthood, was a divine institution. Hence "the Lord's anointed" became the common designation of the kings of Israel. Chap. xii. 3, 5; xxiv. 6; 2 Sam. i. 14, 16; Psa. cv. 15. From Psa. cxxxiii. 2. we would naturally infer that the precious ointment was very copiously poured out. **Kissed him**—In token both of friendly congratulation and of homage. Compare Psa. ii. 12.

kissed him, and said, *Is it not because the Lord hath anointed thee to be captain over his inheritance?* **2** When thou art departed from me to day, then thou shalt find two men by <sup>a</sup>Rachel's sepulchre in the border of Benjamin <sup>at</sup>Zelzah; and they will say unto thee, The asses which thou wentest to seek are found: and, lo, thy father hath left <sup>1</sup>the care of the asses, and sorroweth for you, saying, What shall I do for my son? **3** Then shalt thou go on forward from thence, and thou shalt come to the plain of Tabor, and there shall meet thee three men going up <sup>to</sup>God to Beth-el,

<sup>a</sup> Genesis 35. 19, 20.—<sup>f</sup> Joshua 18. 28.—<sup>1</sup> Hebrew, *the business*.—<sup>g</sup> Genesis 28. 22; 35. 1, 3, 7.

**Captain over his inheritance**—נָזִיר,

*prefect; overseer; prince*. Solemn and responsible office. Compare the term נָזִיר, *Messiah Prince*, or, *the Anointed Prince*. Dan. ix. 25.

**2. When thou art departed from me**—Samuel proceeds, verses 2–7, to give Saul three signs by which he shall know that God had chosen him king. **Rachel's sepulchre**—See Genesis xxxv. 19, 20. There is no sufficient reason to question the traditional site of this place, which is at the modern Kubbet Rahil, a little to the northwest of Beth-lehem. **In the border of Benjamin**—This ran through the valley of Hinnom, just south of Jerusalem. Josh. xviii. 16. **Zelzah**—Some identify this place with the modern Beit-jala; but this passage would rather imply that it was situated north of Rachel's tomb, and nearer to the border of Benjamin. It is nowhere mentioned again. **Left the care of the asses**—Literally, *the words of the asses*; he has left off talking about them, and says more words about his absent son.

**3. The plain of Tabor**—Rather, *the oak of Tabor*, a spot apparently well known to Saul and Samuel, but now lost from our knowledge. Thenius's conjecture that the oak of Deborah (Gen. xxxv. 8) is meant cannot be correct, for that was at Beth-el, far to the north of Saul's home. **Three men going up to God to Beth-el**—That is, going up to worship and sacrifice unto God at Beth-el. This



one carrying three kids, and another carrying three loaves of bread, and another carrying a bottle of wine: 4 And they will salute thee, and give thee two loaves of bread; which thou shalt receive of their hands. 5 After that thou

2 Heb. *ask thee of peace*: as Judges 18. 15.

"shows that there was still a place of sacrifice consecrated to the Lord at Beth-el, where Abraham and Jacob had erected altars to the Lord, who had appeared to them there, (Gen. xii, 8; xiii, 3, 4; xxviii, 18, 19; xxxv, 7;) for the kids and loaves and wine were sacrificial gifts which they were about to offer."—*Keil*. Beth-el was one of the places regularly visited by Samuel in his yearly circuit, (chap. vii, 16,) and here were doubtless priests, and at this time, when the tabernacle was desolate, (see note on chapter ix, 12,) these three devoted men knew no more appropriate place to sacrifice unto God. Perhaps, too, the tabernacle was at Beth-el at this time, for after the desolation of Shiloh it seems to have become again a movable sanctuary, and appears in later history at Nob and Gibeon. Chap. xxi, 1-6; 1 Chron. xvi, 39; comp. Judges xx, 27.

5. **The hill of God**—Hebrew, *Gibeah ha-Elohim*. This seems to have been the name of a sacrificial height near the home of Saul. It perhaps took its name from being the chief seat of the company of prophets here referred to. Without doubt the height Tuleil-el-Ful is meant, which marks the site of the ancient Gibeah of Saul. The city itself, as we learn from this same verse, lay close by, probably at the base of the hill on the east or northeast. See Robinson's "Biblical Researches," vol. iii, p. 287. **Garrison of the Philistines**—On this height those vigilant enemies had intrenched themselves; for, though subdued, and unable to make successful invasions in the land of Israel, (see on chapter vii, 13,) they still annoyed Israel by occasionally throwing a garrison into such places as this and Geba. Chapter xiii, 3. Some render the word, less properly, *columns* or *pillars* of the Philistines, meaning monumental pillars which these invaders had erected as signs of their su-

shalt come to 'the hill of God,' where is the garrison of the Philistines: and it shall come to pass, when thou art come thither to the city, that thou shalt meet a company of prophets coming down 'from the high place with a

h Verse 10.—i Chap. 13. 3.—k Chap. 9. 12.

premacy, or else of former victories. **A**

**company of prophets**—חֲבֵרָה, *a cord*,

like the English word *band*, is used to denote a company or association of persons bound together by common sympathies and aims. This is the first mention we have of those associations in ancient Israel which are commonly called *Schools of the Prophets*. There is little doubt but that they originated with Samuel, for at the time of his call prophecy was rare in Israel. Chapter iii, 1. We have reason to suppose that after the capture of the ark, and the desolation of the sanctuary at Shiloh, this inspired man, anxious to counteract the prevailing tendency to idolatry, gathered around him at his home in Ramah a company of promising youth, and trained them in the true knowledge of Jehovah. During those twenty years of silence in the history of Israel referred to in chap. vii, 2, this work probably occupied much of Samuel's time. Here, observes Stanley, we have the first historical notice of societies formed for educational purposes. "Long before Plato had gathered his disciples round him in the olive grove, or Zeno in the Portico, these institutions had sprung up in Judea." These associations of holy men were no doubt powerful agencies for preserving a knowledge of the true God among the people. Jerome regarded them as an order of monks, but they did not seclude themselves from the world and from human society, for some of them were married, (2 Kings iv, 1;) and this procession, marching with instruments of music through the streets of Gibeah, and publicly prophesying, presents them rather as travelling revivalists, seeking to scatter their religious spirit and enthusiasm among the people. Besides such public exercises, they probably employed themselves privately with the study of

psaltery, and a tabret, and a pipe, and

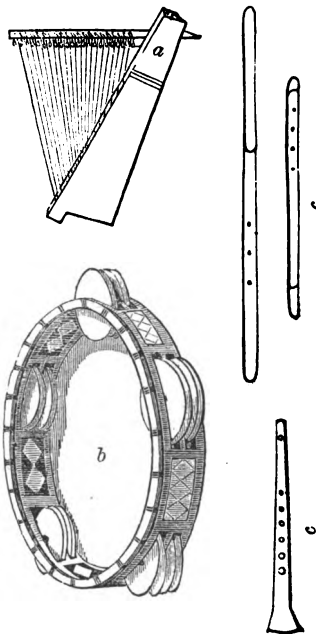
Exod. 15. 20, 21;

the law of Moses, the history of the chosen nation, and the cultivation of sacred poetry and song. A full account of these schools would supply a most interesting chapter in the history of the Hebrew nation, but we are dependent on a few incidental allusions for all we know of them. We next meet with them at Ramah. Chap. xix, 18-24. Here was Samuel's home, and just out of the city these prophets had probably their first-established settlement, (*Nai-oth*.) Here, for a time, in the days of his persecution, David found an asylum with Samuel; and here, no doubt, that youthful psalmist found a most congenial society, and amidst its happy surroundings composed many of his psalms, and cultivated his taste for music to greater perfection than before. In the days of Ahab the members of these schools must have become very numerous; for, besides those whom the miserable Jezebel succeeded in destroying, (1 Kings xix, 10,) a hundred were hidden by Obadiah in a cave, (chap. xviii, 4, 13;) and who shall tell how many of the seven thousand who had not bowed the knee to Baal (xix, 18) were saved from idolatry through the influence of these associations of devout men? In the time of Elijah they were called "sons of the prophets," (1 Kings xx, 35,) probably because some distinguished prophet like Elijah or Elisha was their spiritual father, and presided over them as superintendent and teacher. They had schools at Beth-el, Jericho, Gilgal, the Jordan, and perhaps many other places. 2 Kings ii, 3, 5; iv, 38; vi, 2. Asaph the seer (2 Chron. xxix, 30) was probably a president of one of these schools, in which special attention was paid to sacred poetry and song. Hence the psalms attributed to him, (Psa. l, lxxiii-lxxxiii,) composed by him or some disciple of his school, and used in the temple service. We are not to suppose that all these sons of the prophets received and uttered divine revelations, but rather that in these associations they were trained to be leaders of the public worship, and to serve in divers

a harp, before them; 'and they shall

2 Kings 3. 15; 1 Cor. 14. 1.

ways as teachers of the people. **Psaltery... tabret... pipe... harp**—These instruments of music often served, as in the case of Elisha, (2 Kings iii, 15.) to tranquillize the spirits of the prophets, and induce the proper frame of mind to engage in holy exercises. Instrumental music may ever be an assistant to religious devotion—a fact which the saints of every age have acknowledged by appropriating its use to the worship of God in the sanctuary. It is impossible to determine clearly all the distinguishing qualities of these and other musical instruments of the ancient Hebrews. Those who wish to know the various, and oftentimes conflicting, opinions of antiquaries on this subject should consult the large biblical dictionaries on the several words. On the *harp*, see at Gen. iv, 21. The probable forms of the *psaltery*, *tabret*, and



prophecy: **6** And "the Spirit of the Lord will come upon thee, and "thou shalt prophesy with them, and shalt be turned into another man. **7** And "let it be, when these "signs are come unto thee, "that thou do as occasion serve thee; for "God is with thee. **8** And thou shalt go down before me "to Gilgal; and, behold, I will come down unto thee, to offer burnt offerings, and to sacrifice sacrifices of peace offerings: "seven days shalt thou tarry, till I come to

*m* Num. 11. 25; chap. 16. 13.—*n* Verse 10; chap. 19. 23, 24.—*o* Heb. *it shall come to pass that when these signs, &c.*—*p* Exod. 4. 8; Luke 2. 12.—*q* Hebrew, *do for thee as thine*

*pipe* are shown in the foregoing cut. The psaltery was a stringed instrument of a triangular form, (*a*;) the tabret was an instrument of percussion, something like the modern tambourine, (*b*;) and the pipe was a wind instrument like the modern flute, and perforated with holes, (*c. c.*) **They shall prophesy**—Literally, *and they prophesying*. This exercise seems to have consisted in the ecstatic utterance of prayer and praise to God, as in the case of the elders in the time of Moses Num. xi, 25. So powerful was the influence exerted by this prophesying that those who came near were affected by the same spirit. Compare chap. xix, 20–24.

**6. Turned into another man**—Not regenerated in the Christian sense, nor suddenly endowed with a divine illumination of soul that completely lifted him out of his previous modes of thought and feeling; but quickened with a divine impulse, and inspired with a loftier ambition and with conceptions of responsibility such as he had not known before. See further on verse 9.

**7. Do as occasion serve thee**—Literally, as in the margin, *do for thee as thine hand shall find*. That is, when thou seest all these signs come to pass, know that the Lord confirms thee as captain over his inheritance, and afterward act as circumstances seem to require. Boldly enter the openings of Providence.

**8. Thou shalt go down before me to Gilgal**—This is not a command, but a prediction. Samuel's prophetic eye fastens upon the future turning point

thee, and show thee what thou shalt do. **9** And it was so, that, when he had turned his "back to go from Samuel, God "gave him another heart: and all those signs came to pass that day. **10** And "when they came thither to the hill, behold, "a company of prophets met him; and "the Spirit of God came upon him, and he prophesied among them. **11** And it came to pass, when all that knew him beforetime saw that, behold, he prophesied among the prophets,

*hand shall find*, Judges 9. 33.—*p* Judges 6. 12.—*q* Chap. 11. 14, 15; 13. 4.—*r* Chap. 13. 8.—*s* Hebrew, *shoulder*.—*t* Hebrew, *turned*.—*u* Verse 5.—*v* Chap. 19. 20.—*w* Verse 6.

in Saul's career, when, threatened by an attack from the Philistines, and forsaken by many of his soldiers, he shall be called upon to show his faith in God. Perhaps Samuel added other instructions not recorded here; but it was sufficient now for Saul to know that there would come a time when he would be waiting at Gilgal for Samuel's arrival, and when that occasion came he must wait for special instruction from the Lord. For the manner in which this prophecy was fulfilled, and how Saul failed to observe these instructions, see chap. xiii, 8. It was fitting that at this first interview Samuel should drop a word of warning and counsel for Saul's guidance at that coming time of his greatest danger.

**9. When he had turned his back ... God gave him another heart**—In verse 6 he is told that he would be *turned into another man* when he came in contact with the company of prophets, but here it appears that as soon as he left the company of Samuel *God turned to him another heart*. And so it doubtless was. The unexpected and impressive disclosures which the prophet had made to him began at once to work a revolution in his inner life. Every successive sign, as it came to pass, deepened the impression, and when he met the band of prophets he was a most proper subject to catch the inspiration of their contagious enthusiasm. So he truly returned to Gibeah *another man* from what he was when he left that place five days before.

**11. All that knew him**—All his neighbours and acquaintances at once

then the people said 'one to another, *What is this that is come unto the son of Kish?* *Is Saul also among the prophets?* **12** And one <sup>o</sup> of the same place answered and said, But *who is their father?* Therefore it became a proverb, *Is Saul also among the prophets?* **13** And when he had made an end of prophesying, he came to the high place. **14** And Saul's uncle said unto

7 Heb. *a man to his neighbour.*—*v* Chap. 19. 24; Matt. 13. 54, 55; John 7. 15; Acts 4. 13.

perceive the change, and, as he prophesies among the prophets, they ask, as in amazement: **What is this that is come unto the son of Kish? Is Saul also among the prophets?** Nothing of this kind had ever been known of him before, and all at once he seemed to be changed into a man of another heart and another life.

**12. Who is their father**—Not *his father*, as the Septuagint and other versions presume to amend the Hebrew text,—for this was not a contemptuous question; and otherwise it would have been meaningless in the mouth of a man of Gibeah, who must have known the father of Saul,—but, *Who is the father of them?* that is, of the prophets:—who makes prophets? Is it not God? and cannot he make a prophet of the son of Kish as easily as of any other man? The gift of prophecy comes not by natural descent, but by inspiration of the Almighty; and this fact was ever suggested by the proverb, afterwards common in Israel, *Is Saul also among the prophets?*

**13. He came to the high place**—Whence the company of prophets had come down, (verse 5,) and where he seems to have met his uncle, or friend.

**14. Saul's uncle**—Perhaps Abner, who was afterwards captain of Saul's host. Chap. xiv, 50. But the word *אֲבִי*, here translated *uncle*, frequently means *a beloved friend*, and may here refer to some familiar friend of Saul who was not a relative. The earnestness with which he asks what Samuel had said to Saul is another intimation that Saul's relatives and friends were interested in his case, and had possibly proposed him as a proper person for king. Compare note on chap. ix, 20.

him and to his servant, Whither went ye? And he said, To seek the asses: and when we saw that *they were* no where, we came to Samuel. **15** And Saul's uncle said, Tell me, I pray thee, what Samuel said unto you. **16** And Saul said unto his uncle, He told us plainly that the asses were found. But <sup>o</sup> of the matter of the kingdom, whereof Samuel spake, he told him not.

8 Heb. *from thence.*—*v* Isa. 54. 13; John 6. 45; 7. 16.—*v* Prov. 29. 11.

**16. The matter of the kingdom**—Or, *the word of the kingdom*; that is, the statements and counsels of Samuel respecting it. **He told him not**—With becoming humility and modesty he waited the time when the developments of Providence should make it known, for as yet he was little in his own eyes. Chap. xv, 17.

#### SAUL'S PUBLIC ELECTION AT MIZPEH, 17-27.

It was very important for the interests of Saul, as well as to Samuel and the people, that his advancement to the head of the nation be a matter of public notoriety. Already was it noised abroad that he was among the prophets; but that remarkable fact was no sufficient reason for the people to recognise him as their king. Therefore Samuel, to whom all still looked for judgment, assembled the people at Mizpeh, where Jehovah had on a former occasion signally magnified his name among them, and confounded their enemies, (chap. vii,) and there, by the casting of lots, Saul was publicly designated as the one "whom the Lord had chosen." Samuel knew before this whom the Lord had chosen, and so did Saul, as is seen in his hiding himself among the stuff. Verses 21, 22. So it was not for their sake, but for the people's sake, that this assembly was convened at Mizpeh. Proper attention to this fact will show how futile is the position of De Wette and other rationalistic critics, who assume that this public election at Mizpeh is inconsistent with the account of Saul's private anointing in the preceding section. But on occasion of this public election he was not anointed at all. At a previous convention of the

O. T.

**17** And Samuel called the people together unto the Lord to Mizpeh; **18** And said unto the children of Israel, 'Thus saith the Lord God of Israel, I brought up Israel out of Egypt, and delivered you out of the hand of the Egyptians, and out of the hand of all kingdoms, and of them that oppressed you: **19** And ye have this day rejected your God, who himself saved you out of all your adversities and your tribulations; and ye have said unto him, *Not*, but set a king over us. Now therefore present yourselves before the Lord by your tribes, and by your thousands. **20** And when Samuel had caused all the tribes of Israel to come near, the tribe of Benjamin was taken. **21** When he had caused the tribe of

*y* Judges 11, 11; 20, 1; chap. 11, 15.—*z* Chap. 7, 5, 6.—*a* Judges 6, 8, 9.—*b* Chap. 8, 7, 19; 13, 12.—*c* Josh. 7, 14, 16, 17; Acts 1, 24, 26.—*d* Chap. 23, 2, 4, 10, 11.

people at Ramah they had insisted on having a king. (viii, 19.) and the prophet, to whom the matter was intrusted, dismissed them to their homes that he might take the proper measures for accomplishing their desire. Having now, by providential guidance, found the man of Israel's desire, (ix, 20,) he again assembles the people for the purpose of publicly designating whom the Lord had chosen; and, that there may be no appearance of intrigue, he has the election publicly made by lot.

**17. Unto the Lord**—This expression does not necessarily imply that the ark was present. Compare Judges xi, 11, note. Samuel publicly invokes the divine presence and blessing, and has everything done as in the presence of Jehovah. So there was no chance for intrigue. The matter was decided by lot, and Saul was designated as king by a process the same as that by which Achan was convicted of his crime in the days of Joshua. Josh. vii, 14–18.

**21. Family of Matri**—Not mentioned among the families of Benjamin in Num. xxvi, 38–41; but probably a new family that arose in Benjamin after the tribal war. See note on chap. ix, 1. **He could not be found**—Saul knew, from his former interview with Samuel, what the result of this casting of lots would be, and probably a feeling

Benjamin to come near by their families, the family of Matri was taken, and Saul the son of Kish was taken; and when they sought him, he could not be found. **22** Therefore they inquired of the Lord further, if the man should yet come thither. And the Lord answered, Behold, he hath hid himself among the stuff. **23** And they ran and fetched him thence: and when he stood among the people, he was higher than any of the people from his shoulders and upward. **24** And Samuel said to all the people, See ye him whom the Lord hath chosen, that there is none like him among all the people? And all the people shouted, and said, God save the king. **25** Then Samuel told the people the manner of the kingdom,

*e* Luke 14, 11.—*f* Chap. 9, 2.—*g* 2 Sam. 21, 6.—*h* 1 Kings 1, 25, 39; 2 Kings 11, 12.—*i* Heb. Let the king live.—*j* See Deut. 17, 14, &c.; chap. 8, 11.

of mingled reserve, timidity, and embarrassment led him to hide himself.

**22. They inquired of the Lord further**—Either by urim or by the prophet, for in both these ways Jehovah was wont to be inquired of. Compare chap. xxviii, 6. Very probably on this occasion Samuel himself was the medium, for the seer who could give information concerning the strayed asses might very naturally be expected to tell where Saul was. **Among the stuff**—הַכֵּלִים, *utensils, vessels*; that is, the travelling baggage of the assembled people.

**24. None like him**—See note on chap. ix, 2. **God save the king**—Better, *Live the king!* Equivalent to the French *Vive le roi!* The salutation of royalty.

**25. Manner of the kingdom**—This phrase is not identical with the *manner of the king*, described chap. viii, 11–18, for that was a description of what oriental despots claimed as their right, while this was probably an expansion of the Mosaic law concerning a monarchy, as recorded Deut. xvii, 14–20. Hence it appears that the kingdom of Israel was a constitutional, not an absolute monarchy. The king himself was to be governed and guided by law, and ever to understand that government itself was a divine ordinance, not a human invention.

and wrote *it* in a book, and laid *it* up before the Lord. And Samuel sent all the people away, every man to his house. **26** And Saul also went home <sup>a</sup> to Gibeah; and there went with him a band of men, whose hearts God had touched. **27** <sup>b</sup> But the <sup>c</sup> children of Belial said,

<sup>k</sup> Judges 20. 14; chap. 11. 4.—<sup>l</sup> Chap. 11. 12.  
—<sup>m</sup> Deuteronomy 13. 13.—<sup>n</sup> 2 Samuel 8. 2;  
1 Kings 4. 21; 10. 25; 2 Chronicles 17. 5; Psalm

**Wrote it in a book**—According to the commandment, Deut. xvii, 18: "He shall write him a copy of this law in a book," etc. **Laid it up before the Lord**—Committed it to the charge of the priests, as Moses did the law. Deut. xxxi, 9. 26. The ark and the tabernacle were at this time separate, and it is uncertain in which of them this book of Samuel was placed. Perhaps this disorganized state of the priesthood was a cause of the loss of many ancient books.

**26. There went with him a band of men**—As an escort of honour and esteem. **Whose hearts God had touched**—Who had been peculiarly affected by the scenes of the election they had witnessed at Mizpeh, and who were inwardly drawn by the divine influence to love and admire the new sovereign.

**27. Children of Belial**—Worthless, envious persons. See on chap. i, 16. **Brought him no presents**—The marginal references here show how uniform a custom it was for persons to show their obedience or respect to one of high position, particularly to a king, by bringing him a present. To neglect such token of honour would be to treat a monarch with contempt. **He held his peace**—Literally, *he was as being deaf*. He maintained a prudent reserve, deeming it inexpedient and unwise to begin his reign by using his royal power to crush a few worthless fellows, who were unworthy, at present, of so much attention. But while, perhaps, only a few were outspoken in their disloyalty, it seems from what followed that there was quite a widespread disaffection; and Saul's public inauguration and solemn consecration as the Lord's anointed were reserved for a more suitable occasion. See on chap. xi, 14.

How shall this man save us? And they despised him, <sup>a</sup> and brought him no presents. But <sup>b</sup> he held his peace.

#### CHAPTER XI.

**THEN** <sup>a</sup> Nahash the Ammonite came up, and encamped against <sup>b</sup> Jabesh-

<sup>72</sup> 10; Matthew 2. 11.—<sup>10</sup> Or, *he was as though he had been deaf*.—<sup>a</sup> Chap. 12. 12.  
—<sup>b</sup> Judges 21. 8.

#### CHAPTER XI.

SAUL'S VICTORY OVER THE AMMONITES, 1-11.

The fact that Saul was permitted to return again to private life after all Israel's clamour for a king, and notwithstanding the enthusiasm that prevailed at his election at Mizpeh, shows that there was considerable disaffection and disappointment among the people over his appointment. The salutations of royalty that at first greeted him on that proud occasion soon died away. There was, probably, a feeling that he was too obscure a person, and of insufficient age and experience, to be suddenly advanced to the head of the nation. But we must not judge the tastes and ideas of that more simple age altogether by the standard of our own times. In the old Roman Republic it is said that Cincinnatus was called from the plough to lead the army against the enemy, and, after having conquered, and having held the dictatorship only sixteen days, he returned to his farm again. It was no easy matter to establish a monarchy over a people that had never hitherto been subject to a human king; and, to do it successfully, it was necessary that he who was to be ruler should signalize his martial prowess and heroic daring by going out before the people and fighting for them victorious battles against their enemies. An attempt of the Ammonites to avenge themselves of the defeat they had suffered at the hands of Jephthah (Judges xi, 33) gave to the regal Saul an opportunity to secure for himself a more worthy recognition.

**1. Nahash the Ammonite**—From chap. xii, 12, we learn that he was king of the children of Ammon, and also that a knowledge of his warlike intentions was one reason of Israel's urgent re-

gilead: and all the men of Jabesh said unto Nahash, \*Make a covenant with us, and we will serve thee. **2** And Nahash the Ammonite answered them, On this *condition* will I make a *covenant* with you, that I may thrust out all your right eyes, and lay it *for* <sup>a</sup> a reproach upon all Israel. **3** And the elders of Jabesh said unto him, <sup>1</sup>Give us seven days' respite, that we may send messengers unto all the coasts of Israel:

<sup>c</sup> Gen. 26. 28; Exod. 23. 32; 1 Kings 20. 34; Job 41. 4; Ezek. 17. 13. — <sup>d</sup> Gen. 34. 14; chap. 17. 26. — <sup>e</sup> 1 Heb. *Forbear us*.

quest for a king to fight their battles for them. For the origin of the Ammonites see Gen. xix. 38; and for their subsequent history, Judges xi. 4–33. **Jabesh-gilead**—Gilead was the mountainous tract east of the Jordan bounded on the north by Bashan and on the south by the land of the Ammonites. Of this district Jabesh was the chief city, and is first mentioned Judges xxi. 8, in connexion with the vengeance wrought on its inhabitants for not participating in the tribal war against Benjamin. It was situated on the Wady Yabes, some six or eight miles east of the Jordan. The inhabitants must have been at this time in a very defenceless condition, as is manifest from their desire to make a covenant with the invaders.

### 2. Thrust out all your right eyes

—This would incapacitate them for war, because the shield was carried on the left arm, and would thus partially be in the way of the left eye; but this loss of one eye would not render them unfit for other service, and the conqueror might still use them as slaves. **A reproach upon all Israel**—Because they were unable to defend a part of their nation from such a barbarous treatment; and also to remind Israel that the Ammonites still claimed, as they did in the days of Jephthah, that a part of their land had been unjustly taken from them. Judges xi. 13.

### 3. Give us seven days' respite—

Literally, *Let us alone seven days*. They deemed this a sufficient length of time to ascertain whether help could be obtained for them beyond the Jordan. But why, it may be asked, would Nahash, who could dictate such barba-

and then, if *there be* no man to save us, we will come out to thee. **4** Then came the messengers \*to Gibeah of Saul, and told the tidings in the ears of the people: and 'all the people lifted up their voices, and wept. **5** And, behold, Saul came after the herd out of the field; and Saul said, What *aieth* the people that they weep? And they told him the tidings of the men of Jabesh. **6** \*And the Spirit of God came upon Saul when

<sup>e</sup> Chap. 10. 26; 15. 34; 2 Sam. 21. 6. — <sup>f</sup> Judges 2. 4; 21. 2. — <sup>g</sup> Judges 3. 10; 6. 34; 11. 29; 13. 25; 14. 6; chap. 10. 10; 16. 13.

rous terms of surrender, allow the defenceless town such an opportunity to strengthen itself? He probably supposed that the tribes on the west of the Jordan were in no condition to render Jabesh any considerable aid, and that it would add all the more to Israel's reproach to have it said that the inhabitants of Jabesh implored their aid in vain. Josephus tells us that the besieged had already sought in vain for aid from the tribes on the east of the Jordan, and this fact may have made Nahash feel all the more secure. Then, perhaps, he was not just at that time in a condition to take the city easily, in case the besieged should offer a fierce resistance; nor must we forget that Jehovah designed, by this war with the Ammonites, to magnify Saul in the eyes of Israel.

**4. Messengers to Gibeah**—Gibeah was nearly sixty miles southwest of Jabesh, and it would have taken a day and a night for the messengers to reach it. But why were these messengers sent to Gibeah? We most naturally suppose that the elders of Jabesh knew that Saul had very recently been elected king, and therefore dispatched their messengers to his place of residence. When they arrived at Gibeah they found no regal court, and no king, for Saul was away in the field attending to the cattle. What then could they do but utter the tidings in the ears of the people? **All the people... wept**—For they saw no prospect of saving their brethren from this cruel infliction, and their nation from foul reproach.

**6. The Spirit of God came upon Saul**—As it came on the ancient judges.

he heard those tidings, and his anger was kindled greatly. <sup>7</sup> And he took a yoke of oxen, and <sup>8</sup> hewed them in pieces, and sent *them* throughout all the coasts of Israel by the hands of messengers, saying, 'Whosoever cometh not forth after Saul and after Samuel, so shall it be done unto his oxen. And the fear of the Lord fell on the people,

<sup>1</sup> Judges 19. 29.—<sup>4</sup> Judges 21. 5, 8, 10.  
<sup>3</sup> Heb. *as one man*, Judges 20. 1.

See the marginal references. As the judges of former times had undertaken their great exploits by special inspiration from the Almighty, so also Saul. When he departed from Samuel, that prophet told him after certain signs came to pass to follow the openings of Providence, (see note on chap. x, 7,) and here was presented a manifest occasion for him to rise in the dignity of his power and his royal office, and call the nation to arms. **His anger was kindled greatly**—At the thought that the children of Ammon would dare threaten Israel with such barbarity.

**7. Took ... oxen, and hewed them in pieces**—Lucian says, that among the ancient Scythians, when any great injury called for punishment, an individual who was deeply interested in the matter cut an ox in pieces and sent it round, whereupon all who would help avenge the wrong that had been done took a piece, and swore by it to do his utmost to punish the offender. The import of this symbolical act the words of the messengers explained. It was the king's prerogative to call the people out to battle; this act showed that he was terribly in earnest. Saul's conduct could not but remind the people of the similar act of the Levite of Mount Ephraim, (Judges xix, 29,) and also of the bitter vengeance wrought on the inhabitants of this same Jabesh-Gilead for their refusal to respond to that call. Judges xxi, 10. **After Saul and after Samuel**—He adds the name of Samuel to his own in order to strengthen the authority and influence of his command. **Fear of the Lord fell**—A fear inspired by Jehovah. **The people were made to feel** that a most important movement for the honour of all Israel was at hand.

and they came out <sup>9</sup> with one consent. <sup>8</sup> And when he numbered them in <sup>10</sup> Bezek, the children <sup>11</sup> of Israel were three hundred thousand, and the men of Judah thirty thousand. <sup>9</sup> And they said unto the messengers that came, Thus shall ye say unto the men of Jabesh-gilead, To-morrow, by *that time* the sun be hot, ye shall have <sup>12</sup> help. And the

<sup>1</sup> Judges 1. 5.—<sup>2</sup> Sam. 24. 9.  
<sup>3</sup> Or, *deliverance*.

**8. Bezek**—At this place Judah had defeated Adoni-bezek. Judg. i, 4. When Saul issued his call to all the tribes he probably designated this place as the rendezvous, where every warrior must report himself without the least delay. No traveller has yet satisfactorily identified Bezek with any modern site. From the next verse we infer that it was within a day's journey of Jabesh, and therefore a very proper place to muster the army into battle array. **Israel... three hundred thousand... Judah thirty thousand**—This distinction between Judah and Israel is considered by many as clear evidence that this narrative was written after the division of the nation into two kingdoms; but it may also indicate that long before that division was completed there were growing rivalries and jealousies that silently prepared the way for it, so that in Saul's time Judah and Israel began to reckon themselves apart, as if they were two different states. Compare 2 Sam. ii, 10; xix, 41; xx, 1, 2. Three hundred thousand men was indeed a vast army, but there is no sufficient reason to believe that the number is exaggerated. At the time of the march through the desert all that were able to go forth to war in Israel were six hundred and three thousand five hundred and fifty, (Num. i, 46,) and it would have been exceedingly strange if now, from all the coasts of Israel, the call of Saul had brought together less than half that number.

**9. They said unto the messengers that came**—These messengers were the ones that came from Jabesh to Gibeah. They had repaired to Bezek to wait to see the result of Saul's call for the people to assemble there. **To-morrow, by that time the sun**



messengers came and showed *it* to the men of Jabesh; and they were glad. **10** Therefore the men of Jabesh said, To-morrow <sup>m</sup> we will come out unto you, and ye shall do with us all that seemeth

*m* Verse 3.

**be hot**—That is, about noon. Whether this “morrow” was the last day of the seven granted by Nahash to the elders of Jabesh cannot be certainly decided by any thing here recorded. But on the supposition that it was, the question has been raised: Was a period of seven days sufficient time for all these things to be done? It would require at least a day for the messengers to reach Gibeah, and it would seem at first sight that a week would be barely sufficient to notify the tribes, much less to get together an army of three hundred and thirty thousand men in readiness for battle. Indeed, with our modern ideas and methods of raising and marshalling an army, it would be utterly impossible for the most experienced general to get together, without any previous arrangement, so large an army in so short a time. But we must divest our minds of our modern notions of warfare, and remember that in ancient Israel every able-bodied man was made familiar from his childhood with the implements of war. A bow, a sword or a spear, and a shield, or simply a sling, were the weapons most commonly used. From chap. xiii, 22, it appears that swords and spears were scarce among the people, but at such a time the sling was probably regarded as a much more serviceable weapon. Compare the feat of David, chap. xvii, 49, and the statement of Judges xx, 16, that the little tribe of Benjamin had seven hundred chosen men, each of whom could sling stones at a hair-breadth and not miss. Accordingly, when summoned out to battle, every man would provide his own weapons and his own food, and hasten at once to the place of rendezvous. No great length of time would be necessary, under such circumstances, for the mustering of an army. A man notified in the morning, might equip himself and travel forty or fifty miles before night, and in circumstances

good unto you. **11** And it was so on the morrow, that <sup>a</sup>Saul put the people <sup>o</sup>in three companies; and they came into the midst of the host in the morning watch, and slew the Ammonites

*n* See chap. 31. 11.—*o* Judges 7. 16.

of great peril he would probably travel in the night time also. Josh. x, 9. Then we must not imagine that the roads of Palestine were, at that time, in the ruined and neglected state in which the modern traveller finds them: nor should we obscure the subject by the supposition that the summons of Saul was carried through the coasts of Israel by a few slow-footed travellers. Doubtless every town had one or more swift-footed runners, who, like Asahel, (2 Samuel ii, 18,) were as light of foot as the wild roe; and as the tidings reached one town, swift messengers would fly forth in different directions; and the alarm might spread still more rapidly by the erection of ensigns on the tops of the high hills. Such tidings, of course, would spread by night as well as by day, and thirty or forty hours would be sufficient to send the call of the king through all the coasts of Israel. Saul probably sent forth ten swift runners, (for it is hardly likely that the tribes on the east of the Jordan were summoned,) each bearing a piece of the slaughtered oxen to the chief city of each tribe; and from such central city of every tribe the call rapidly flew to all the surrounding country. Attention to all these circumstances will show that a vast army might, without great difficulty, be mustered in a few days.

**10. To-morrow we will come out unto you**—By this guileful message they sought to make the enemy feel all the more secure and confident of success, and thus subject them to a more humiliating defeat.

**11. Saul put the people in three companies**—Perhaps about one hundred and ten thousand in each company. But we need not suppose that the whole three hundred and thirty thousand were at one time engaged in the fight. **In the morning watch**—Between three and six o'clock in the morning. So Saul had evidently marched from Bezek

until the heat of the day: and it came to pass, that they which remained were scattered, so that two of them were not left together.

**12** And the people said unto Samuel, 'Who is he that said, Shall Saul reign over us? bring the men, that we may put them to death. **13** And Saul said, 'There shall not a man be put to death this day: for to day the LORD hath

*p* Chap. 10. 27.—*q* See Luke 19. 27.—*r* 2 Sam. 19. 22.—*s* Exod. 14. 13, 30; chap. 19. 5.

during the night. **Two of them were not left together**—Their army was utterly demoralized and scattered.

THE REACTION IN FAVOUR OF SAUL, AND RENEWAL OF THE KINGDOM AT GILGAL, 12-15.

The aged Samuel, whose name had gone forth with Saul's call to arms, (verse 7.) was with the army at the time of Saul's triumph over the Ammonites, and when he saw the mighty host all flushed with the glory of their triumph, and all with one accord extolling Saul, he deemed it a most appropriate time to establish the new king in all the powers and prerogatives of the government, and secure for him national recognition.

**12. Bring the men, that we may put them to death**—The reference is to the outspoken disloyalty that showed itself at Mizpeh. Chap. x, 27. But the new king's magnanimity and piety forbade the shedding of Israelitish blood on that day of victory.

**14. Let us go to Gilgal**—The ancient sacred camping ground of Israel, where, after the long exile in the wilderness, the reproach of Egypt was rolled away. Compare Josh. v, 2-9, notes. Appropriately now, after long years of varied fortune, may the nation assemble, in the persons of its warriors, on that hallowed spot, and there recognise their new leader, who has shown himself to be another conqueror of Israel's foes. **Renew the kingdom there**—At Mizpeh he had only been designated as the chosen of the Lord, but not formally recognised as king, or set apart by solemn ceremonies as the Lord's anointed. Such more solemn and impressive inauguration was

wrought salvation in Israel. **14** Then said Samuel to the people, Come, and let us go to Gilgal, and renew the kingdom there. **15** And all the people went to Gilgal; and there they made Saul king before the LORD in Gilgal; and there they sacrificed sacrifices of peace offerings before the LORD; and there Saul and all the men of Israel rejoiced greatly.

*t* Chapter 10. 8.—*u* Chapter 10. 17.  
*v* Chapter 10. 8.

reserved for this occasion, when, as Israel's honoured and victorious chieftain, no envious tongue would dare malign him.

**15. There they made Saul king before the Lord**—Whether Samuel anointed him again on this occasion we are not told, but it is certain that by some formal ceremony he was set apart and recognised as king. Samuel's speaking of him as 'Jehovah's anointed' (chap. xii, 3) makes it probable that the public anointing was done at this time. One prominent ceremony of the occasion was the **sacrifices of peace offerings**. In these the worshipper himself received the greater part of the animal slain, and with it held a feast of thanksgiving; an appropriate service for that proud occasion, when **all the men of Israel rejoiced greatly**.

## CHAPTER XII.

### SAMUEL'S FAREWELL ADDRESS TO ISRAEL, 1-25.

While the hearts of all the people are thus knit to their new king, and every tongue in Israel is eloquent with his praise, the venerable prophet and judge feels that the proper time has come for the public surrender of his office as ruler. For what more suitable occasion was likely to present itself than this joyful assembly of the people at Gilgal? Here the monarchy was newly confirmed to Saul, and henceforth all Israel would regard him as their leader and king. Samuel, indeed, as long as he lived, would be regarded with profoundest reverence by all, and his religious influence must needs be greater than that of any other man. So, too,

## CHAPTER XII.

**A**ND Samuel said unto all Israel, Behold, I have hearkened unto <sup>a</sup>your voice in all that ye said unto me, and <sup>b</sup>have made a king over you. **2** And now, behold, the king <sup>c</sup>walketh before you: <sup>d</sup>and I am old and gray-headed; and, behold, my sons <sup>e</sup>are with you: and I have walked before you from my childhood unto this day. **3** Behold, here I <sup>f</sup>am: witness against me before the LORD, and before <sup>g</sup>his anointed: <sup>h</sup>'whose ox have I taken? or whose ass have I taken? or whom have I defrauded? whom have I oppressed? or of whose hand have I received <sup>i</sup>any

<sup>a</sup> Chap. 8. 5, 19, 20. — <sup>b</sup> Chap. 10. 24; 11. 14, 15. — <sup>c</sup> Num. 27. 17; chap. 8. 20. — <sup>d</sup> Chap. 8. 1, 5. — <sup>e</sup> Verse 5; chap. 10. 1; 24. 6; 2 Sam. 1. 14, 16. — <sup>f</sup> Num. 16. 13; Acts 20. 33; 1 Thess. 2. 5. — <sup>g</sup> 1 Heb. *ransom*. — <sup>h</sup> 2 Or, *that I should hide mine eyes at him*.

as long as he was able to exercise judgment, there would be those who would, in matters of difficulty, prefer his counsels and judgment before all others. Accordingly, he "judged Israel all the days of his life." Chap. vii, 15. But his years reminded him that he must shortly pass away. His long, flowing locks, over which no razor had ever passed, (chap. i, 11,) were gray with age and cares. There must have been a mighty struggle in his bosom when he uttered this valedictory to the people whose interests had been the burden of his heart and prayers for so many years. The nation had now reached a new era in its historical development, and its future weal or woe depended on the people's obedience to the commandments of God. This impressive truth the venerable prophet seeks, throughout his entire address, to fasten indelibly upon their minds.

The address consists of three parts. (1) Samuel's self-vindication, 1-5. (2) A brief historical review of the theocracy from its beginning up to the time of Saul's inauguration, 6-13. (3) Solemn exhortation to obedience, on the ground that this revolution in the government was offensive to Jehovah, to which, during an awful pause, (16-19,) a miraculous confirmation is given from the heavens, 14-25.

**1, 2. I...have made a king over you**—This statement, together with

<sup>1</sup>bribe <sup>2</sup>to <sup>3</sup>'blind mine eyes therewith? and I will restore it you. **4** And they said, <sup>4</sup>'Thou hast not defrauded us, nor oppressed us, neither hast thou taken aught of any man's hand. **5** And he said unto them, The LORD is witness against you, and his anointed <sup>5</sup>is witness this day, <sup>6</sup>'that ye have not found aught <sup>6</sup>'in my hand. And they answered, <sup>7</sup>*He is witness*. **6** And Samuel said unto the people, <sup>8</sup>'It is the LORD that <sup>8</sup>'advanced Moses and Aaron, and that brought your fathers up out of the land of Egypt. **7** Now therefore stand still, that I may <sup>9</sup>reason with you before the LORD of all the <sup>9</sup>'righteous acts of the

<sup>1</sup> Deuteronomy 16. 19. — <sup>2</sup> Psa. 37. 5, 6; Daniel 6. 4; 3 John 12. — <sup>3</sup> John 18. 38; Acts 23. 9; 24. 16, 20. — <sup>4</sup> Exodus 22. 4. — <sup>5</sup> Micah 6. 4. — <sup>6</sup> Or, *made*. — <sup>7</sup> Isaiah 1. 18; 5. 3, 4; Micah 6. 2, 3. — <sup>8</sup> Hebrew, *righteousness*, or, *benefits*, Judges 5. 11.

that which follows—**behold, the king walketh before you**—indicates what we have already assumed, that this farewell address was made at Gilgal when they renewed the kingdom there. **My sons are with you**—That is, are at your disposal, to be treated as may seem proper to you and to your king. They had heretofore assisted Samuel in the judgeship by attending to matters in remote parts of the country, (see on chap. viii, 1,) but now they were superseded by the election of a king.

**3. Before his anointed**—That is, Saul, the king, who had probably been publicly anointed before this assembly at Gilgal.

**5. They answered...witness**—They thereby testified by an oath before God that there was no reason for them to be dissatisfied with Samuel's administration, or for bringing about this revolution in their government.

**6. It is the Lord**—In the Hebrew the word LORD is without expressed grammatical connexion, but it is most natural to regard it as a repetition from the preceding verse. Thus: *Jehovah is witness*, etc.—even *Jehovah, who advanced Moses and Aaron*. Literally, *who made Moses and Aaron*: that is, made them what they were.

**7. All the righteous acts of the Lord**—A remembrance of these would show them how ill-advised and impious it was to revolutionize their form of

LORD, which he did <sup>a</sup>to you and to your fathers. 8 <sup>a</sup>When Jacob was come into Egypt, and your fathers <sup>a</sup>cried unto the LORD, then the LORD <sup>a</sup>sent Moses and Aaron, which brought forth your fathers out of Egypt, and made them dwell in this place. 9 And when they <sup>a</sup>forgot the LORD their God, <sup>a</sup>he sold them into the hand of Sisera, captain of the host of Hazor, and into the hand of <sup>a</sup>the Philistines, and into the hand of the king <sup>a</sup>of Moab, and they fought against them. 10 And they cried unto the LORD, and said, <sup>a</sup>"We have sinned, because we have forsaken the LORD, <sup>a</sup>and have served Baalim and Ashtaroth: but now <sup>a</sup>deliver us out of the hand of our enemies, and we will serve thee. 11 And the

5 Hebrew, *with*.—*n* Gen. 48. 5, 6.—*o* Exod. 2. 23.—*p* Exod. 3. 10; 4. 16.—*q* Judges 3. 7.—*r* Judges 4. 2.—*s* Judges 10. 7; 13. 1.—*t* Judges 3. 12.—*u* Judges 10. 10.—*v* Judges 2. 13.—*w* Judges 10. 15, 16.—*x* Judges 6. 14, 32.

government, and establish a kingdom like that of the heathen nations. Jehovah had never failed them when they obeyed his word and cried unto him; why, then, should they desire a human king? For a fuller historical record of the several acts referred to, see the marginal references.

11. **Bedan**—We have no record of any judge in Israel of this name, and interpreters have accordingly resorted to various conjectures as to the person meant. Some think the word בִּדָן should be rendered *in Dan*, that is, a native of Dan, meaning Samson, who was of that tribe. Judg. xiii, 2. Others think Jair, the Gileadite, is meant, because a descendant of Manasseh bears this name in 1 Chron. vii, 17. There may, indeed, have been a judge of this name, of whom we have no mention in the book of Judges, for we are not to regard that book as a complete history; but the name Bedan is more probably a corruption of *Abdon*, (Judg. xii, 13,) or of *Barak*. Judg. iv, 6. The reading Barak is favoured by its resemblance to Bedan in orthography, (בִּדָן—בָּרַק,) and by the fact that it is so taken in the Septuagint, Syriac, and Arabic versions. Compare also Heb. xi, 32. **Samuel**—Some have thought proper, by the aid of the Syriac and Arabic versions, to emend the Hebrew text here and read *Samson*, on the ground that Samuel would not

LORD sent <sup>a</sup>Jerubbual, and Bedan, and <sup>a</sup>Jephthah, and <sup>a</sup>Samuel, and delivered you out of the hand of your enemies on every side, and ye dwelt safe. 12 And when ye saw that <sup>a</sup>Nahash the king of the children of Ammon came against you, <sup>a</sup>ye said unto me, Nay; but a king shall reign over us: when <sup>a</sup>the LORD your God <sup>a</sup>was your king. 13 Now therefore <sup>a</sup>behold the king <sup>a</sup>whom ye have chosen, <sup>a</sup>and whom ye have desired! and, behold, <sup>a</sup>the LORD hath set a king over you. 14 If ye will <sup>a</sup>fear the LORD, and serve him, and obey his voice, and not rebel against the <sup>a</sup>commandment of the LORD; then shall both ye and also the king that reigneth over you <sup>a</sup>continue following the LORD your God: 15 But

*v* Judges 11. 1.—*s* Chap. 7. 13.—*u* Chap. 11. 1.—*b* Chap. 8. 5, 19.—*c* Judges 8. 23; chap. 8. 7; 10. 19.—*d* Chap. 10. 24.—*e* Chap. 8. 5; 9. 20.—*f* Hos. 13. 11.—*g* Josh. 24. 14; Psa. 81. 13, 14.—*h* Heb. *mouth*.—*i* Heb. *be after*.

mention himself as one of the deliverers of Israel. But Samuel did more than any other judge to break the Philistine oppression, (vii, 13,) and he mentions himself to show the people how inexcusable they were in "refusing to obey the voice of Samuel, and saying, Nay, but we will have a king over us." viii, 19.

12. **When ye saw that Nahash . . . came**—This shows, as we have elsewhere noted, (at beginning of chap. viii.) that the Ammonite invasion was one reason of Israel's urgent request for a king. See, he says, your disrespect and ingratitude towards God. When a judge was in your midst by whom God had wrought you most signal deliverance from your foes, ye see another enemy in the distance, and begin to clamour for a human king, apparently forgetting that Jehovah, your God, was your king!

14. **Both ye and also the king**—There was no necessary evil in their having a king, and if both king and subjects reverence God, the nation shall be as prosperous and happy as ever. Some other form of government might have been better; but if the king and people will meet the true conditions of national permanence, the monarchy shall be blessed and honoured. A failure to recognise and observe the commandments of God will sooner or later ruin any nation, no matter what its form of government.

if ye will <sup>a</sup>not obey the voice of the LORD, but rebel against the commandment of the LORD; then shall the hand of the LORD be against you, <sup>1</sup>as *it was* against your fathers. **16** Now therefore <sup>a</sup>stand and see this great thing, which the LORD will do before your eyes. **17** *Is it* not <sup>1</sup>wheat harvest to day? <sup>a</sup>I will call unto the LORD, and he shall send thunder and rain; that ye may perceive and see that <sup>a</sup>your wickedness *is* great, which ye have done in the sight of the LORD, in asking you a king. **18** So Samuel called unto the LORD: and the LORD sent thunder and rain that day: and <sup>a</sup>all the people greatly feared the LORD and Samuel. **19** And all the people said unto Samu-

el, <sup>a</sup>Pray for thy servants unto the LORD thy God, that we die not: for we have added unto all our sins *this* evil, to ask us a king. **20** And Samuel said unto the people, Fear not: ye have done all this wickedness: yet turn not aside from following the LORD, but serve the LORD with all your heart; **21** And <sup>a</sup>turn ye not aside: <sup>a</sup>for *then should ye go* after vain things, which cannot profit nor deliver; for they *are* vain. **22** For <sup>a</sup>the LORD will not forsake his people <sup>a</sup>for his great name's sake: because <sup>a</sup>it hath pleased the LORD to make you his people. **23** Moreover as for me, God forbid that I should sin against the LORD <sup>a</sup>in ceasing to pray for you: but <sup>a</sup>I will teach you the <sup>a</sup>good and the

<sup>a</sup> Lev. 26. 14, 15, &c.; Deut. 28. 15, &c.; Josh. 24. 20.—<sup>i</sup> Verse 9.—<sup>k</sup> Exod. 14. 13, 31.—<sup>l</sup> Prov. 28. 1.—<sup>m</sup> Josh. 10. 12; chap. 7. 9, 10; James 5. 16-18.—<sup>n</sup> Chap. 8. 7.—<sup>o</sup> Exod. 14. 31; Ezra 10. 9.—<sup>p</sup> Exod. 9. 28; 10. 17; James 5. 15; 1 John 5. 16.—<sup>q</sup> Deut. 11. 16.—<sup>r</sup> Jer. 16. 19;

Hab. 2. 18; 1 Cor. 8. 4.—<sup>s</sup> 1 Kings 6. 13; Psa. 94. 14.—<sup>t</sup> Josh. 7. 9; Psa. 106. 8; Jer. 14. 21; Ezek. 20. 9, 14.—<sup>u</sup> Deut. 7. 7, 8; 14. 2; Mal. 1. 2.—<sup>v</sup> Heb. *from ceasing*.—<sup>w</sup> Acts 12. 5; Rom. 1. 9; Col. 1. 9; 2 Tim. 1. 3.—<sup>x</sup> Psa. 34. 11; Prov. 4. 11.—<sup>y</sup> 1 Kings 8. 36; 2 Chron. 6. 27; Jer. 6. 16.

**16. Stand and see this great thing**—Rain in the time of harvest was a strange thing to a Hebrew. Prov. xxvi. 1. The following statements, taken from Robinson, (Biblical Researches, vol. i, p. 430, 431,) will illustrate this: "The harvest upon the mountains ripens, of course, later than in the plains of the Jordan and the seacoast. On the 4th and 5th of June the people of Hebron were just beginning to gather their wheat; on the 11th and 12th the threshing floors on the mount of Olives were in full operation. We had already seen the harvest in the same stage of progress on the plains of Gaza on the 19th of May; while at Jericho, on the 12th of May, the threshing floors had nearly completed their work. During the months of April and May the sky is usually serene, the air mild and balmy. Showers occur occasionally, but they are mild and refreshing. The 6th of May (1838) was remarkable for thunder and for several showers some of which were quite heavy. But the occurrence of rain so late in the season was regarded as a very unusual circumstance. In ordinary seasons, from the cessation of the showers in spring until their commencement in October or November, rain never falls, and the sky is usually serene."

**17. Your wickedness is great...**

**in asking you a king**—Their wickedness was not in the mere fact of their asking for a king, but in the manner and spirit with which they urged the matter, and in which they ungratefully cast reflections on the marvellous deliverances of God. The heathenish tendencies, too—the love of heathen customs indicated in their specific request for a king *like the nations*—intensified the sinful reflection on God's mercies.

**18. Feared the Lord and Samuel**—They felt that Samuel's thoughts and feelings and those of Jehovah were the same. Jehovah's true representative was among them.

**20. Fear not**—Do not yield yourselves to inordinate terror, for even after all your rebellions, if now ye serve him **with all your heart**, he will be found plenteous in mercy.

**22. For his great name's sake**—Jehovah is jealous of his glory; and all its sublime manifestations in defence of **his people** he could not well forget.

**23. God forbid that I should sin...in ceasing to pray for you**—What a grandeur and sublime excellency of character and heart is indicated by this declaration! Though rejected by an ungrateful people, yet for them shall his prayers unceasingly ascend. To do otherwise would, in his mind, be to sin against Jehovah.

right way; **24** 'Only fear the LORD, and serve him in truth with all your heart: for \*consider \*how \*great things

*y* Eccles. 12. 13. — *s* Isa. 5. 12. — *9* Or, *what a great thing, &c.*

**25. Consumed, both ye and your king**—Mark the decree: By disobedience and sin even the Lord's anointed, as well as the chosen people, shall most certainly perish! Surely a most impressive warning with which to close the prophet's last public address to the assembled nation!

This address is a noticeable representative of the burden of prophecy as exhibited in the oracles of all the prophets that followed Samuel. Here we see the true prophet as emphatically *the man of God*, the messenger of Jehovah, commissioned to reveal the divine will, to rebuke the wickedness of kings and peoples, and to pronounce the judgments that would surely follow personal and national sins. He was the spiritual watchman whom Jehovah set over his people to reveal the great truths of the divine government, and apply them to the leading persons and events of his age.

Samuel appeared again at intervals in the subsequent history of Saul, but his public ministry as ruler in Israel closed with this farewell address at Gilgal. His history, as recorded in this book which bears his name, presents him as the holy child, the saintly judge, and the venerable seer and prophet.

(1) *The holy child.* His mother was a prophetess, as appears from the inspired psalm which she uttered at the time of his dedication, (ii, 1-10,) and he was given her in answer to most fervent prayer. Hence his name Samuel — *Heard of God.* Chap. i, 20. Like Samson, he was a Nazarite from the womb, and the vow of his consecration was binding on him all his days. Chap. i, 11. While yet a tender child his parents took him to the tabernacle at Shiloh, and, by special sacrifices, consecrated him unto the Lord; and there, until the place was desolated, he ministered unto the Lord, girded with a linen ephod. Chap. ii, 18. It was while he was yet a child that the Lord revealed

he hath done for you. **25** But if ye shall still do wickedly, \*ye shall be consumed, \*both ye and your king.

*a* Deut. 10. 21; *Psa.* 136. 2, 3. — *b* Josh. 24. 20.  
*c* Deut. 28. 36.

himself to him in a vision of the night, and from that time he knew Jehovah by a divine and intimate communion. Chap. iii, 7. This supernatural endowment speedily elevated him to recognition by all Israel as a prophet of the Most High God. Chap. iii, 20. Surely Samuel's holy childhood, like that of the blessed Jesus, proclaims to all who study it that even in its earliest and tenderest years the human heart may bear the image of the heavenly.

(2) *The saintly judge.* His holy childhood and early call to be a prophet invest his character as judge with more of saintliness than that of any other judge in Israel. Even Eli, who was also the high priest, never wielded the moral and religious influence that Samuel did. We first meet with him in the character of judge at Mizpeh, (chap. vii, 6,) where the Philistines met with one of their most disastrous defeats. Chap. vii, 13. Yet even on that occasion his character of judge seemed almost swallowed up in that of intercessor for the people. They looked to him as a mediator between themselves and God. Chap. vii, 8. He presided at the sacrifices offered there and at other places, and his own home was not without its altar. Chap. vii, 17. In fact, no sacrifice of the people seemed complete without his blessing; and his yearly visits to Beth-el, Gilgal, and Mizpeh (vii, 16) were probably hailed with like interest and enthusiasm to that which greeted him at the city where he first met Saul. Chap. ix, 12, 13. The people showed their entire confidence in his judgship by committing to his hands the task of establishing them into a kingdom, (viii, 5,) and when he resigned his rulership over them, they called God to witness that no unrighteous act could be laid to his charge. Chap. xii, 5.

(3) *The venerable seer and prophet.* It was this relation in which Samuel stood before God and man that gave

such saintliness to his character as judge; and, in fact, whenever he appeared on public occasions it would seem that his judgeship was almost lost sight of in view of the far more exceeding sanctity and venerableness of his prophetic calling. While yet a youth, all Israel, from Dan to Beer-sheba, knew that he was established to be a prophet of the Lord. Chap. iii, 20. It is as prophet rather than judge that he intercedes with God for the people, blesses their sacrifices, and teaches them the right ways of the Lord. He was both seer and prophet. Chap. ix, 9. Gifted with a supernatural vision, he could discern things that were unknown to common mortals. Chap. ix, 20; x, 22. It was in a vision of the night that the Lord first revealed himself to Samuel. Chap. iii, 15. Before that time, in Israel divine revelations were few and far between, (iii, 1:) but afterwards there was an unbroken succession of prophets until the close of Old Testament history, so that the inspired apostle seems to have regarded him as the beginning of the sacred order. Acts iii, 24. He was the founder of the schools of the prophets, (x, 5,) and after he resigned his judgeship he sought retirement at Ramah among his spiritual children in one of these schools, (xix, 18,) and there for a time he had the training of the great psalmist king of Israel. His prophetic office he exercised after the inauguration of Saul, and that monarch ever looked up to him as his spiritual father, and showed him the profoundest reverence. We next meet with him at Gilgal, near the Jordan, where he first declared to the disobedient Saul that his kingdom should not long continue. Chap. xiii, 14. Afterwards he counselled him to war with Amalek, (xv, 1;) and after the battle, in which Saul was again disobedient to the divine word, he uttered before him his last solemn oracle. Chap. xv, 17-35. Then, in accordance with a divine revelation, he turned aside to Beth-lehem and anointed the youthful son of Jesse, (xvi, 1;) after which he retired to his home at Ramah, and there died and was buried (xxv, 1) amid the lamentations of a

people with whom his word had been as the law of God. There have been other prophets in some respects, perhaps, greater than Samuel; in the office of judge, perhaps Gideon surpassed him in the number of his mighty works; and there may have been many children equally as holy and devout in their childhood; but, taking him altogether, we find for him in history no perfect parallel. His is a monumental character on which no blot appears, and on whose memory Jew and Christian will ever love to meditate.

"Samuel is the chief type," says Stanley, "in ecclesiastical history, of holiness, of growth, of a new creation without conversion; and his mission is an example of the special missions which such characters are called to fulfil. In proportion as the different stages of life have sprung naturally and spontaneously out of each other, without any abrupt revulsion, each serves as a foundation on which the other may stand; each makes the foundation of the whole more sure and stable. In proportion as our own foundation is thus stable, and as our own minds and hearts have grown up gradually and firmly, without any violent disturbance or wrench to one side or to the other, in that proportion is it the more possible to view with calmness and moderation the difficulties and differences of others; to avail ourselves of the methods and new characters that the advance of time throws in our way; to return from present troubles to the pure and untroubled well of our earlier years; to preserve and to communicate the childlike faith, changed, doubtless, in form, but the same in spirit, in which we knelt in humble prayer for ourselves and others, and drank in the first impressions of God and of heaven. The call may come to us in many ways; it may tell us of the change of the priesthood, of the fall of the earthly sanctuary, of the rise of strange thoughts, of the beginning of a new epoch. Happy are they who, here or elsewhere, are able to perceive the signs of the times, and to answer, without fear or trembling, 'Speak, Lord, for thy servant heareth!'"

## CHAPTER XIII.

SAUL <sup>1</sup>reigned one year; and when he had reigned two years over Is-

<sup>1</sup> Hebrew, *the son of one*

## SECTION SECOND.

## HISTORY OF SAUL.

## CHAPTERS XIII-XXXI.

## CHAPTER XIII.

With this chapter commences the history of Saul's reign, and on to the end of the First Book of Samuel we are hurried through a series of events both thrilling and instructive, until the section closes with the tragic fall of Israel's first monarch. The reader's mind is saddened as he finds a reign so auspiciously begun, and strengthened by many a noble conquest, deteriorate into a foul persecution of the youthful shepherd of Beth-lehem. As we read on to the end of his life, we are gradually made to feel that the princely appearing, broad-shouldered son of Kish was unequal to the task of successfully transforming the loose confederacy of the Hebrews into a monarchy. But an index to it all is given in the single passage of Hosea: "I gave thee a king in mine anger and took him away in my wrath."

The first three chapters of this section (xiii, xiv, xv) give a detailed account of the three great errors of Saul's reign. The first is his disobedience at Gilgal, where it is announced to him that his dynasty shall end with himself. The second is his rash and foolish vow, which he found himself unable to fulfil; a vow which will ever associate him with Jephthah. The third is his most grievous disobedience in failing to execute the divine judgment on the Amalekites. All his subsequent misfortunes, and his insane pursuit of David, were fruits of judicial blindness—the penal consequence of his three fatal errors.

## THE PHILISTINES AROUSED, 1-5.

1. **Saul reigned one year**—This verse, translated in accordance with its parallels in 2 Samuel ii, 10; v, 4; 1 Kings xiv, 21; xxii, 42, and 2 Kings viii, 26, reads thus: *Saul was a year old*

rael, **2** Saul chose him three thousand *men* of Israel; *whereof* two thousand were with Saul in Michmash and in *year in his reigning.*

*when he began to reign, and he reigned two years over Israel.* All attempts to make the Hebrew text mean anything else are uncritical and do violence to the language. More literally, the Hebrew is, *A son of a year was Saul at his being king*; that is, upon his becoming king. So, too, in the passages referred to above, *A son of forty years was Ish-bosheth*; *A son of thirty years was David*, etc. According to the Chaldee, which many have followed in their interpretation, the meaning is, *Saul was an innocent child when he began to reign*; that is, like a little child a year old. But this interpretation stands opposed to the *usus loquendi* of the language, as is seen in the passages above referred to, and others like them. It follows, therefore, that certain numerals have fallen out of the Hebrew text in both sentences, for it is evident both that Saul was more than a year old at the beginning of his reign, and that he reigned over Israel more than two years. This defect can now be supplied only by conjecture. According to Josephus, and Acts xiii, 21, he reigned *forty years*; and since he had a son old enough at the beginning of his reign to command a division of his army, it would seem that he must have been at least forty years old when he began to reign. It is difficult to reconcile this with the facts and dates of David's life, for he began to reign when thirty years old, (2 Sam. v, 4,) and that was after Saul's death; and yet at the time of his victory over Goliath he must have been at least fifteen years old. Had Saul reigned twenty-five years before that event? That seems hardly possible; but we can fill up the defective text of this verse by no more authoritative numbers than those above given.

2. **Saul chose . . . three thousand . . . of Israel**—This was probably the first act of his reign, and done at Gilgal immediately after the renewal of the kingdom there. Then all the fighting men



mount Beth-el, and a thousand were with Jonathan in <sup>a</sup>Gibeah of Benjamin: and the rest of the people he sent every man to his tent. **3** And Jonathan smote <sup>b</sup>the garrison of the Philistines that *was* in <sup>c</sup>Geba, and the Philistines heard of it. And Saul blew the trum-

<sup>a</sup> Chap. 10. 26. — <sup>b</sup> Chap. 10. 5. — <sup>c</sup> Or, *The hill*.

of the nation were assembled, numbering over three hundred thousand, (chap. xi, 8,) and there could have been no more opportune occasion on which to select a choice standing army. **Michmash**—This ancient city lay four miles southeast of Beth-el, and its site is identical with the modern Mukhmas, where the traveller still finds many foundations of large hewn stones, and columns lying among them. **Mount Beth-el**—Like mount Ephraim (chap. i, 1) not a single mountain, but a range of hills, intermediate between Beth-el and Michmash. On these heights Saul stationed his two thousand warriors, and for the time probably had his headquarters at Michmash. **A thousand were with Jonathan in Gibeah of Benjamin**—This city was called Gibeah of Benjamin, because it belonged to that tribe. Joshua xviii, 28; Judges xix, 14. Its site was at the base of the modern Tuleil-el-Ful, five miles southwest of Michmash. It appears from this passage that Saul had, at the beginning of his reign, a son old enough to take charge of a garrison of a thousand men. He must have been, then, at least forty years of age. Here we first meet with Jonathan, the strategic warrior and fast friend of David. **The rest of the people**—Who had assembled at Gilgal to witness the inauguration of Saul. Having chosen from among them three thousand valiant men, he dismissed the remainder to their homes.

**3. The garrison of the Philistines that was in Geba**—Geba was situated between Gibeah and Michmash, about three miles from the former place and two from the latter. It was a city of Benjamin (Josh. xviii, 24) assigned to the priests. Josh. xxi, 17. The English version confounds it in verse 16 with Gibeah. Its name still lingers in the modern Jeba, a

pet throughout all the land, saying, Let the Hebrews hear. **4** And all Israel heard say *that* Saul had smitten a garrison of the Philistines, and *that* Israel also <sup>a</sup>was had in abomination with the Philistines. And the people were called together after Saul to Gilgal. **5** And

<sup>a</sup> Heb. *did stink*, Gen. 34. 30; Exod. 5. 21.

small, half-ruined village on an eminence which commands an extensive view of the Dead Sea and the mountains beyond. "Across the deep ravine on the north," says Robins. n, "we could see the next village on our route, the ancient Michmash, lying directly over against Jeba in a direction about northeast." Here, as on the heights of Gibeah, (chapter x, 5,) the Philistines had intrenched themselves; though, this may have been the same garrison that is there mentioned, but which had in the meantime, while Israel was at war for the rescue of Jabesh-gilead, advanced as far as Geba. Jonathan probably took this garrison by surprise, as he and his armourbearer did the one mentioned in the following chapter. **The Philistines heard**—And regarded it as an indication of hostile action on the part of the Israelites. **Saul blew the trumpet**—Ordered it to be blown. The sound of the trumpet was the usual accompaniment of important proclamations, designed as a signal to arouse the attention of the people. Compare 2 Sam. xv, 10; xx, 1; 1 Kings i, 34; 2 Kings ix, 13.

**4. Was had in abomination**—**שָׁחַתָּה**, *was made to stink*; that is, had become loathsome and hateful to their enemies. When they heard that this Philistine garrison had been dislodged, the Hebrews understood at once that their old enemy of the seacoast would be provoked to war. **The people... after Saul to Gilgal**—The same Gilgal where the kingdom was renewed, (chapter xi, 14,) and where Samuel judged Israel. Chapter vii, 16. It was situated in the east border of Jericho, and was the first camping ground of the Israelites after their entrance into the Land of Promise. Josh. iv, 19. It is said (verse 12) to be *down* from Mich-

the Philistines gathered themselves together to fight with Israel, thirty thousand chariots, and six thousand horsemen, and people as the sand which is on thesea shore in multitude: and they came up, and pitched in Michmash, eastward from Beth-aven.

6 When the men of Israel saw that they were in a strait, (for the people were distressed,) then the people did

c Josh. 7. 2; Hos. 4. 15.—d Judges 6. 2

mash, and also that Samuel went up from it in order to reach Gibeah. Such statements would be improper if made of the northern Gilgal, (*Jilgilia*,) for that was up both from Gibeah and Michmash. Saul, seeing the Philistines attempting a bold and determined invasion, deemed it prudent to withdraw his own forces from the heights of Michmash and Beth-el, and gather the people together in this more retired spot of the Jordan valley.

5. **Thirty thousand chariots, and six thousand horsemen**—Here we meet another instance of manifest error of numbers in the text. "Thirty thousand war chariots bear no proportion whatever to six thousand horsemen, not only because the number of war-chariots is invariably smaller than that of the horsemen, (compare 2 Sam. x, 18; 1 Kings x, 26; 2 Chron. xii, 3,) but also because such a number of war chariots is never met with either in sacred or profane history, not even in the case of nations that were much more powerful than the Philistines. The number is, therefore, certainly corrupt, and we must either read three thousand, according to the Syriac and Arabic, or else simply one thousand. In the latter case the origin of the number thirty must be attributed to the fact that, through the oversight of a copyist, the **ל** (Hebrew numeral for thirty) of the word **יִשְׂרָאֵל**, *Israel*, was written twice, and consequently the second **ל** was taken for the numeral thirty."—*Keil*. **Came up...pitched in Michmash**—Thus occupying the heights from which Saul had fallen back. **Beth-aven**—This place was on the east of Beth-el, (Josh. vii, 2),

hide themselves in caves, and in thickets, and in rocks, and in high places, and in pits. 7 And some of the Hebrews went over Jordan to the land of Gad and Gilead. As for Saul, he was yet in Gilgal, and all the people followed him trembling. 8 And he tarried seven days, according to the set time that Samuel had appointed: but Samuel came not to Gilgal; and the

4 Heb. trembled after him.—e Chap. 10. 8.

and, as we infer from this passage, between it and Michmash; but it has not yet been satisfactorily identified with any modern site.

THE PEOPLE'S DISTRESS, AND SAUL'S UNTIMELY SACRIFICE, 6-15.

6. **The people were distressed**—They were vexed, harassed, and alarmed by the bold and sudden advance of the Philistine hosts, and despaired being able to stand before them.

**Thickets**—תְּחָתִים, *thorns*, or *thorn bushes*. **High places**—צִרְחִים, *strongholds*, as pits or cellars, as at Judges ix, 46, 49.

7. **Hebrews went over Jordan**—Which shows that the Gilgal where Saul tarried all this time was in the plains of Jericho, (see on verse 4,) whence numbers might easily steal away to the land of Gad and Gilead, which lay across the Jordan immediately opposite Jericho. **Followed him trembling**—Those that did follow him, over and above the many that deserted to the caves and deserts, trembled through fear of soon falling into the hands of an enraged and cruel enemy.

8. **He tarried seven days, according to the set time that Samuel**—It is proper to complete this sentence, as our translators have done, by **had appointed**. The reference is to Samuel's words, as recorded in chap. x, 8. That seer's prophetic eye had fastened on this scene of excitement and trial, and he had given Saul solemn counsel to wait at such time for his coming and additional directions. This season of trial was designed to test severely the youthful monarch's faith in God. **Samuel came not to Gilgal**—Came not until the middle or latter part of the

people were scattered from him. **9** And Saul said, Bring hither a burnt offering to me, and peace offerings. And he offered the burnt offering. **10** And it came to pass, that as soon as he had made an end of offering the burnt offering, behold, Samuel came; and Saul went out to meet him, that he might salute him. **11** And Samuel said, What hast thou done? And Saul said, Because I saw that the people were scattered from me, and *that* thou camest not within the days appointed, and *that* the Philistines gathered themselves together at Michmash; **12** Therefore said I, The Philistines will come down now upon me to Gilgal, and I have not made supplication unto the Lord: I

forced myself therefore, and offered a burnt offering. **13** And Samuel said to Saul, Thou hast done foolishly: thou hast not kept the commandment of the Lord thy God, which he commanded thee: for now would the Lord have established thy kingdom upon Israel for ever. **14** But now thy kingdom shall not continue: the Lord hath sought him a man after his own heart, and the Lord hath commanded him to be captain over his people, because thou hast not kept *that* which the Lord commanded thee. **15** And Samuel arose, and gat him up from Gilgal unto Gibeah of Benjamin. And Saul numbered the people *that were* present with him, about six hundred men.

*f* Psa. 37. 7; Prov. 15. 8; 20. 22; Isa. 66. 3.—  
5 Heb. *bless him*.—6 Heb. *entreated the face*.  
—7 2 Chron. 18. 9.

*A* Chapter 15. 11.—*i* Chapter 15. 28.—*k* Psa.  
29. 20; Acts 13. 22.—*7* Hebrew, *found*.—  
*l* Chap. 14. 2.

seventh day. He seems to have stayed away purposely, in order to furnish occasion for Saul to show his faith by obedience to the commandment of Jehovah.

**9. He offered the burnt offering**—We need not suppose that Saul offered this sacrifice with his own hand. As we have observed on chap. vii, 9, the presence of priests on such occasions is naturally understood, and no specification of that fact was necessary. So Saul's blowing of the trumpet (verse 3) throughout all the land is not to be understood of his personal act. The command, **Bring hither a burnt offering to me**, is but a part of the order to offer such sacrifice in his presence.

**10. That he might salute him**—Or, *bless him*, as the margin has it. Saul held Samuel in the highest esteem, and always showed the greatest reverence for his prophetic office; but his rash and headstrong disposition led him more than once to forget or disregard his counsels.

**11. What hast thou done**—Samuel's heart sinks within him, and this question is the exclamation of an inward pang. He probably saw remorse and sorrow depicted on the face of the unhappy Saul.

**12. I forced myself**—I did violence to my conscience, and with great reluctance did this act. But all his

apology is very feeble in the face of a broken commandment, and of the most plain and solemn counsels of his great spiritual father.

**13. Thou hast done foolishly**—"The prophet knew very well that there are many foolishnesses in the heart of man; but in his view, and in that of all the sacred writers, the lowest depth of human foolishness was in disobedience to the Lord's commandments. There are two kinds of fools prominently noticed in Scripture—the fool who denies that there is any God, and the fool who does not obey God though he does not deny his existence. And yet, after all, these are but one. One may as well believe there is no God as not to obey him."—*Kitto*.

**14. Thy kingdom shall not continue**—This means, as the context and the sequel show, that his kingdom should not be transmitted to his posterity, but transferred to another person of a truer heart. Neither this passage, nor its parallel in chap. xv, 28, means that Saul was to be personally deposed, and another succeed him during his lifetime. The words of Samuel are simply a prophecy of what was to be. **A man after his own heart**—David, as we shall find in the subsequent history.

**15. About six hundred men**—Alas! Whither had gone the two thousand select warriors that were

**16** And Saul, and Jonathan his son, and the people *that were* present with them, abode in <sup>a</sup>Gibeah of Benjamin: but the Philistines encamped in Michmash. **17** And the spoilers came out of the camp of the Philistines in three companies: one company turned unto

<sup>8</sup> Heb. *Geba*, verse 3. — <sup>m</sup> Josh. 18. 28.  
<sup>n</sup> Josh. 16. 8; 18. 13, 14.

with him on the heights of Michmash? Fled to the thickets and the caves. Ammonites they can boldly fight and conquer; but when the Philistines threaten with numbers as the sand of the sea, their memory is filled with past oppressions, and they cower and tremble at the thoughts of battle.

POSITION, MOVEMENTS, AND CONTINUATION OF THE TWO ARMIES, 16-23.

**16. Gibeah of Benjamin**—Rather, *Geba*, according to the margin, for this also was a city of Benjamin. Josh. xviii, 24; xxi, 17. Many interpreters have, like our translators, confounded this place with Gibeah; but it was some three miles distant. See on verse 3. It is quite likely that after he had smitten the Philistine garrison Jonathan held this place, and did not withdraw to Gilgal with his father; and after Saul's unsuccessful attempt to muster the people at Gilgal, that monarch, with the six hundred that did not desert him, went up to reinforce Jonathan at Geba. The Philistine army lay encamped upon the heights of Michmash, in full view of Saul and Jonathan, and separated by a deep valley between.

**17. The spoilers**—Marauding parties, whose object was to spy out the land and condition of the enemy, and do him all the injury possible. **Ophrah**—Located at the modern Taiyibeh, five or six miles north of Michmash. This also was a city of Benjamin. Josh. xviii, 23. **The land of Shual**—This must have been the territory around, and more probably somewhat to the north of, Ophrah, though its exact position is unknown. If, as some suppose, it be the same as *the land of Shalim*, (chap. ix, 4,) it confirms our conjecture as to the route of Saul when in search of the asses.

the way *that leadeth to* <sup>m</sup>Ophrah, unto the land of Shual: **18** And another company turned the way to <sup>a</sup>Beth-horon: and another company turned *to* the way of the border that looketh to the valley of <sup>a</sup>Zeboim toward the wilderness. **19** Now <sup>p</sup>there was no smith

<sup>o</sup> Nehemiah 11. 34. — <sup>p</sup> See 2 Kings 24. 14; Jeremiah 24. 1.

**18. Beth-horon**—This lay westward from Michmash. On Beth-horon nether and upper, see Josh. x, 11; xvi, 3, 5. **The way of the border that looketh to the valley of Zeboim toward the wilderness**—Or, as Keil translates: *The way to the territory that rises above the valley*, etc. The valley of Zeboim has not been fairly identified with any modern name, though one traveller (Grove, in Smith's Dict.) gives worthy reasons for identifying it with a wild gorge through which he was conducted in 1858 from Jericho to Michmash. This gorge, lying to the east of Michmash, bears the Arabic name of Shuk ed-Dubba, equivalent to the Heb. נֵי הַצְּבִיעִים, *valley of*

*hyenas*. As the other two parties went one to the north towards Ophrah, and the other west towards Beth-horon, we naturally suppose that the third took their route towards the east over the heights that look towards the southeast, and very likely along this very gorge. According to this view the *wilderness* would be the wild district between Michmash and Jericho.

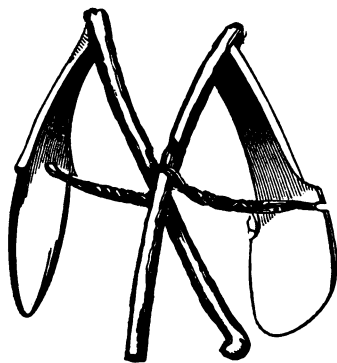
**19. No smith**—חָקֵץ, *a graver, a workman*: whether in wood, stone, or metals, is usually determined by the context. The Philistines, like other conquerors, had, during the long period of their dominion over Israel, removed all the artificers. After their deliverance by the hand of Samuel, (chap. vii, 13,) the Israelites seem to have taken no measures to supply themselves with workmen and arms, such as they had formerly possessed. For the purpose of sharpening their agricultural implements they were obliged to resort to their enemies; and yet so loth were they to do this that their

found throughout all the land of Israel: for the Philistines said, Lest the Hebrews make *them* swords or spears: **20** But all the Israelites went down to the Philistines, to sharpen every man

19 Heb. *a file with mouths.*

instruments often became very dull. See on verse 21. In the war with the Ammonites the Israelites probably found the sling and the bow (see note on chapter xi, 9) so serviceable that they saw no particular necessity for swords and spears, and took no pains to collect them. Still, we are not to suppose that Saul and his son were the only ones in all Israel that had weapons of this kind. Verse 22 expressly tells us that it was with *the people who were with Saul and Jonathan*, that is, the six hundred with Saul, (verse 15 and chap. xiv, 2,) and perhaps a still smaller number with Jonathan, that neither sword nor spear was found. The writer's object in introducing the statements of verses 19-22 seems to have been to show how illy prepared, according to all human appearance, the Israelitish army under Saul and Jonathan was to cope with its thoroughly equipped antagonist.

**20. Share...mattock**—It is hardly possible to determine the real meaning of the Hebrew words thus translated here. Both words are from the same root, (שָׁרַץ,) and may signify the *sickle*,



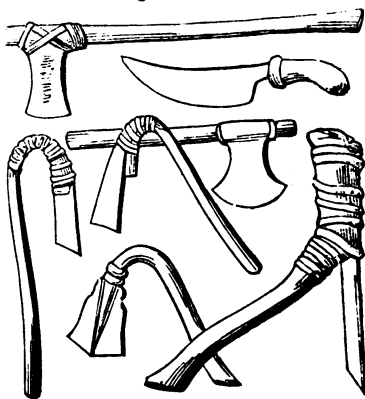
EGYPTIAN HOES.

his share, and his coulter, and his axe, and his mattock. **21** Yet they had *a* file for the mattocks, and for the coulters, and for the forks, and for the axes, and *to* sharpen the goads. **22** So it

10 Heb. *to set.*

the *coulter*, or the *hoe*, as well as the ploughshare or the mattock. In view of the uncertainty respecting these and other agricultural terms of the Hebrews, the reader may as well abide by the English version as any other.

**21. A file**—Or, as the margin, *a file with mouths*. So the Rabbins and other interpreters have understood the Hebrew words, הַפְּצִירָה פִּים. But the words can hardly mean a sharpening tool. The root, פָּצַר, means *to notch*, *to indent*; and פְּצִירָה, applied to the edges of instruments for cutting, most naturally means *indentation* in the sense of dulling. Thus this verse tells us the result of the lack of smiths in Israel: the agricultural instruments



ANCIENT EDGE TOOLS.

became nicked and dull. Keil supposes that the final הַ in פְּצִירָה should be connected with the next word as the article, and he translates the verse thus: *So that bluntness of the edges occurred in the edge tools, and the ploughshares, and the trident, and the axes, and the setting of the goad.*

came to pass in the day of battle, that 'there was neither sword nor spear found in the hand of any of the people that *were* with Saul and Jonathan: but with Saul and with Jonathan his son was there found. **23** 'And the <sup>11</sup>garrison of the Philistines went out to the passage of Michmash.

## CHAPTER XIV.

**N**OW <sup>1</sup>it came to pass upon a day, that Jonathan the son of Saul said unto the young man that bare his armour, Come, and let us go over to the Philistines' garrison, that *is* on the other side. But he told not his father. **2** And Saul tarried in the uttermost part of Gibeah under a pomegranate tree which *is* in Migron: and the people

*g* So Judges 5. 8. — *r* Chap. 14. 1, 4. — *11* Or, *standing camp*. — *1* Or, *there was a day*. — *a* Chap. 13. 15. — *b* Chap. 22. 9, 11, *Ahimelech*.

**23. The passage of Michmash**—This was the deep, wild Wady es-Suweinit, which lies between Geba and Michmash, of which Dr. Robinson says, (Bib. Res., vol. i, p. 441:) "It begins in the neighbourhood of Beitin and el-Bireh; and as it breaks through the ridge below these places its sides form precipitous walls. On the right, about a quarter of an hour below where we crossed, it again contracts, and passes off between high perpendicular precipices."

## CHAPTER XIV.

JONATHAN'S ADVENTURE, AND THE ROUT OF THE PHILISTINES, 1-23.

**1. The young man that bare his armour**—An officer much like the aide-camp in modern service, and usually a favourite of the commander. Chap. xvi, 21. **He told not his father**—For probably his father would have opposed such a daring enterprise.

**2. The uttermost part of Gibeah**—The outskirts of the city, or, as Keil supposes, the extreme northern end. **Migron**—This place must have been in the immediate vicinity of Gibeah, but its exact position is unknown. The Migron of Isa. x, 28 seems to have been north of the Wady es-Suweinit, and, if so, must have been a different place from this.

**3. Ahiah**—Here we meet again with

that *were* with him *were* \* about six hundred men; **3** And <sup>1</sup>Ahiah, the son of Ahitub, <sup>2</sup>Ichabod's brother, the son of Phinehas, the son of Eli, the Lord's priest in Shiloh, <sup>3</sup>wearing an ephod. And the people knew not that Jonathan was gone. **4** And between the passages, by which Jonathan sought to go over <sup>4</sup>unto the Philistines' garrison, *there was* a sharp rock on the one side, and a sharp rock on the other side: and the name of the one *was* Bozez, and the name of the other Seneh. **5** The <sup>2</sup>forefront of the one *was* situate northward over against Michmash, and the other southward over against Gibeah. **6** And Jonathan said to the young man that bare his armour, Come, and let us go over unto the garrison of these <sup>1</sup>uncir-

*c* Chap. 4. 21. — *d* Chap. 2. 28. — *e* Chap. 13. 23. — *2* Hebrew, *tooth*. — *f* Gen. 17. 7, 11; Judges 15. 18; 2 Sam. 1. 20; Jer. 9. 23, 26.

the descendants of Eli. See note on chap. ii, 33. It is generally supposed, and quite probable, that *Ahiah* is only a different name for *Ahimelech*, mentioned chap. xxii, 9; still, it is possible that Ahimelech may have been his brother, and successor in the office of high priest. The presence of the priest with Saul is here mentioned in anticipation of what is to be stated in verses 18, 19, 36, 37.

**4. Bozez and... Seneh**—These rocks were in the valley that lay between Geba and Michmash. The statements of this verse and the next are well explained by Robinson, (Bib. Res., vol. i, p. 441:) "In the valley, just at the left of where we crossed, are two hills of a conical, or, rather, a spherical form, having steep, rocky sides, with small wadies running up behind each, so as almost to isolate them. One is on the side towards Jeba, and the other towards Mukhmas. These would seem to be the two rocks mentioned in connexion with Jonathan's adventure: they are not, indeed, so 'sharp' as the language of Scripture would seem to imply, but they are the only rocks of the kind in this vicinity. The northern one is connected towards the west with an eminence still more distinctly isolated."

**5. Gibeah**—Rather, *Geba*. See note on chap. xiii, 16.

cumcised: it may be that the Lord will work for us: for *there is* no restraint to the Lord <sup>6</sup>to save by many or by few. **7** And his armourbearer said unto him, <sup>7</sup>*Do all that is in thy heart: turn thee; behold, I am with thee according to thy heart.* **8** Then said Jonathan, Behold, we will pass over unto *these* men, and we will discover ourselves unto them. **9** If they say thus unto us, <sup>9</sup>*Tarry until we come to you; then we will stand still in our place, and will not go up unto them.* **10** But if they say thus, Come up unto us; then we will go up: for the Lord hath delivered them into our hand; and <sup>10</sup>*this shall be a sign unto us.* **11** And both of them discovered themselves unto the garrison of the Philistines: and the Philistines said, Behold, the Hebrews come forth out of the holes where they had hid themselves. **12** And the men of the garrison answered Jonathan

<sup>6</sup> Judges 7. 4, 7; 2 Chron. 14. 11.—<sup>7</sup> 2 Sam. 7. 3.—<sup>8</sup> Hebrew, *Be still.*—<sup>9</sup> See Gen. 24. 14; Judges 7. 11.—<sup>10</sup> Chap. 17. 44; 2 Sam. 2. 14, 17; 2 Kings 14. 8.

**6. No restraint to the Lord to save by many or by few**—Jonathan was confident in the arm of Jehovah. He seems to have made this adventure a subject of prayer, as Abraham's servant did the matter about which his master had sent him. Gen. xxiv. 12.

**9. Then we will stand still**—For if they come to us they will discover our hostile intentions.

**10. Come up unto us**—This invitation from the men of the Philistine garrison they would regard as a sign from Jehovah—a prophecy of success. "It was not tempting God for Jonathan to fix upon such a sign by which to determine the success of his enterprise, for he did it in the exercise of his calling, when fighting not for personal objects, but for the kingdom of God, which the uncircumcised were threatening to annihilate. He did it in the most confident belief that the Lord would deliver and preserve his people; and such faith as this God would not put to shame."—*Keil*.

**12. We will show you a thing**—We will make known something of importance to you. These words, like Ehud's to the king of Moab, (Judges iii, 20,) were spoken in irony, and concealed a deadly intention.

and his armourbearer, and said, <sup>11</sup>*Come up to us, and we will show you a thing.* And Jonathan said unto his armourbearer, Come up after me: for the Lord hath delivered them into the hand of Israel. **13** And Jonathan climbed up upon his hands and upon his feet, and his armourbearer after him: and they fell before Jonathan; and his armourbearer slew after him. **14** And that first slaughter, which Jonathan and his armourbearer made, was about twenty men, within as it were <sup>14</sup>*a half acre of land, which a yoke of oxen might plough.* **15** And <sup>15</sup>*there was trembling in the host, in the field, and among all the people: the garrison, and the spoilers, they also trembled, and the earth quaked: so it was* <sup>16</sup>*a very great trembling.* **16** And the watchmen of Saul in Gibeah of Benjamin looked; and, behold, the multitude melted away, and

<sup>14</sup> Or, *half a furrow of an acre of land*, Judges 7. 21.—<sup>15</sup> 2 Kings 7. 7; Job 18. 11.—<sup>16</sup> m Chap. 13. 17.—<sup>17</sup> Heb. *a trembling of God.*—<sup>18</sup> n Gen. 35. 5.

**14. A half acre of land**—Literally, *Within about half a furrow of a yoke of land*; that is, half a furrow's length. A yoke of land is what a yoke of oxen would plough in a day. So the Latin word for acre is *jugerum*, from *jugum*, a yoke. This first slaughter made by Jonathan and his companion was, therefore, within a comparatively small space of ground.

**15. Trembling**—Fear, consternation, and horror. **The earth quaked**—Because of the vast multitude rushing to and fro, and beating one another down. Perhaps, also, an earthquake. **A very great trembling**—Rather, as the margin, *a trembling of God*; a supernatural terror infused by God into the hearts of the Philistines.

**16. The watchmen of Saul**—Who were stationed where they could observe all the movements of the Philistine army. **In Gibeah**—We are not to suppose that all the watchmen here referred to were stationed in one spot, but that they were placed on different heights north and northeast of Gibeah; and, being sent out from Saul's headquarters, they there made their reports. So we need not alter the reading *Gibeah*. **The multitude melted away**—Dissolved and perished by killing one

they <sup>a</sup>went on beating down *one another*. **17** Then said Saul unto the people that *were* with him, Number now, and see who is gone from us. And when they had numbered, behold, Jonathan and his armourbearer *were* not *there*. **18** And Saul said unto Ahiah, Bring hither the ark of God: <sup>b</sup>for the ark of God was at that time with the children of Israel. **19** And it came to pass, while Saul <sup>c</sup>talked unto the priest, that the "noise that *was* in the host of the Philistines went on and increased: and Saul said unto the priest, Withdraw thine hand. **20** And Saul and all the

<sup>a</sup> Verse 20. — <sup>p</sup> Chap. 5. 2; 7. 1. — <sup>q</sup> Num. 27. 21.  
6 Or, *tumult*.

another. Their swords were turned against each other, (verse 20,) for Jehovah interposed as in the days of Gideon, (Judges vii, 22,) and set his seal to the faith of the youthful hero Jonathan. **They went on beating down one another**—This, probably, gives the best sense of the Hebrew,

וַיִּלָּךְ וַיִּהָרֹג, and it (that is, the multitude) *went and smote*. Gesenius renders: "They went on and were scattered, that is, dispersed themselves more and more." Others, with the Septuagint, take הָלַךְ as an adverb, *hither*, and, supplying its correlate, render, *went hither and thither*.

**18. Bring hither the ark of God**—In his excitement and alarm on finding Jonathan and his armourbearer gone, Saul is about to commit as grievous a blunder as did the elders of Israel in a former war with the Philistines. Chap. iv, 3. **For the ark of God was at that time with the children of Israel**—That is, it was at Kirjath-jearim, (chap. vii, 1,) and in the possession of the Israelites, from whom it had not been taken since its return from the land of the Philistines. The Hebrew text וְכֵן יִשְׂרָאֵל, and the children of Israel, gives no sense, and must be an error of the copyist for לְבָנֵי or בְּבָנֵי, *to or among* the children of Israel. This need not be understood as meaning that the ark was with Saul's six hundred at Gibeah, but, as explained above, in the possession of the Israelites. This seems

people that *were* with him <sup>a</sup>assembled themselves, and they came to the battle: and, behold, <sup>b</sup>every man's sword was against his fellow, and *there* was a very great discomfiture. **21** Moreover, the Hebrews *that* were with the Philistines before that time, which went up with them into the camp *from the country* round about, even they also *turned* to be with the Israelites that *were* with Saul and Jonathan. **22** Likewise all the men of Israel which <sup>c</sup>had hid themselves in mount Ephraim, *when* they heard that the Philistines fled, even they also followed hard after them in

<sup>7</sup> Heb. *were cried together*. — <sup>r</sup> Judges 7. 22;  
3 Chron. 20. 23. — <sup>s</sup> Chap. 13. 6.

to us the most satisfactory way of explaining this verse as it stands in the present Hebrew text. But there are grave reasons for doubting the integrity of this text, and for adopting the reading of the Septuagint, which has *ephod* instead of *ark*. The ephod, not the ark, was used for inquiring of God, and the expression, *bring hither the ark*, is strange in this connexion, but *bring hither the ephod* is common. See chap. xxiii, 9; xxx, 7. The Septuagint reads: *Bring hither the ephod, for he (Ahiah) bore the ephod in that day before Israel*.

**19. While Saul talked unto the priest**—The increasing noise and consternation of the enemy led Saul to countermand his order to Ahiah, and hasten on to the battle. **Withdraw thine hand**—Desist from doing what I have told thee. The people must not linger now to inquire of Jehovah.

**21. The Hebrews that were with the Philistines**—Those who had deserted Saul's army and gone over to them, and those whom they had taken captive during this last invasion. Instead of *Hebrews*, the Septuagint reads *slaves*; and it is altogether probable that in their wars and conquests the Philistines had captured and made slaves of many of the Hebrews. These, seeing the confusion of the Philistines, turned against them and made the confusion worse confounded. **Before that time**—Before the time of this assault of Jonathan. Literally the Hebrew is, *yesterday and the third day*. Compare Josh. iii, 4, note.



the battle. **23** 'So the LORD saved Israel that day: and the battle passed over 'unto Beth-aven.

**24** And the men of Israel were distressed that day: for Saul had 'adjured the people, saying, Cursed *be* the man that eateth *any* food until evening, that I may be avenged on mine enemies. So none of the people tasted *any* food. **25** 'And all *they* of the land came to a wood; and there was 'honey upon the ground. **26** And when the people were come into the wood, behold, the honey dropped; but no man put his hand to his mouth: for the people feared the oath. **27** But Jonathan heard not when his father charged the people with the oath: wherefore he put forth the end of the rod that *was* in his hand,

† Exod. 14. 30: Psa. 44. 6, 7; Hos. 1. 7.—  
u Chap. 13. 5.—v Josh. 6. 26.—w Deut. 9. 28;

**23. The battle passed over unto Beth-aven**—Rather, *passed beyond Beth-aven*. Assuming that Beth-aven lay west of Michmash, (see on chap. xiii, 5,) we suppose the Philistines were chased beyond this place on their way to Aijalon. Verse 31.

SAUL'S HASTY ADJURATION, 24-46.

Here again we meet with a display of the rash and impetuous spirit of Saul. He wished to make the most of his opportunity, and inflict the greatest possible disasters on his enemy; but his oath not only failed to accomplish this object, but even led to his own confusion when the people interfered and rescued Jonathan from his curse. Had the victors been permitted to eat freely of the spoil, they would in all probability have been able to have made the defeat of these dreaded enemies tenfold more deadly and disastrous.

**24. Were distressed**—Fatigued; tired out by the arduous fighting. **For Saul had adjured the people**—This rendering implies that Saul had made his adjuration before the battle; but in the Hebrew the letter translated *for* is the conjunction *and*, (ו,) and indicates that Saul made the adjuration after he saw the distress of the people. He perceived that his men were faint, but feared that any delay might turn the tide of battle.

**26. The honey dropped**—Kitto

and dipped it in a honeycomb, and put his hand to his mouth: and his eyes were enlightened. **28** Then answered one of the people, and said, Thy father straitly charged the people with an oath, saying, Cursed *be* the man that eateth *any* food this day. And the people were 'faint. **29** Then said Jonathan, My father hath troubled the land: see, I pray you, how mine eyes have been enlightened, because I tasted a little of this honey. **30** How much more, if haply the people had eaten freely to day of the spoil of their enemies which they found? for 'had there not been now a much greater slaughter among the Philistines? **31** And they smote the Philistines that day from Michmash to Aijalon: and the people were very faint.

Matt. 8. 5.—x Exod. 3. 8; Num. 13. 27; Matt. 8. 4.—y Or, *wearry*.—z Eccles. 9. 18.

quotes Mr. Roberts as saying: "Bees in the East are not, as in England, kept in hives; they are all in a wild state. The forests literally flow with honey; large combs may be seen hanging in the trees as you pass along, full of honey." Dr. Thomson says: "I have explored densely wooded gorges in Hermon and in southern Lebanon where wild bees are still found both in trees and in the clefts of the rocks."

**27. His eyes were enlightened**—Languor and faintness of the body show themselves in the eye, and this was the case with Jonathan and the people. But this refreshing taste of wild honey reinvigorated Jonathan, and caused his eyes to sparkle with returning strength. There is some confusion here in the pointed Hebrew text. The *Keri*, after the analogy of אָרַר in verse 29, and with many codices, and the Syriac, Arabic, Chaldee, and Vulgate, read תִּאֲרַנָה, from אָרַר, *to become bright*. But if we adhere to the *Kethib* we should change the pointing thus—תִּרְאֶנָּה. In either case the meaning is substantially the same.

**29. My father hath troubled the land**—Jonathan is quick to see the rashness and folly of his father's oath, and to point out its injury to the Hebrews' cause.

**31. From Michmash to Aijalon**—A distance of fifteen miles or more.

**32** And the people flew upon the spoil, and took sheep, and oxen, and calves, and slew *them* on the ground: and the people did eat *them* with the blood. **33** Then they told Saul, saying, Behold, the people sin against the LORD, in that they eat with the blood. And he said, Ye have *transgressed*: roll a great stone unto me this day. **34** And Saul said, Disperse yourselves among the people, and say unto them, Bring me hither every man his ox, and every man his sheep, and slay *them* here, and eat; and sin not against the LORD in eating with the blood. And all the people brought every man his ox <sup>10</sup> with him that night, and slew *them* there. **35** And Saul *built* an altar unto the LORD: <sup>11</sup>the same was the first altar

<sup>a</sup> Lev. 3. 17; 7. 26; 17. 10; 19. 26; Deut. 12. 16, 23, 24; Acts 15. 20, 29.—<sup>9</sup> Or, *dealt treacherously*.—<sup>10</sup> Heb. *in his hand*.—<sup>a</sup> Chap. 7. 17.

Aijalon, the modern Yalo, was situated on the south side of a beautiful valley, a little to the southwest of the two Beth-horons, and is famous for its association with Joshua's great battle at Gibeon and Beth-horon. Josh. x, 12.

**32. The people flew upon the spoil, and . . . did eat . . . with the blood**—This was another unfortunate result of Saul's hasty oath. So voracious did the people become by the evening time that, in their haste to satisfy their hunger, they waited not for proper dressing and cooking, but ate the sheep and oxen with the blood, thus violating an oft-repeated commandment of the law. See marginal references. The reading of the *Keri* קרי, from קני, or קים, to fly

upon, after the analogy of chap. xv, 19, is to be preferred before קני of the *Kethib*, for קני gives in this connexion no good sense.

**33. Roll a great stone unto me**—For the purpose of building an altar, whereon the peace offerings of sheep and oxen might be properly slain.

**35. The same was the first altar that he built**—Literally, *It he began to build an altar to Jehovah*. Compare margin. This means, according to Grotius, that Saul commenced the building of the altar by laying the first stone himself. Hervey thinks he began to build an altar, but, in his haste to pursue the

that he built unto the LORD. **36** And Saul said, Let us go down after the Philistines by night, and spoil them until the morning light, and let us not leave a man of them. And they said, Do whatsoever seemeth good unto thee. Then said the priest, Let us draw near hither unto God. **37** And Saul asked counsel of God, Shall I go down after the Philistines? wilt thou deliver them into the hand of Israel? But <sup>b</sup>he answered him not that day. **38** And Saul said, <sup>c</sup>Draw ye near hither, all the <sup>12</sup>chief of the people; and know and see wherein this sin hath been this day: **39** For <sup>d</sup>as the LORD liveth, which saveth Israel, though it be in Jonathan my son, he shall surely die. But *there was* not a man among all the people *that*

<sup>11</sup> Heb. *that altar he began to build unto the LORD*.—<sup>b</sup> Chap. 28. 6.—<sup>c</sup> Josh. 7. 14; chap. 10. 19.—<sup>12</sup> Heb. *corner*s, Judges 20. 2.—<sup>d</sup> 2 Sam. 12. 5.

Philistines, did not finish it. But the previous sentence states that he did build the altar, and the previous verse implies that sacrifices were offered on it. The more probable meaning is the one conveyed by our version—this was the first altar, or the beginning of Saul's altar building. The altar of the burnt offerings at Gilgal (chap. xiii, 9) had been erected by others. It is very supposable and probable that Saul built many other altars to Jehovah.

**36. Let us draw near hither unto God**—Ahiah, the priest, doubted the propriety of the thing proposed by Saul, and would therefore seek counsel of God. *Hither unto God* does not imply that the ark was there among them, but has reference to the altar on which the sacrifices had been offered, and also to the urim and thummin on the breast-plate of the priest.

**37. Saul asked counsel of God**—By urim and thummin. **He answered him not**—Thereby indicating that he or the people had in some way incurred the Divine displeasure.

**38. Draw ye near hither**—For the purpose of casting lots. **Chief of the people**—קַנִּי, *corners*, applied to princes and chief men as corner-stones or pillars of the state. Saul supposed that the blame must lie on some prominent man of his army, and he vowed his death, even should it be Jonathan.

answered him. **40** Then said he unto all Israel, Be ye on one side, and I and Jonathan my son will be on the other side. And the people said unto Saul, 'Do what seemeth good unto thee. **41** Therefore Saul said unto the Lord God of Israel, 'Give a perfect lot. And Saul and Jonathan were taken: but the people 'escaped. **42** And Saul said, Cast lots between me and Jonathan my son. And Jonathan was taken. **43** Then Saul said to Jonathan, 'Tell me what thou hast done. And Jonathan told him, and said, 'I did but taste a little honey with the end of the rod that *was* in mine hand, and, lo, I must die. **44** And Saul answered, 'God do so and more also: 'for thou

*e* Verses 7, 36; 2 Sam. 15. 15.—13 Or, *Show the innocent.*—*f* Prov. 16. 33; Acts 1. 24.—*g* Josh. 7. 16; chap. 10. 20, 21.—14 Heb. *went forth.*—*h* Josh. 7. 19.

**42. Jonathan was taken**—But Jonathan had not knowingly transgressed, and by the victory God had set his approving seal to the young hero's Gideon-like faith, and Saul's oath was rash, unwise, and without divine counsel; why, then, should the cloud of divine indignation rest upon the people, and why should the Lord God of Israel designate Jonathan as the offender? We answer, This taking of Jonathan by lot was not a designation of him as the special object of the Divine anger, nor did the people so understand it, as we see from their action in rescuing him from death. But though it convicted him of no guilt before God, it did show him to be the violator of the king's oath; and a solemn oath, made by the anointed king of God's chosen people, though it be hasty and unwise, must be vindicated in the eye of the nation as a thing not to be treated lightly. The taking of Jonathan led to an investigation of the whole matter of the oath, and resulted in showing that he who violated this oath was not so guilty before God as he who made it. And this result would further show that the sin of the people in eating with the blood (verse 33) was a consequence of Saul's rash adjuration. The king himself, then, had been the cause of the trouble, and of Jehovah's refusal to answer him that day, and with a fallen countenance and a saddened heart he returned from the

shalt surely die, Jonathan. **45** And the people said unto Saul, Shall Jonathan die, who hath wrought this great salvation in Israel? God forbid: 'as the Lord liveth, there shall not one hair of his head fall to the ground; for 'he hath wrought with God this day. So the people rescued Jonathan, that he died not. **46** Then Saul went up from following the Philistines: and the Philistines went to their own place.

**47** So Saul took the kingdom over Israel, and fought against all his enemies on every side, against Moab, and against the children of 'Ammon, and against Edom, and against the kings of 'Zobah, and against the Philistines: and whithersoever he turned himself,

*i* Verse 27.—*k* Ruth 1. 17.—*l* Verse 39.—*m* 2 Sam. 14. 11; 1 Kings 1. 53; Luke 21. 18.—*n* 1 Cor. 3. 9; 2 Cor. 6. 1.—*o* Chap. 11. 11.—*p* 2 Sam. 10. 6.

pursuit of the Philistines. They who hold high positions of authority among men should be exceedingly careful how they deal with solemn oaths. In Israelitish history Saul's rash adjuration was the last relic of the age of vows.

#### BRIEF SUMMARY OF SAUL'S WARS AND GENEALOGY, 47-52.

Several things occurred during this last Philistine invasion to weaken the people's confidence in Saul. Nevertheless he was now established in the kingdom, and other successful battles served to strengthen his regal authority and power.

**47. Against Moab**—These enemies had sought to injure Israel in the days of Moses. Num. xxii. **Against the children of Ammon**—As described in chap. xi. **Against Edom**—The descendants of Esau, who had refused the Israelites a passage through their country. Num. xx, 14-21. **The kings of Zobah**—Zobah seems to have lain somewhere between Damascus and the Euphrates, but its exact position has not been determined. In the days of David it was ruled by a single king, named Hadadezer. 2 Sam. viii, 3. **Against the Philistines**—Against these inveterate foes he carried on war, at intervals, all his days, (verse 52.) and at last was conquered by them. Chap. xxxi. **He vexed them**—The Hebrew word thus rendered here is the Hiphil

ne vexed *them*. **48** And he <sup>18</sup>gathered a host, and <sup>19</sup>smote the Amalekites, and delivered Israel out of the hands of them that spoiled them. **49** Now <sup>20</sup>the sons of Saul were Jonathan, and Ishui, and Malchishua: and the names of his two daughters *were these*; the name of the firstborn Merab, and the name of the younger Michal: **50** And the name of Saul's wife *was* Ahinoam, the daughter of Ahimaaz: and the name of the captain of his host *was* <sup>21</sup>Abner, the son of Ner, Saul's uncle. **51** *And* Kish *was* the father of Saul; and Ner the father of

Abner *was* the son of Abiel. **52** And there *was* sore war against the Philistines all the days of Saul: and when Saul saw any strong man, or any valiant man, <sup>22</sup>he took him unto him.

## CHAPTER XV.

**S**AMUEL also said unto Saul, <sup>23</sup>"The Lord sent me to anoint thee *to be* king over his people, over Israel: now therefore hearken thou unto the voice of the words of the Lord. **2** Thus saith the Lord of hosts, I remember *that* which Amalek did to Israel, <sup>24</sup>how he

<sup>15</sup> Or, *wrought mightily*.—<sup>q</sup> Chap. 15. 3, 7. —<sup>r</sup> Chap. 31. 2; 1 Chron. 8. 33. —<sup>16</sup> Heb. *Abiner*.—<sup>s</sup> Chap. 9. 1.

form of the verb *יָצָא*, and has been rendered variously. Septuagint, *He saved himself*. Vulgate, *He was victorious*. So Gesenius and Fürst. Luther, *He executed punishment*. This last is best supported by the usage of the language.

**48. He gathered a host**—Rather, *he waxed mighty*. He acquired mighty influence and power by his many successful battles. **Smote the Amalekites**—As we read in the next chapter But as we have detailed descriptions of the wars with Amalek, and Ammon, and the Philistines, how are we to account for the fact that the wars with Moab, Edom, and Zobah are only mentioned with a passing notice? We answer, The sacred writers seek to show us the divine as well as the human side in the history of the chosen people, and therefore they select those facts which serve this purpose best. Saul's battles with Moab, Edom, and Zobah probably furnished no marked displays of Divine interposition, and for this reason our author paused not to describe them fully.

**49. Ishui**—Supposed to be the same as Abinadab, mentioned chap. xxxi, 2; 1 Chron. viii, 33; ix, 39. **Malchishua**—This name is sometimes spelled *Melchishua*. **His two daughters**—Of whom we read again in chapter xviii, 17-28.

**51. Ner the father of Abner was the son of Abiel**—From 1 Chron. viii, 33, we learn that Ner was the father of Kish; so Abner and Kish were brothers, and Abiel, represented as the father of Kish in chap. ix, 1,

<sup>t</sup> Chapter 8. 11.—<sup>a</sup> Chapter 9. 16; 10. 1.—<sup>b</sup> Exodus 17. 8, 14; Numbers 24. 20; Deuteronomy 25. 17, 18, 19.

must be understood as a more remote ancestor.

**52. Sore war...all the days of Saul**—This statement is given as a reason why Saul pressed into his service every **strong man** of mark. In this he acted the part of a prudent general.

## CHAPTER XV.

## SAUL'S WAR WITH AMALEK, 1-9.

Jehovah deigns to give Saul's obedience one more test. He has already warned him that, because of disobedience, his kingdom shall not be established in his posterity, (chap. xiii, 14;) but ere he utters the final oracle of rejection he affords him one more trial. Occasion for this is found in the war with the Amalekites, those ancient enemies whose wanton hostility to the chosen people had, even in the days of Moses, drawn down upon them the curse of God. See Exod. xvii, 8-16; Deut. xxv, 17-19.

**1. The Lord sent me to anoint thee**—The same Divine authority that made him king now commissions him to destroy the fierce, wicked Amalekites. Chapter xiv, 48, suggests that this war on Amalek was not without fresh provocation. Those spoilers had probably made a predatory incursion into the southern borders, like that mentioned chapter xxx, 1.

**2. I remember**—The bitter wars and ancient wrongs against the people of Jehovah are not forgotten by him. And shall he not avenge his own elect? Luke xviii, 7.

laid *wait* for him in the way, when he came up from Egypt. **3** Now go and smite Amalek, and <sup>c</sup>utterly destroy all that they have, and spare them not; but slay both man and woman, infant and suckling, ox and sheep, camel and ass. **4** And Saul gathered the people together, and numbered them in <sup>d</sup>Telaim, two hundred thousand footmen, and ten thousand men of Judah. **5** And Saul came to a city of Amalek, and <sup>e</sup>laid wait in the valley. **6** And Saul said unto <sup>f</sup>the Kenites, <sup>g</sup>'Go, depart, get you down from among the Amalekites,

<sup>c</sup> Lev. 27, 28, 29; Josh. 6, 17, 21.—<sup>d</sup> Josh. 15, 24.—<sup>e</sup> Or, *fought*.—<sup>f</sup> Num. 24, 21; Judges 1, 16; 4, 11.—<sup>g</sup> Gen. 18, 25; 19, 13, 14; Rev. 18, 4.—<sup>h</sup> Exod. 18, 10, 19; Num. 10, 29, 32.

**3. Man and woman, infant and suckling**—Who dares question the right of God to inflict such judgments upon a wicked and idolatrous nation? Jehovah is governor among the nations, and in order to chastise and destroy a wicked people he may with equal justice use the wasting pestilence or the armies of Israel. See note on Josh. vi, 21. **Ox and sheep, camel and ass**—Such utter destruction of all the spoil would show that the Israelites fought not to enrich themselves with the possessions of their enemies, but simply as the ministers of God's wrath to execute his judgments. Saul's sparing of the best of the spoils was, therefore, a rash and offensive meddling with the Divine judgments. Like Achan's offence, it was appropriating a part of the accursed thing to private use.

**4. Telaim**—Probably the same as *Telem*, mentioned, Josh. xv, 24, among the cities in the extreme south of Judah. Its site has not been identified. The Targum and Vulgate translate the word, and read *lamb*s. The Septuagint and Josephus strangely read *Gilgal*. **Two hundred thousand footmen**—A very large army was necessary in order to fight successfully the powerful Amalekites, for they were spread over a large district, and were chief of the hostile nations. Num. xxiv, 20.

**5. Laid wait in the valley**—That is, set an ambush (from אָרַב) in one of the great wadies of the Negeb, or south country. Strategic warfare was likely

lest I destroy you with them: for <sup>a</sup>ye showed kindness to all the children of Israel, when they came up out of Egypt. So the Kenites departed from among the Amalekites. **7** <sup>b</sup>And Saul smote the Amalekites from <sup>c</sup>Havilah <sup>d</sup>until thou comest to <sup>e</sup>Shur, that is over against Egypt. **8** And <sup>f</sup>he took Agag the king of the Amalekites alive, and <sup>g</sup>utterly destroyed all the people with the edge of the sword. **9** But Saul and the people <sup>h</sup>spared Agag, and the best of the sheep, and of the oxen, and <sup>i</sup>of the fatlings, and the lambs, and all <sup>j</sup>that was

<sup>a</sup> Chap. 14, 48.—<sup>b</sup> Gen. 2, 11; 25, 18.—<sup>c</sup> Gen. 16, 7.—<sup>d</sup> See 1 Kings 20, 34, 35, &c.—<sup>e</sup> m See chap. 30, 1.—<sup>f</sup> n Verses 3, 15.—<sup>g</sup> 2 Or, *of the second sort*.

to be most successful with those wild sons of the desert.

**6. The Kenites**—The descendants of Jethro, Moses' father in law, who is called a Kenite in Judges i, 16. For the kindness shown to the Israelites by this ancestor of the Kenites, see Exod. xviii.

**7. From Havilah until thou comest to Shur**—From the eastern to the western boundaries of the desert south of Palestine. This territory was formerly occupied by the sons of Ishmael. See Gen. xxv, 18.

**8. Agag**—This was the common title of the Amalekite, as Pharaoh was of the Egyptian, and Abimelech of the Philistine kings. **Utterly destroyed all the people**—"That is, all that fell into the hands of the Israelites; for it follows from the very nature of the case that many escaped, and consequently there is nothing striking in the fact that Amalekites are mentioned again at a later period. Chap. xxvii, 8; xxx, 1; 2 Sam. viii, 12."—*Keil*.

**9. Spared Agag, and the best of the sheep**—The one for the purpose of gratifying his vainglory by leading captive so illustrious a slave; the other to gratify his covetousness. Thus he repeated the sin of Achan. Joshua vii, 21. **Of the fatlings**—כִּשְׁמֵנִים, *of the second sort*, as margin correctly reads. The reference is, probably, to the age of the animals: those of the second birth, or later born, and therefore tender and particularly desirable, either for food or sacrifice.

good, and would not utterly destroy them: but every thing *that was vile* and refuse, that they destroyed utterly.

10 Then came the word of the Lord unto Samuel, saying, 11 \*It repenteth me that I have set up Saul *to be king*: for he is \*turned back from following me, \*and hath not performed my commandments. And it \*grieved Samuel; and he cried unto the Lord all night.

12 And when Samuel rose early to meet Saul in the morning, it was told Samuel, saying, Saul came to \*Carmel, and, behold, he set him up a place,

*o* Verse 35; Gen. 6. 6, 7; 2 Sam. 24. 16.—*p* Josh. 22. 16; 1 Kings 9. 6.—*q* Chap. 13. 13; verses 3, 9.—*r* Verse 35; chap. 16. 1.—*s* Josh.

SAMUEL'S LAST WORDS TO SAUL, 10-35.

10. **Then came the word of the Lord unto Samuel**—Either by a dream or a vision of the night. See Num. xii, 6.

11. **It repenteth me**—Repentance in God does not imply changeableness in the Divine nature, like the changes oft involved in human life and action; for such a supposition is forbidden by such passages as verse 29, where see note, and Num. xxiii, 19. But the Divine nature is emotional. Indignation and grief over the sins of men are passions as true and pure as love. The emotionality of anger, grief, or pity no more implies imperfection in God than does the emotionality of love. Can we for a moment think of a personal God destitute of feeling? And when his creatures suffer and fall through sin, what feelings but indignation and grief might be expected to move his holy nature? By repentance in God we are, therefore, to understand the change of feeling which must needs occur in the Divine nature towards any of the children of his grace when they turn from his truth and presumptuously sin against him. Compare Gen. vi, 6, and note on Judges ii, 18. **It grieved Samuel**—Literally, *It burned him*. It thrilled his great soul to its profoundest depths, for he saw that this rejection of Saul must result in great calamity to Israel. So Jehovah and his holy prophet both were grieved. **He cried unto the Lord all night**—He probably prayed that this cup might pass from

and is gone about, and passed on, and gone down to Gilgal. 13 And Samuel came to Saul: and Saul said unto him, 'Blessed *be* thou of the Lord: I have performed the commandment of the Lord. 14 And Samuel said, 'What *meaneth* then this bleating of the sheep in mine ears, and the lowing of the oxen which I hear? 15 And Saul said, They have brought them from the Amalekites: 'for the people spared the best of the sheep and of the oxen, to sacrifice unto the Lord thy God; and the rest we have utterly destroyed.

15. 55.—*t* Gen. 14. 19; Judges 17. 2; Ruth 3. 10.—*u* Mal. 3. 13, 15; Luke 19. 22; Rom. 3. 19.—*v* Verses 9, 21; Gen. 3. 12; Prov. 28. 13.

him, and that Saul might be forgiven and established in the kingdom.

12. **Carmel**—This was one of the cities of Judah, (see on Josh. xv, 55.) and has been identified with the modern Kurmul, six miles south of Hebron. **Set him up a place**—That is, say some, for the purpose of giving his army rest and dividing the spoils. The Vulgate translates, *He erected for himself a triumphal arch*. But the word translated *place* means *a hand*, (ἡ.)

and is used of Absalom's pillar. 2 Sam. xviii, 18. Such is its meaning here. Saul erected at Carmel a monument as a memorial of his victory over the Amalekites. It may have been an elevated hand, serving as an index to attract the attention of the passing traveller. **Gilgal**—Here Samuel had before solemnly announced to the disobedient king his fall. Chap. xiii, 14.

13. **I have performed the commandment of the Lord**—This is the language of hypocrisy, by which the disobedient warrior presumes to hide his guilt.

15. **The people spared the best of the sheep**—He lays the fault upon the people, and thereby criminally insinuates that the thing was done against his will. **The Lord thy God**—These words, in this connexion, are full of significance. They seem to have flowed from a desire to compliment Samuel on the honour and sanctity of his personal intercourse with Jehovah, and also from a feeling that Jehovah was not his own God. "Every

**16** Then Samuel said unto Saul, "Stay, and I will tell thee what the Lord hath said to me this night. And he said unto him, Say on. **17** And Samuel said, "When thou *wast* little in thine own sight, *wast* thou not *made* the head of the tribes of Israel, and the Lord anointed thee king over Israel? **18** And the Lord sent thee on a journey, and said, Go and utterly destroy the sinners the Amalekites, and fight against them until they be consumed. **19** Wherefore then didst thou not obey the voice of the Lord, but didst fly upon the spoil, and didst evil in the sight of the Lord? **20** And Saul said unto Samuel, Yea, "I have obeyed the voice of the Lord, and have gone the way which the Lord sent me, and have brought Agag the king of Amalek, and have utterly destroyed the Amalekites. **21** "But the people took of the spoil, sheep and oxen, the chief

*w* Chap. 9. 27; 12. 7; 1 Kings 22. 16. — *a* Chap. 9. 21; 10. 23; Jer. 6. 15; Hos. 13. 1. — *3* Heb. *they consume them*. — *v* Verse 13; Job 23. 9; 34. 5; 35. 2. — *z* Verse 15. — *a* Psa. 50. 8, 9; Prov. 21. 3; Isa. 1. 11, 12, 13, 16, 17; Jer. 7. 22, 23; Micah

of the things which should have been utterly destroyed, to sacrifice unto the Lord thy God in Gilgal. **22** And Samuel said, "Hath the Lord *as great* delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the Lord? Behold, "to obey *is* better than sacrifice, *and* to hearken than the fat of rams. **23** For rebellion *is as* the sin of 'witchcraft, and stubbornness *is as* iniquity and idolatry. Because thou hast rejected the word of the Lord, "he hath also rejected thee from *being* king. **24** "And Saul said unto Samuel, I have sinned: for I have transgressed the commandment of the Lord, and thy words: because I "feared the people, and obeyed their voice. **25** Now therefore, I pray thee, pardon my sin, and turn again with me, that I may worship the Lord. **26** And Samuel said unto Saul, I will not return with thee: 'for thou hast re-

6. 6-8; Heb. 10. 6-9. — *b* Eccles. 5. 1; Hos. 6. 6; Matt. 5. 24; 9. 13; 12. 7; Mark 12. 33. — *i* Heb. *divination*. Deut. 18. 10. — *c* Chap. 13. 14. — *d* See 2 Sam. 12. 13. — *e* Exod. 23. 2; Prov. 29. 25; Isa. 61. 12, 13. — *f* See chap. 2. 30.

word," says Hervey, "uttered by Saul seems to indicate the breaking down of his moral character. One feels that after the scene so forcibly described in this chapter Saul must have forfeited his own self-respect, and that his downward career was henceforth almost inevitable."

**16. Stay**—Leave off these false pretences, desist from such hypocritical apologies, whilst, by the revelation of Him whom thou callest my God, I lay open the iniquities of thy heart and the disobedience of thy life.

**17. Little in thine own sight**—As was manifested in his modest response to Samuel's first salutation. Chap. ix. 21.

**20. Yea, I have obeyed**—Still the guilty spirit seeks to justify itself. Strange stupidity! Sullen perversity! How prone are sinners to throw their guilt on others, or else to plead for it a religious motive! Saul did both.

**22. To obey is better than sacrifice**—For all the sacrifices and ceremonies of religion are to aid and promote obedience, not to be made a substitute for it. Disobedience can never be made a virtue even though attended by thousands of sacrifices. Samuel's

words here "rise far above the special occasion, and contain the key-note of the long remonstrance of the prophets in all subsequent times against an exaggerated estimate of ceremonial above obedience. The very flow of the words recalls to us the form, as well as the spirit, of Amos and Isaiah."—*Stanley*.

**23. For rebellion...the sin of witchcraft**—This gives the sense, but it would be as well to transpose these words and follow the order of the Hebrew, thus: *For the sin of witchcraft is rebellion, and iniquity and idolatry are stubbornness*. That is, Saul's rebellious and stubborn opposition to the word of God is as bad as the sins of witchcraft and idolatry; for these sins, in their inmost nature and essence, are refractoriness against the Divine law.

**24. I have sinned**—The announcement of his rejection suddenly subdues his haughty spirit, and brings him to the acknowledgment of his disobedience; but his palliating words, *I feared the people, and obeyed their voice*, show that his penitence was more the result of alarm over the thought of being rejected than of any deep consciousness of sin.

jected the word of the Lord, and the Lord hath rejected thee from being king over Israel. **27** And as Samuel <sup>turned</sup> about to go away, <sup>he</sup> laid hold upon the skirt of his mantle, and it rent. **28** And Samuel said unto him, <sup>The</sup> Lord hath rent the kingdom of Israel from thee this day, and hath given it to a neighbour of thine, <sup>that is</sup> better than thou. **29** And also the <sup>Strength</sup> of Israel will not lie nor repent: for he <sup>is</sup> not a man, that he should repent. **30** Then he said, I have sinned: <sup>yet</sup> honour me now, I pray thee, before

<sup>1</sup> 1 Kings 11. 30.—<sup>2</sup> Chap. 28. 17, 18; 1 Kings 11. 31.—<sup>3</sup> Or, *Eternity*, or, *Victory*.—<sup>4</sup> Num. 23. 19; Ezek. 24. 14; 2 Tim. 2. 13; Titus 1. 2.

**27. He laid hold upon the skirt of his mantle**—The solemn words and manner of the seer, and his turning to depart, thrilled Saul with sudden emotions of fear; and that stern image of the mantled Samuel seemed ever after to haunt the monarch's soul. Compare chap. xxviii, 14.

**29. Strength of Israel**—Jehovah, thus called not only because of his omnipotence, but also because of his constancy and truth—the glorious object of Israel's confidence. **Will not lie nor repent**—Compare verse 11 and note there. Jehovah has feelings of love and anger: love for the righteous and anger towards the wicked. If the righteous man turn from his righteousness, or the wicked from his wickedness, towards him correspondingly Jehovah's feelings change. This is often called repentance in God. But beyond this the divine Nature is not subject to change. In man, however, repentance implies sinfulness and fallibility, and involves a moral and religious change, so that it is never after the manner of man that God repents.

**31 Samuel turned again after Saul**—He finally yielded to Saul's pleading, but not until he had, by his stern and solemn acts and words, made on his mind deep and lasting impressions of God's anger against him. It was also one object of his turning with Saul to execute the judgment of God upon the king of the Amalekites.

**32. Delicately**—We render the passage thus: *Agag came unto him in fetters. And Agag said, Terrible and*

the elders of my people, and before Israel, and turn again with me, that I may worship the Lord thy God. **31** So Samuel turned again after Saul; and Saul worshipped the Lord. **32** Then said Samuel, Bring ye hither to me Agag the king of the Amalekites. And Agag came unto him delicately. And Agag said, <sup>Surely</sup> the bitterness of death is past. **33** And Samuel said, <sup>As thy sword hath made women childless, so shall thy mother be childless among women.</sup> And Samuel hewed Agag in pieces before the Lord in Gil-

<sup>1</sup> John 5. 43; 12. 43.—<sup>2</sup> Isa. 29. 13; Luke 18. 9. 14; 2 Tim. 3. 5.—<sup>3</sup> 1 Thess. 5. 3.—<sup>4</sup> Exod. 17. 11; Num. 14. 45; see Judges 1. 7.

*bitter is the death.* The majority of interpreters, ancient and modern, have understood by the word *delicately* that Agag came to Samuel *cheerfully* and *with delight*, and supposed that he was not to be put to death. But it is difficult to conceive how or why such a part should be acted by this captive king. The only other place where this plural form, <sup>מַעְרַנּוֹת</sup>, occurs is in Job

xxxviii, 31, and it is there translated *sweet influences*. But this translation makes no sense, and both Gesenius and Fürst render it *hands*, in accordance with the Septuagint and Chaldee. According to this etymology the word is to be derived from <sup>עָנָה</sup>, *to bind*; and <sup>מַעְרַנּוֹת</sup>

is formed by transposition of the letters <sup>נ</sup> and <sup>ך</sup>, and is to be regarded as an adverbial accusative—in *fetters*. We render then—*Agag came unto him in fetters. Surely the bitterness of death is past*—Thus rendered, this passage also is difficult to explain satisfactorily. Accordingly we prefer, with Fürst, to render <sup>כָּר</sup> *is terrible*, rather than *is past*; deriving it from <sup>כָּרָה</sup>, *to be bad, corrupt*. The passage then becomes literally an exclamation—*Surely bathos and bitter the death!*

**33. As thy sword hath made women childless**—These words indicate that Agag had been given to cruelties, and that both he and his people had kept up the old practice of destroying the weak and feeble that might fall in their way. Deut. xxv, 19. His punishment was retributive, like that of Adoni-bezek. Judges i, 7.



gal. **34** Then Samuel went to Ramah; and Saul went up to his house to °Gibeah of Saul. **35** And °Samuel came no more to see Saul until the day of his death: nevertheless Samuel °mourned for Saul: and the Lord °repented that he had made Saul king over Israel.

### CHAPTER XVI.

**A**ND the Lord said unto Samuel, °How long wilt thou mourn for Saul, seeing °I have rejected him from reigning over Israel? °fill thine horn with oil, and go, I will send thee to Jesse the Beth-lehemite: for °I have

o Chap. 11. 4.—p See chap. 19. 24.—q Verse 11; chap. 16. 1.—r Verse 11.—s Chap. 15. 35.  
b Chap. 15. 23.—c Chap. 9. 16; 2 Kings 9. 1.  
d Psa. 78. 70; 89. 19, 20; Acts 13. 22.

**35. Samuel came no more to see Saul**—At a later time, when in pursuit of David, Saul came before Samuel, (chap. xix, 24,) but we do not find that Samuel had any intercourse with him. So this interview at Gilgal was the last the prophet had with the disobedient king.

### CHAPTER XVI.

#### THE ANOINTING OF DAVID, 1-13.

We are now about to be introduced to him who figures in the following history as one of the most interesting and honoured personages of the olden time—that neighbour of Saul, (chap. xv, 28,) that man after Jehovah's heart, (chap. xiii, 14,) who is to succeed Saul on the throne of Israel, and be the brightest star in all the host of kings. Soon after his anointing he is providentially introduced into the royal household, and still later, by his victory over Goliath, he suddenly becomes the idol of the nation's heart. But from that proud day until the death of Saul he is persecuted by the jealous king, and flies from the court and from his home, and wanders up and down as an exile and outlaw.

**1. How long wilt thou mourn for Saul**—Samuel's affectionate nature passed through a bitter struggle before he could become reconciled to the will of Jehovah. He had loved Saul, and done his utmost to preserve him. All night he had cried unto the Lord for him, (chap. xv, 11,) and

provided me a king among his sons. **2 And Samuel said, How can I go? if Saul hear it, he will kill me.** And the Lord said, Take a heifer °with thee, and say, °I am come to sacrifice to the Lord. **3 And call Jesse to the sacrifice, and °I will show thee what thou shalt do: and °thou shalt anoint unto me him whom I name unto thee.** **4 And Samuel did that which the Lord spake, and came to Beth-lehem.** And the elders of the town °trembled at his °coming, and said, °Comest thou peaceably? **5 And he said, Peaceably: I am come to sacrifice unto the Lord: °sanctify your-**

1 Heb. in thine hand.—e Chap. 9. 12; 20. 29.  
f Exod. 4. 15.—g Chap. 9. 16.—h Chap. 31. 1.—i Heb. meeting.—j 1 Kings 2. 18; 2 Kings 9. 22.—k Exod. 19. 10, 14.

when he thought of his sad fall, and the wrath of God against him, he trembled for the safety of the kingdom. **Fill thine horn with oil**—For the purpose of anointing another king. See note on chap. x, 1. **Jesse**—The only one who bears this name in Scripture. His genealogy is given Ruth iv, 18-22, and 1 Chron. ii, 5-12.

**2. If Saul hear it, he will kill me**—The prophet seems to have known that Saul was now given over to the power of an evil spirit, (verse 14,) and, urged on by Satanic impulse, he might be as quick to imbrue his hands in the blood of his spiritual father as he was at a later period to slay the priests of Nob. Chap. xxii, 18. **Take a heifer with thee, and say, I am come to sacrifice**—Samuel was under no obligation to publish the whole object of his mission to Beth-lehem, and therefore, by the counsel of the Lord himself, he prudently conceals his chief design. In this there was no falsehood, no deception.

**4. The elders of the town trembled at his coming**—For what reason we are not told; but probably from suspicion or fear that his coming was for the purpose of punishing some sin among them, or of denouncing some bitter judgment. **Comest thou peaceably**—Without any hostile intention? Compare parallel passages.

**5. I am come to sacrifice**—A purpose the same as that which led him to the city where he first met Saul. See

selves, and come with me to the sacrifice. And he sanctified Jesse and his sons, and called them to the sacrifice. **6** And it came to pass, when they were come, that he looked on Eliab, and said, Surely the Lord's anointed is before him. **7** But the Lord said unto Samuel, Look not on his countenance, or on the height of his stature; because I have refused him: *for the Lord seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh on the heart.* **8** Then Jesse called Abinadab, and made him pass before Samuel. And he said, Neither hath the Lord chosen this. **9** Then Jesse made Shammah to pass by. And he said, Neither hath the Lord

*l* Chap. 17. 13; 1 Chron. 27. 18, *Elihu*.—*m* 1 Kings 12. 26.—*n* Psa. 147. 10, 11.—*o* Isa. 55. 8.—*p* 2 Cor. 10. 7.—*q* Hebrew, *eyes*.—*r* 1 Kings 8. 39; 1 Chron. 28. 9; Psa. 7. 9; Jer. 11. 20; 17. 10; 20. 12; Acts 1. 24.—*s* Chap. 17. 13.—*t* *Shimeah*, 2 Sam. 13. 8; *Shim-*

chosen this. **10** Again, Jesse made seven of his sons to pass before Samuel. And Samuel said unto Jesse, The Lord hath not chosen these. **11** And Samuel said unto Jesse, Are here all thy children? And he said, There remaineth yet the youngest, and, behold, he keepeth the sheep. And Samuel said unto Jesse, Send and fetch him: for we will not sit down till he come hither. **12** And he sent, and brought him in. Now he was ruddy, and withal of a beautiful countenance, and goodly to look to. And the Lord said, Arise, anoint him: for this is he. **13** Then Samuel took the horn of oil, and anointed him in the midst of his brethren: and the Spirit of the Lord

*ma*, 1 Chron. 2. 13.—*t* Chap. 17. 12.—*u* 2 Sam. 7. 8; Psa. 78. 70.—*v* Heb. *round*.—*w* Chap. 17. 42; Cant. 5. 10.—*x* Heb. *fair of eyes*.—*y* So chap. 9. 17.—*z* Chap. 10. 1; Psa. 89. 20.—*aa* See Num. 27. 18; Judges 11. 29; 13. 25; 14. 6; chap. 10. 6, 10.

notes on chap. ix, 6, 12. **Sanctify yourselves**—According to the directions of the law, by change of clothes, washings, and abstinence. See Exod. xix, 10–15. **Jesse and his sons**—For these particularly the sacrifice was intended, and it is probable, from the acts and words of Samuel on this occasion, that he privately informed Jesse of his object to anoint one of his sons, but it nowhere appears that Jesse was informed of David's royal destiny. Though the prophet may have told him of his purpose to anoint one of his sons, he did not acquaint him with the object of that anointing, but left it for the developments of providence to show.

**7. Look not on his countenance, or on the height of his stature**—This seems to be a plain allusion to the external appearance of Saul. Chap. ix, 2. That which chiefly recommended him to the favour of Israel was his size and beauty; but now, in selecting a man after his own heart, Jehovah shows that his divine judgment is based not on external form or comeliness, but on the inner life. David also, however, was of a goodly appearance. Verse 12.

**10. The Lord hath not chosen these**—This statement made to Jesse implies that Samuel had already, as we have remarked on verse 5, private-

ly informed him of the object of his coming.

**12. Ruddy**—אַדְמוֹנִי, *red*; it may refer either to the face or the hair, but as it is used of the hair in Gen. xxv, 25, we prefer so to understand it here and in chap. xvii, 42. These three are the only passages where the word occurs. Esau and David were alike in being *red-haired*, as well as in their wandering habits and skilful use of weapons. It is said that red hair was regarded as a rare mark of beauty in the East. **Of a beautiful countenance**—Rather, *beautiful as to the eyes*. This indicates that his eyes were keen and penetrating, enlivened by the fires of genius, and beaming with a generous warmth, by which the hearts of men and women were alike affected. **Goodly to look to**—That is, of a comely and prepossessing appearance.

**13. Anointed him in the midst of his brethren**—But though these sons of Jesse saw this honour conferred on their youngest brother, they seem not to have understood its meaning. They may have thought that he was anointed because of some desire or intention of the prophet to make him a pupil of one of the prophetic schools. **The Spirit of the Lord**

came upon David from that day forward. So Samuel rose up, and went to Ramah.

**14** But the Spirit of the LORD departed from Saul, and an evil spirit from the LORD troubled him. **15** And Saul's servants said unto him, Behold now, an evil spirit from God troubleth

*s* Judges 16. 20; chap. 11. 6; 18. 12; 28. 15; Psa. 51. 11. — *a* Judges 9. 23; chap. 18. 10; 19. 9.

came upon David from that day forward—"A spirit of prudence to behave himself wisely upon all occasions; with a spirit of courage, so that he durst grapple with a lion and a bear; and the spirit of prophecy, in which he was afterwards very eminent. In short, a spirit fit for a prince."—*Patrick*. It does not appear that Samuel informed David of his destiny, as he did Saul; but the special movings of the Spirit on his heart, and the successive developments of Providence in his favour, must have gradually convinced him that he was sooner or later to be recognized as the Lord's anointed. At a later time this seems to have been openly revealed. 2 Sam. iii, 18.

#### DAVID'S INTRODUCTION TO THE COURT OF SAUL, 14-23.

**14. The Spirit of the Lord departed from Saul**—The divine influences of which he had been made a partaker at the beginning of his career (see chap. x, 10, and xi, 6) were withdrawn from him, and God no longer inspired him to noble enterprises.

**15. An evil spirit... troubleth thee**—A demon like those mentioned so frequently in the New Testament, sent by permission of the Lord, as Satan in the case of Job. Job ii, 7. See notes on Matt. iv, 24, and Mark v, 2. It is not only by Saul's servants, but by the sacred writer himself, that we are told it was an evil spirit from the Lord; so we cannot regard it as merely a superstitious and mistaken notion of Saul's physicians. Compare chap. xviii, 10; xix, 9. But while he thus became possessed by a supernatural evil power, it is very likely that a mental disease bordering on insanity was the substratum on which the evil spirit worked. After Samuel's last words

thee. **16** Let our lord now command thy servants, *which are* before thee, to seek out a man, *who is* a cunning player on a harp: and it shall come to pass, when the evil spirit from God is upon thee, that he shall play with his hand, and thou shalt be well. **17** And Saul said unto his servants, Provide me now

*7 Or, terrified.*—*b* Gen. 41. 46; verses 21, 22; 1 Kings 10. 8.—*c* Verse 23; 2 Kings 3. 15.

of judgment the king could not be happy in his kingdom. The more he thought upon his doom, the more it harrowed up his soul. It was, perhaps, his highest ambition to be the father of a race of kings, and to have this hope suddenly dashed from him was to have darkness settle over all his life. "The Hebrew mind so linked itself to the future by the contemplation of posterity that it is scarcely possible to us, with our looser attachment to the time beyond ourselves, to apprehend, in all its intensity, the deep distress of mind with which any Hebrew, and much more a king, regarded the prospect that there would be no son of his succeeding."—*Kitto*. Saul's future gradually became full of ghostly images, and when, disengaged at times from the excitements of war and the cares of government, he sat down to think upon his darkened fortunes, his mind and heart, forsaken of all divine influences from Jehovah, became an easy prey to foul suspicions and gloomy fears—a most inviting state for demoniacal possession. The evil spirit, entering and revelling amid these mental disorders, carried him at times to the wildest height of madness.

**16. A cunning player on a harp**—One skilled in the use of that instrument. **He shall play with his hand, and thou shalt be well**—Numerous instances in ancient and modern times illustrate the power of music to quell disorders of the mind. One old author says: "Music is the cure for many affections of the mind and body—such as absence of mind, fearful apprehensions and long-continued derangement." Censorinus, a writer of the third century, says that the physician Asclepiades was accustomed by the melody of sound to allay the ravings of the

a man that can play well, and bring *him* to me. 18 Then answered one of the servants, and said, Behold, I have seen a son of Jesse the Beth-lehemite, *that is* cunning in playing, and *a* mighty valiant man, and a man of war, and pru-

d Chap. 17. 32, 34, 35, 36.—8 Or, *speech*.  
e Chap. 3. 19: 18. 12, 14.

delirious. Xenocrates is said to have done the same. Kitto also, quoting from the Memoirs of the French Royal Academy of Sciences, cites "the case of a person who was seized with fever, which soon threw him into a very violent delirium, accompanied by bitter cries, by tears, by terrors, and by an almost constant wakefulness. On the third day, a hint that fell from himself suggested the idea of trying the effect of music. Gradually as the strain proceeded his troubled visage relaxed into a most serene expression, his restless eyes became tranquil, his convulsions ceased, and the fever absolutely left him." Instances of a similar nature might be multiplied. Dr. A. Clarke quotes from the *Physica Sacra* of Dr. Scheuchzer the following attempt at a physiological explanation of this phenomenon. "Health consists in a moderate tension of the fibres, which permits all the fluids to have an entire freedom of circulation; and to the spirits, that of diffusing themselves through all the limbs. On the contrary, disease consists in tensions of the fibres morbidly weak or morbidly strong. This latter seems to have been the case of Saul: and as the undulations of the air, which convey sound, communicate themselves to and through the most solid bodies, it is easy to suppose that by the modulations of music all the fibres of his body, which were under the influence of their morbidly increased tension, might be so relaxed as to be brought back into their natural state, and thus permit the re-establishment of a free and gentle circulation of the fluids, and consequently of the animal spirits, and thus induce calmness and tranquillity of mind." When, now, Saul's physical and mental derangement was checked by the power of musical sounds, the

dent in  *matters*, and a comely person, and *the Lord is* with him. 19 Wherefore Saul sent messengers unto Jesse, and said, Send me David thy son, *which is* with the sheep. 20 And Jesse *took* an ass *laden* with bread, and a bottle of

f Verse 11; chap. 17. 15, 34.—g See chap. 10. 27; 17. 18; Gen. 43. 11; Prov. 18. 16.

demon was for the time dispossessed, (verse 23,) because the psychological conditions of his absolute control over his victim were removed.

18. **A mighty valiant man, and a man of war**—From what we learn in chap. xvii, 34, 35, of David's early conflicts with wild beasts, we may readily infer that long before his warlike abilities became patent to the public eye there were individuals who knew of these his early conflicts, and discerned in the youthful hero the beginnings of a mighty warrior. **Prudent in matters**—Hebrew, *knowing of speech*; skilled in the use of language. The words and psalms of David show him to have been eloquent.

19. **Thy son, which is with the sheep**—Saul's servant, who informed him of David, seems to have known this son of Jesse only as the remarkable shepherd boy.

20. **An ass laden with bread... wine... kid**—See note on chap. ix, 7. The Hebrew is, literally, *an ass of bread*, and some have thought it to be the name of a weight or measure, but the English version conveys the better meaning. "It is a pleasant picture to conceive the future king of Israel stepping lightly along behind the animal, with his shepherd's staff and scrip, and entertained as he went by the gambols of the kid. His light harp was, no doubt, slung to his back; and it is likely that he now and then rested under a tree and solaced his soul with its music."—Kitto. The distance between Beth-lehem and Gibeah of Saul is about ten miles, and on this journey the youthful psalmist probably passed in sight of the stronghold of Zion, destined one day to fall before his conquering forces, and ever after to be known as "the city of David." 2 Samuel v, 7.

wine, and a kid, and sent *them* by David his son unto Saul. **21** And David came to Saul, and <sup>2</sup>stood before him: and he loved him greatly; and he became his armourbearer. **22** And Saul sent to Jesse, saying, Let David, I pray thee, stand before me; for he hath found favour in my sight. **23** And it came to pass, when <sup>1</sup>the evil spirit from God was upon Saul, that David took a harp, and played with his hand: so <sup>2</sup>Saul was refreshed, and was well, and the evil spirit departed from him.

<sup>1</sup> Gen. 41. 46; 1 Kings 10. 8; Prov. 22. 29.—<sup>2</sup> Verses 14, 16.—<sup>3</sup> Chap. 13. 10, 11; Matt. 12. 43, 45; Luke 11. 24, 26.

**21. He became his armourbearer**—That is, Saul conferred upon him this office as a token of confidence and love; but he never actually exercised its duties, unless, perhaps, for a short time after his victory over Goliath.

**23. David...played...Saul was refreshed**—"They sit side by side, the likeness of the old system passing away, of the new system coming into existence. Saul, the warlike chief, his great spear always by his side, reluctant, moody, melancholy; and David, the youthful minstrel, his harp in his hand, fresh from the schools where the spirit of the better times was fostered, pouring forth, to soothe the troubled spirit of the king, the earliest of those strains which have soothed the troubled spirit of the world."—*Stanley*.

## CHAPTER XVII.

DAVID'S VICTORY OVER GOLIATH, 1-58.

Of this Philistine war, in which Goliath was slain, the time and causes are unknown; but as there was bitter war against the Philistines all the days of Saul, (chap. xiv, 52,) we need not suppose that there was any special provocation on the part of the Israelites. Those obstinate enemies on the seacoast, who had held Israel in subjection forty years, (Judges xiii, 1,) were loath to lose them from among their tributaries; and their sufferings from the ark, (chap. v,) and by the hand of Samuel, (chap. vii, 10,) and still more recently by the heroism of Jonathan, (chap. xiv,) were sufficient provocation for them to attempt war at any time. Possibly, also, they had heard of the

## CHAPTER XVII.

**NOW** the Philistines <sup>a</sup>gathered together their armies to battle, and were gathered together at <sup>b</sup>Socoh, which *belongeth* to Judah, and pitched between Socoh and Azekah, in <sup>1</sup>Ephes-dammim. **2** And Saul and the men of Israel were gathered together, and pitched by the valley of Elah, and <sup>2</sup>set the battle in array against the Philistines. **3** And the Philistines stood on a mountain on the one side, and Israel stood on a mountain on the other side: and *there was* a val-

<sup>a</sup> Chap. 13. 5.—<sup>b</sup> Josh. 15. 35; 2 Chron. 28. 18.—<sup>1</sup> Or, *The coast of Dammim*, called *Pu-dammim*, 1 Chron. 11. 13.—<sup>2</sup> Heb. *rang'd the battle*.

madness of Saul, and therefore deemed the present a favourable opportunity to wreak their fill of vengeance. As to the time of this war, Josephus tells us that it was shortly after the events narrated in the last chapter. But as we learn from verse 15 that David had returned from Saul to his father, and from verse 55 that Saul had forgotten Jesse, we incline to the belief that this war occurred some years after David's introduction to Saul's court.

**1. Socoh**—One of the cities of Judah. It has been identified with the modern Suweikeh, fourteen miles southwest of Jerusalem. **Azekah... Ephes-dammim**—These places have not been satisfactorily identified, but we incline to locate Ephes-dammim at the ruins of the modern Damun, a little to the east of Suweikeh; in which case Azekah may be, as Van de Velde has conjectured, at Ahbek, a little to the northeast of Damun.

**2. The valley of Elah**—The Wady es-Sunt, which has been often visited by travellers, and is represented by all as corresponding fully to the statements of this narrative. This valley is a mile in width, and through its centre runs a watercourse whose banks and bed abound with pebbles. The mountains on either side have a steep, uniform slope, and are about five hundred feet high. "It took its name Elah of old from the terebinth, (butn,) of which the largest specimen we saw in Palestine still stands in the vicinity; just as now it takes its name es-Sunt (Sunt) from the acacias which are scattered in it."—*Robinson*.

ney between them. **4** And there went out a champion out of the camp of the Philistines, named *Goliath*, of *Gath*, whose height *was* six cubits and a span. **5** And *he had* a helmet of brass upon his

c2 Sam. 21. 19.—d Josh. 11. 22.

**4. A champion**—The Septuagint has, *a mighty man*; Vulgate, *bastard*; Syriac and Arabic, *a giant*. But the Hebrew, אִישׁ הַגִּבּוֹרִים, literally signifies

*a man between the two*; that is, an arbitrator between the two armies, or one who was lord of the space between the two camps. Goliath, the pride of the Philistine hosts, stepped forth between the two armies and proposed by a personal contest with a chosen warrior from the Israelites, and according to the conditions stated in verse 9, to decide the fortunes of the war. Such single combats at the head of armies were not unusual in ancient times, as is witnessed by the combats of Paris and Menelaus. (Homer, *Iliad*, book iii.) **Of Gath**—And therefore probably a remnant of the Anakim that escaped the sword of Joshua. Josh. xi, 22. **Whose height... six cubits and a span**—That is, if we reckon the cubit at twenty-one inches, about ten and one half feet. Josephus (*"Antiquities,"* xviii, 4, 5) mentions one Eleazar, a Jew by birth, whose height was seven cubits; and Pliny speaks of a giant Pusio, whose height exceeded ten Roman feet.

**5. A helmet of brass**—A defensive armour for the head. **A coat of mail**—Literally, *a coat of scales*.

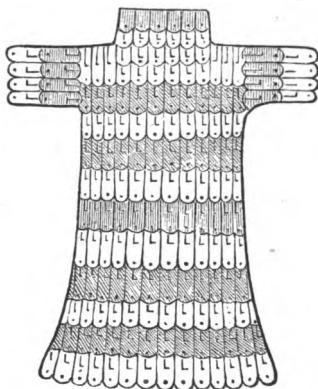


ANCIENT ARMOUR FOR THE HEAD.

head, and he *was* armed with a coat of mail; and the weight of the coat *was* five thousand shekels of brass. **6** And *he had* greaves of brass upon his legs, and a *target* of brass between his shoulders.

3 Heb. clothed.—4 Or, gorget.

A defensive armour for the body, consisting of plates of brass overlapping



ANCIENT COAT OF MAIL.

each other like the scales on a fish, or shingles on a roof. The Hebrew word is rendered *habergeon* in 2 Chron. xxvi, 14, and Neh. iv, 16. **Weight... five thousand shekels**—Reckoning the shekel at half an ounce avoirdupois, the weight of the scale armour would be about one hundred and fifty pounds.

**6. Greaves of brass upon his legs**—Rather, *upon his feet*. These were shin covers bound by thongs around and above the ankles. Among the ancient Greeks they were elastic behind, and extended upward above the knees. **Target**—Margin, *gorget*. This word is elsewhere variously translated—*shield*, (verse 45, and Job xxxix, 23;) *spear*, (Josh. viii, 18, 26; Job xli, 29; Jer. vi, 23;) *lance*, (Jer. l, 42.) The word is best translated *spear*, and this Goliath carried *between his shoulders*, that is, slung upon his back, as the ancients often carried their heavy swords. (Homer, *Iliad*, book ii, 45.) So Josephus understood it: "His spear was such as was not car-

7 And the <sup>\*</sup>staff of his spear *was* like a weaver's beam; and his spear's head *weighed* six hundred shekels of iron: and one bearing a shield went before him. 8 And he stood and cried unto the armies of Israel, and said unto them, Why are ye come out to set *your* battle in array? *am* not I a Philistine, and ye <sup>'</sup>servants to Saul? choose you a man for you, and let him come down to me. 9 If he be able to fight with me, and to kill me, then will we be your

<sup>e</sup> 2 Samuel 21. 19; 1 Chronicles 11. 28; 20. 5. <sup>f</sup> Chapter 8. 17. <sup>g</sup> Chapter 11. 1. <sup>h</sup> Verse 26; 2 Samuel 21. 21.

ried like a light thing in his right hand, but he carried it as lying on his shoulders."

7. **The staff of his spear**—So the *Keri*, and the parallel passages in 2 Sam. xxi, 19; 1 Chron. xx, 5. But the *Kethib* here reads, חֵץ הַנִּיחַ, *arrow*

*of his spear*, that is, the arrow-head, or iron point, of his javelin. The *Keri* is to be preferred. **Like a weaver's beam**—Like the large cylinder of wood on which the weaver winds his warp before weaving, or that on which the cloth is rolled as it is woven. Perhaps the reference is to the upright standards of the loom. See cut of ancient loom at Judges xvi, 13. **Six hundred shekels**—About eighteen pounds.

8. **Am not I a Philistine**—In the Hebrew, Philistine is made emphatic by the article, but the word *servants* is without it. Thus: *Am not I the Philistine*, etc. *Am not I the great warrior of the Philistine army?* Why then trouble the army with battle? I am empowered to decide alone the fortunes of the day.

10. **I defy the armies of Israel this day**—Hebrew, *I have reproached the armies of Israel this day*. He heaps upon them scorn and contempt for their supposed inability to cope with a single warrior.

12-31. By many critics this passage has been regarded as an interpolation, chiefly for the following reasons:

(1.) It is wanting in the Vatican Codex of the Septuagint. But if it were wanting in every copy of the Septuagint, this alone would be no sufficient

servants: but if I prevail against him, and kill him, then shall ye be our servants, and <sup>'</sup>serve us. 10 And the Philistine said, I <sup>'</sup>defy the armies of Israel this day; give me a man, that we may fight together. 11 When Saul and all Israel heard those words of the Philistine, they were dismayed, and greatly afraid. 12 Now David *was* <sup>'</sup>the son of that <sup>'</sup>Ephrathite of Beth-lehem-judah, whose name *was* Jesse; and he had <sup>'</sup>eight sons: and the man went among

<sup>i</sup> Verse 58; Ruth 4. 22; Chapter 16. 1, 18. <sup>k</sup> Genesis 35. 19. <sup>l</sup> Chapter 18. 10, 11; see 1 Chronicles 2. 13-15.

reason for its rejection; for it can be shown that the translators of that version sometimes made omissions and additions at pleasure.

(2.) After what had been written in chap. xvi, 1-12, the statements here made (verses 12-14) respecting David's father and brothers are superfluous, and indicate a different authorship. But such repetition and fulness of detail, especially in matters of genealogy, is characteristic of Hebrew historical composition; and as this victory over Goliath was David's first bold, though unintentional, step towards the throne, and instrumental in securing for him the affections of the people, it would be unfair criticism to make this minuteness of detail an argument against the genuineness of the passage.

(3.) Eliab's behaviour towards David, verse 28, is unaccountable and unlikely after he had seen his brother anointed by the hand of Samuel. But this objection assumes that Eliab clearly understood that by Samuel's anointing of David he designated him as the future king of Israel—an assumption that has no foundation in the sacred record. See note on chap. xvi, 13. The honour conferred by Samuel on Jesse's youngest son made him, like Joseph, the object of his brothers' jealousy, and Eliab's angry words were but a single outburst of that jealousy.

(4.) According to chap. xvi, 21, David was Saul's armourbearer, and we would naturally expect to find him acting as such in this battle with the Philistines; but, according to verse 15 of this section, he had retired from Saul's

men for an old man in the days of Saul.

**3** And the three eldest sons of Jesse went and followed Saul to the battle: and the names of his three sons that went to the battle were Eliab the first-born, and next unto him Abinadab, and the third Shammah. **14** And David was the youngest: and the three eldest followed Saul. **15** But David went and returned from Saul to feed his father's sheep at Beth-lehem. **16** And the Philistine drew near morning and evening, and presented himself forty days. **17** And Jesse said unto David his son, Take now for thy brethren an ephah of

*m* Chap. 16. 6, 8, 9; 1 Chron. 2. 13.—*n* Chap. 16. 19.—*5* Heb. *cheeses of milk*.—*6* Heb. *cup-twin of a thousand*.

court and resumed the care of his father's sheep at Beth-lehem. But surely this is no contradiction. There is no necessity for regarding his appointment as armourbearer as any thing more than an honorary title and office which he never exercised. Joab had ten armourbearers, (2 Sam. xviii, 15,) and Saul perhaps had many more.

Other minor objections based upon particular expressions will be duly noticed in notes on the passages to which they pertain.

**15. David went and returned from Saul**—By this it would seem that the king's affection towards his healer cooled as soon as the cure had been effected. The probability of this most physicians can vouch from their own experience. Besides, it is likely that, from the peculiar nature of his complaint, Saul cared not to be continually reminded, by the presence of his healer, of the sufferings he had gone through, and of paroxysms which it humbled his proud mind to think had made him an object of compassion in the eyes of his subjects. He therefore made no opposition to the application for his son's return home, which Jesse probably made when he found that David's services were no longer necessary.—*Kitto*.

**17. Parched corn**—See note on Ruth ii, 14.

**18. Cheeses**—Literally, *cuttings of the milk*. That is, say some, slices of curdled milk. Cheese is not common at the present day among the Bedouin

this parched corn, and these ten loaves, and run to the camp to thy brethren; **18** And carry these ten cheeses unto the captain of their thousand, and look how thy brethren fare, and take their pledge. **19** Now Saul, and they, and all the men of Israel, were in the valley of Elah, fighting with the Philistines. **20** And David rose up early in the morning, and left the sheep with a keeper, and took, and went, as Jesse had commanded him; and he came to the trench, as the host was going forth to the fight, and shouted for the battle. **21** For Israel and the Philistines had

*o* Gen. 37. 14.—*7* Or, *place of the carriage*, chap. 26. 5.—*8* Or, *battle array*, or, *place of fight*.

Arabs, but there is in use among them a substance, consisting of coagulated buttermilk, which is dried until it becomes quite hard, and is then ground. **Their pledge**—A token from them that they are alive and well.

**19. Saul, and they... were in the valley of Elah**—Better to supply *are*, instead of *were*, and understand this verse as a part of Jesse's words to David. To the instructions which Jesse gives his son in the preceding verses, he here adds, for his further information, that he will find Saul, and his brothers, and all Israel, in the valley of Elah, engaged in war with the Philistines. This obviates the objection urged against the genuineness of this passage, that there was no fighting with the Philistines until after Goliath's fall. The statement was but a casual remark of Jesse, who was not fully acquainted with the facts, and is not to be taken as literally correct.

**20. The trench**—*הַמַּחְצֵה*, the wagon rampart. The barrier formed around the encampment by the baggage wagons and other vehicles of the army. **The host was going forth to the fight**—That is, they were marching out of the camp to put themselves in battle array. **Shouted for the battle**—Raised the war cry. Neither of these expressions implies that the armies engaged in actual conflict, as some objectors have absurdly assumed. This appears still more clearly in the following verse.



put the battle in array, army against army. **22** And David left <sup>9</sup>his carriage in the hand of the keeper of the carriage, and ran into the army, and came and <sup>10</sup>saluted his brethren. **23** And as he talked with them, behold, there came up the champion, the Philistine of Gath, Goliath by name, out of the armies of the Philistines, and spake <sup>11</sup>according to the same words: and David heard *them*. **24** And all the men of Israel, when they saw the man, fled <sup>12</sup>from him, and were sore afraid. **25** And the men of Israel said, Have ye seen this man that is come up? surely to defy Israel is he come up: and it shall be, *that* the man who killeth him, the king will enrich him with great riches, and <sup>13</sup>will give him his daughter, and make his father's house <sup>14</sup>free in Israel. **26** And David spake to the men that stood by him, saying, What shall be done to the man that killeth this Philistine, and taketh away <sup>15</sup>the reproach from Israel? for who *is* this <sup>16</sup>uncircumcised Philistine, that he should <sup>17</sup>defy the armies of <sup>18</sup>the liv-

<sup>9</sup> Heb. *the vessels from upon him*.—<sup>10</sup> Heb. *asked his brethren of peace*, as Judges 18. 15.  
—<sup>11</sup> Verse 8.—<sup>12</sup> Hebrew, *from his face*.—  
<sup>13</sup> Josh. 15. 16.—<sup>14</sup> Ezek. 7. 24; Matt. 17. 26.  
—<sup>15</sup> Chap. 11. 2.—<sup>16</sup> Chap. 14. 6.—<sup>17</sup> Verse 10.

**21. Army against army**—Render: *And Israel and the Philistines set battle array against battle array*—That is, they formed their respective armies in battle array on the mountains on either side of the valley, as stated in verse 3, the two armies facing each other.

**22. His carriage**—That which he carried. Margin, *the vessels from upon him*. The parched ears, the ten loaves, and the cheeses which Jesse had sent by him to the camp. **The keeper of the carriage**—The overseer of the supplies; the quartermaster.

**24. Fled from him, and were sore afraid**—The Israelitish host shrunk backward and trembled before the insolent giant. The whole context shows that there was no actual flight of the whole army, but skirmishing parties may have gone down to the valley and when Goliath came forth they made a rapid retreat to the camp.

**25. The man who killeth him, the king will enrich**—It is every way probable that in his dismay and terror before the challenge of Goliath Saul had made such offers as are here

ing God? **27** And the people answered him after this manner, saying, "So shall it be done to the man that killeth him." **28** And Eliab his eldest brother heard when he spake unto the men; and Eliab's <sup>19</sup>anger was kindled against David, and he said, Why camest thou down hither? and with whom hast thou left those few sheep in the wilderness? I know thy pride, and the naughtiness of thine heart; for thou art come down that thou mightest see the battle. **29** And David said, What have I now done? <sup>20</sup>*Is there* not a cause? **30** And he turned from him toward another, and <sup>21</sup>spake after the same <sup>22</sup>manner: and the people answered him again after the former manner. **31** And when the words were heard which David spake, they rehearsed *them* before Saul: and he <sup>23</sup>sent for him. **32** And David said to Saul, "Let no man's heart fail because of him; <sup>24</sup>thy servant will go and fight with this Philistine." **33** And Saul said to David, "Thou art not able to go against this Philistine to fight with him:

<sup>19</sup> Deut. 5. 26.—<sup>20</sup> Verse 25.—<sup>21</sup> Gen. 37. 4, 8, 11; Matt. 10. 36.—<sup>22</sup> Verse 17.—<sup>23</sup> Verses 26, 27.—<sup>24</sup> 12 Heb. *word*.—<sup>25</sup> 13 Heb. *took him*.—  
<sup>26</sup> Deut. 20. 1, 3.—<sup>27</sup> Chap. 16. 18.—<sup>28</sup> See Num. 13. 31; Deut. 9. 2.

specified; but the fact that we have no record of their fulfilment has been construed into an argument against the genuineness of this section. This argument at best is only one from silence. But in reply we urge that Saul's inquiry respecting David's father, (vers. 55–58,) and his proposal to give him his daughter in marriage, (chap. xviii, 17,) seem to have been made in direct reference to the promises here recorded, and all apparent failure to redeem his promise is sufficiently accounted for by Saul's passionate jealousy at the honours David received from the people. Chap. xviii, 6–9. **Make his father's house free in Israel**—Free from taxation and public burdens, and elevated to the rank of royalty.

**28. I know thy pride**—"Eliab sought for the splinter in his brother's eye, and was not aware of the beam in his own."—*Keil*.

**29. Is there not a cause**—Literally, *Is not that word*?—What wrong have I committed? Is not that word—that simple inquiry—allowable? He thought his brother very sensitive.

for thou *art but* a youth, and he a man of war from his youth. **34** And David said unto Saul, Thy servant kept his father's sheep, and there came a lion, and a bear, and took a <sup>14</sup>lamb out of the flock: **35** And I went out after him, and smote him, and delivered *it* out of his mouth: and when he arose against me, I caught *him* by his beard, and <sup>15</sup>smote him, and slew him. **36** Thy servant slew both the lion and the bear: and this uncircumcised Philistine shall be as one of them, seeing he hath defied the armies of the living God. **37** David said moreover, 'The Lord that delivered me out of the paw of the lion, and out of the paw of the bear, he will deliver me out of the hand of this Philistine. And Saul said unto David, Go, and 'the Lord be with thee. **38** And Saul <sup>16</sup>armed David with his armour, and he put a helmet of brass upon his head; also he armed him with a coat of mail. **39** And David girded his sword upon his armour, and he assayed to go; for he had not proved *it*. And David said unto Saul, I cannot go with these; for I have not proved *them*. And David put them off him. **40** And he took his staff in his hand, and chose

him five smooth stones out of the <sup>17</sup>brook, and put them in a shepherd's bag which he had, even in a scrip; and his sling *was* in his hand: and he drew near to the Philistine. **41** And the Philistine came on and drew near unto David; and the man that bare the shield *went* before him. **42** And when the Philistine looked about, and saw David, he <sup>18</sup>disdained him: for he was *but* a youth, and <sup>19</sup>ruddy, and of a fair countenance. **43** And the Philistine said unto David, 'Am I a dog, that thou comest to me with staves? And the Philistine cursed David by his gods. **44** And the Philistine <sup>20</sup>said to David, Come to me, and I will give thy flesh unto the fowls of the air, and to the beasts of the field. **45** Then said David to the Philistine, Thou comest to me with a sword, and with a spear, and with a shield: <sup>21</sup>but I come to thee in the name of the Lord of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom thou hast <sup>22</sup>defied. **46** This day will the Lord <sup>23</sup>deliver thee into mine hand; and I will smite thee, and take thine head from thee; and I will give <sup>24</sup>the carcasses of the host of the Philistines this day unto the fowls of the air, and to the wild

<sup>14</sup> Or, *kid*.—<sup>d</sup> Judges 14. 5, 6; 2 Sam. 23. 20. —<sup>e</sup> Psa. 18. 16, 17; 63. 7; 77. 11; 2 Cor. 1. 10; 2 Tim. 4. 17, 18.—<sup>f</sup> Chap. 20. 13; 1 Chron. 22. 11, 16.—<sup>15</sup> Hebrew, *clothed David with his clothes*.—<sup>16</sup> Or, *valley*.—<sup>17</sup> Heb. *vessel*.—<sup>18</sup> Psa. 123. 3, 4; 1 Cor. 1. 27, 28.

<sup>19</sup> Chap. 16. 12.—<sup>i</sup> Chap. 24. 14; 2 Sam. 3. 8; 9. 8; 16. 9; 2 Kings 8. 13.—<sup>k</sup> 1 Kings 20. 10, 11; Prov. 18. 12; Eccles. 9. 11, 12.—<sup>2</sup> 2 Sam. 22. 33, 35; Psa. 124. 8; 125. 1; 2 Cor. 10. 4; Heb. 11. 33, 34.—<sup>m</sup> Verse 10.—<sup>18</sup> Heb. *shut thee up*.—<sup>n</sup> Deut. 28. 26.

**34. A lion, and a bear**—The prowess of the lion is well known. It is a testimony of Samson's mighty power that he rent a lion as he would have rent a kid. Judges xiv, 6. No ordinary man would, therefore, dare to fight the king of beasts. "The Syrian bear—still found on the higher mountains of this country—is perhaps equally to be dreaded in a close personal encounter. The inhabitants of Hermon say that when he is chased up the mountain he will cast back large stones upon his pursuers with terrible force and unerring aim. The stoutest hunter will not venture to attack him alone, nor without being thoroughly armed for the deadly strife."—*Thomson*.

**40. Smooth stones**—Such as would pass most easily and rapidly through

the air. The torrent bed of the Wady es-Sumt is said to be lined with smooth pebbles. **A scrip**—A pouch; a knapsack. **Sling**—On the use of this instru-



SYRIAN BEAR.

ment in ancient warfare, see note on Judges xx, 16.

**43–47.** Such parleying and threats as these verses record were common

beasts of the earth; \*that all the earth may know that there is a God in Israel. **47** And all this assembly shall know that the Lord saveth not with sword and spear: for the battle is the Lord's, and he will give you into our hands. **48** And it came to pass, when the Philistine arose, and came and drew nigh to meet David, that David hasted, and ran toward the army to meet the Philistine. **49** And David put his hand in his bag, and took thence a stone, and slang it, and smote the Philistine in his forehead, that the stone sunk into his forehead; and he fell upon his face to the earth. **50** So David prevailed over the Philistine with a sling and with a stone, and smote the Philistine, and slew him; but *there was* no sword in the hand of David. **51** Therefore David ran, and stood upon the Philistine, and took his sword,

*o* Josh. 4. 24; 1 Kings 8. 43; 18. 36; 2 Kings 19. 19; Isa. 52. 10. — *p* Psa. 44. 6, 7; Hos. 1. 7; Zech. 4. 6. — *q* 2 Chron. 20. 15.

in ancient times between contending heroes. Numerous examples may be found in Homer,

**49. In his forehead**—The only unprotected portion of his body. According to the Septuagint, however, the stone passed through Goliath's helmet.

**52. The valley**—Where the Wady es-Sumt opens into the great western plain of Philistia. **Shaaraim**—The site of this place is unknown. It is probably to be looked for somewhere between Gath and Ekron. On the two last named cities, see notes on chap. v, 8, 10.

**54. David took the head...and brought it to Jerusalem; but he put his armour in his tent**—According to some critics this verse is utterly irreconcilable with the context, and is, therefore, to be regarded as the interpolation of a later hand. But what are the difficulties? (1.) Jerusalem was then in the hands of the Jebusites, and remained so until a much later day, when David himself conquered them. 2 Sam. v, 7. But this is no good reason why the head of the Philistine might not have been taken there; for, according to Judges i, 21, the Benjamites occupied Jerusalem in common with the Jebusites. But if this were not now the case, and the Jebusites were in possession of the whole city, David,

and drew it out of the sheaf thereof, and slew him, and cut off his head therewith. And when the Philistines saw their champion was dead, they fled. **52** And the men of Israel and of Judah arose, and shouted, and pursued the Philistines, until thou come to the valley, and to the gates of Ekron. And the wounded of the Philistines fell down by the way to Shaaraim, even unto Gath, and unto Ekron. **53** And the children of Israel returned from chasing after the Philistines, and they spoiled their tents. **54** And David took the head of the Philistine, and brought it to Jerusalem; but he put his armour in his tent. **55** And when Saul saw David go forth against the Philistine, he said unto Abner, the captain of the host, Abner, "whose son is this youth? And Abner said, As thy soul liveth, O king, I can-

*r* Chap. 21. 9; see Judges 3. 31; 15. 15; 2 Sam. 23. 21.—*s* Heb. 11. 34.—*t* Josh. 15. 38.—*u* See chap. 16. 21, 22.

passing by Jerusalem on his return from the battle, might have thought to awe the Jebusite stronghold by placing Goliath's ghastly head in sight of them. (2.) Another difficulty is that David could have had no tent in the camp. The tent his brothers occupied, however, may not improperly have been spoken of as his tent. But *his tent*, in which he put the giant's armour, more probably refers to David's home in Beth-lehem, not to an army tent. That this is a common meaning of the word *tent* a reference to chap. iv, 10; xiii, 2; Josh. xxii, 7, and 1 Kings xii, 16, will abundantly show. This verse simply informs the reader what became of Goliath's head and armour; but we are not necessarily to suppose that the facts recorded took place immediately after the battle, or even that David did these things in his own person. Various displays may have been made of the head before it was brought to Jerusalem, and also of the armour before it was taken to David's home. From chap. xxi, 9, we learn that at a later day Goliath's sword was kept at Nob in care of the priests.

**55. Whose son is this youth**—But did not Saul remember David, whose services on the harp had been of so much advantage to him in his madness? Chap. xvi, 20–23. Perhaps not,

not tell. **56** And the king said, Inquire thou whose son the stripling is. **57** And as David returned from the slaughter of the Philistine, Abner took him, and brought him before Saul with the head of the Philistine in his hand. **58** And Saul said to him, Whose son art thou, thou young man? And David answered, "I am the son of thy servant Jesse the Beth-lehemite.

## CHAPTER XVIII.

**AND** it came to pass, when he had

*v* Verse 54.—*w* Verse 12.—*a* Gen. 44. 30.—*b* Chap. 19. 2; 20. 17; 2 Sam. 1. 26; Deut.

for probably some time had elapsed since the youth had left his court, and Saul's memory may have suffered somewhat from his disease. A man of Saul's varying moods would be quite likely to forget even a benefactor; or if he remembered David's musical service, he may have forgotten his looks, so as not to have recognised him on this occasion. But now, having promised to reward not only him who slew Goliath, but his father also, (verse 25,) and seeing the youth go forth against the giant confident of victory, he begins to inquire after the tribe and position of his father's house.

## CHAPTER XVIII.

FRIENDSHIP OF DAVID AND JONATHAN,  
1-4.

**1. When he had made an end of speaking unto Saul**—That is, after the interview mentioned in the last verse of the preceding chapter, in which David informed Saul of his father. All their conversation on that occasion is not recorded, for it is manifest that that verse contains but a very small part of it. Enough is given, however, to acquaint us with the main subject of their conversation. **The soul of Jonathan was knit with the soul of David**—An instance of more touching and tender friendship is not recorded on the page of history, nor even in works of fiction. Here was a fellowship of souls. On the part of Jonathan it was the more remarkable, inasmuch as David became his rival for the throne. But even after this became well known Jonathan's love

made an end of speaking unto Saul; that "the soul of Jonathan was knit with the soul of David," and Jonathan loved him as his own soul. **2** And Saul took him that day, "and would let him go no more home to his father's house. **3** Then Jonathan and David made a covenant, because he loved him as his own soul. **4** And Jonathan "stripped himself of the robe that was upon him, and gave it to David, and his garments, even to his sword, and to his bow, and to his girdle.

13. 6.—*c* Chapter 17. 15.—*d* Genesis 41. 42; Esther 6. 8, 9.

never cooled, but rather warmed with intenser devotion to his friend, and he often gave aid and comfort to the sor of Jesse in the time of his persecution. Chap. xxiii, 17. Well might the psalmist king say, in his requiem over the fallen hero, (2 Sam. i, 26,) "Thy love to me was wonderful, passing the love of women."

On this subject Ewald's note is fine. "Nothing can establish a true bond between two friends and produce pure friendship except a loftier necessity which stands above them both, and which both alike burn to satisfy with ever-increasing fulness—the necessity, namely, of finding and loving in others, if possible in a yet higher degree, the purely divine power already felt within, and thus mutually living under its influence. It is in an age which is possessed, above all things, by a pure aspiration to obtain noble gifts, that the blessing of such a genuine friendship will also most readily be realized; and so the period in Israel's history with which we are now concerned furnishes, among so many other glorious spectacles, that of a friendship which shines for all ages an eternal type."

**2. Saul... would let him go no more home**—That is, to remain there in his former occupation. He was doubtless permitted to go and visit his father whenever he desired, but not to resume his charge of the sheep as before. Chap. xvii, 15.

**4. His garments**—Rather, *his armour*, as the word *קַיִשׁ* is rendered, chap. xvii, 39. This, we are immediately told, consisted of his sword, bow, and girdle.

**5** And David went out whithersoever Saul sent him, and <sup>1</sup>behaved himself wisely: and Saul set him over the men of war, and he was accepted in the sight of all the people, and also in the sight of Saul's servants. **6** And it came to pass as they came, when David was returned from the slaughter of the <sup>2</sup>Philistine, that <sup>3</sup>the women came out of all cities of Israel, singing and dancing, to meet king Saul, with tabrets, with joy, and with <sup>4</sup>instruments of music. **7** And the

<sup>1</sup> Or, prospered. verses 14, 15, 30. — <sup>2</sup> Or, Philistines. — <sup>3</sup> Exod. 15, 20; Judges 11, 34. — <sup>4</sup> Heb. three-stringed instruments.

The giving of this robe and armour was the seal of the covenant between them.

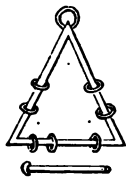
#### DAVID'S HONOURS AND SAUL'S JEALOUSY, 5-9.

After the battle, and after the covenant between Jonathan and David, the latter was advanced to great honour in the kingdom. The heart of the king, as well as that of the army, turned towards the heroic youth with one common feeling of gratitude and love. But the glories of this youthful warrior are soon to be clouded.

**5. Saul set him over the men of war**—We have no data to determine the exact chronology of the events recorded in this verse. But his appointment over the men of war, and his going out in obedience to Saul's orders, are probably identical with what is related in verses 13 and 14. The writer seems to have inserted them here to show the immediate results of David's victory and Jonathan's friendship.

**6. All cities of Israel**—All those near which the returning army passed. **Singing and dancing**—According to the custom of the Hebrew women after great victories. Compare Exod. xv, 20; Judg. xi, 34. **Instruments of music**

—Margin, *three-stringed instruments*. מִשְׁכָּנִים, as the name of a musical instrument, occurs here only, and signifies, literally, *threes*. The triangle is probably intended, of which we subjoin an engraving.



**7. Saul hath slain his thousands,**

women <sup>1</sup>answered *one another* as they played, and said, <sup>2</sup>Saul hath slain his thousands, and David his ten thousands. **8** And Saul was very wroth, and the saying <sup>3</sup>displeased him; and he said, They have ascribed unto David ten thousands, and to me they have ascribed *but* thousands: and *what* can he have more but <sup>4</sup>the kingdom? **9** And Saul eyed David from that day and forward.

**10** And it came to pass on the morrow, that <sup>5</sup>the evil spirit from God came

<sup>1</sup> Exodus 15, 21. — <sup>2</sup> Chap. 21, 11; 29, 5. — <sup>3</sup> Heb. was evil in his eyes. — <sup>4</sup> Eccles. 4, 4. — <sup>5</sup> Chap. 15, 28. — <sup>6</sup> Chap. 16, 14.

**and David his ten thousands**—A neat poetic parallelism. The enthusiastic throng intimate, in an exultant hour, that David's triumph is of more importance than all Saul's victories.

**8. Saul was very wroth**—His passionate nature could not brook such insinuations without yielding to foul thoughts and deepest envy. **What can he have more but the kingdom**—Immediately there flashes upon him the suspicion that this son of Jesse is that neighbour of whom Samuel had spoken, (chapter xv, 28,) who was destined to supersede him on the throne.

**9. Eyed David from that day**—Watched all his movements with suspicion and jealousy. And this fact may well account for the king's failure to reward David and his father's house according to all that he had promised the one who would succeed in slaying the insolent Goliath. Chap. xvii, 25.

#### SAUL'S FIRST ATTEMPTS UPON THE LIFE OF DAVID, 10-30.

Here commences the record of those fell persecutions by which, during the rest of Saul's lifetime, the conqueror of Goliath was continually harassed. It forms a suggestive period of Israelitish history, and presents in striking contrast the development of Saul's heart-wickedness on the one hand, and of David's many excellences on the other. These persecutions, however, were a most useful discipline for the psalmist king.

**10. The evil spirit from God came upon Saul**—He relapsed into that state of demoniac possessive a de-

upon Saul, <sup>1</sup>and he prophesied in the midst of the house: and David played with his hand, as at other times: <sup>m</sup>and *there was* a javelin in Saul's hand.

**11** And Saul <sup>n</sup>cast the javelin; for he said, I will smite David even to the wall *with it*. And David avoided out of his presence twice. **12** And Saul was <sup>o</sup>afraid of David, because <sup>p</sup>the Lord was with him, and was <sup>q</sup>departed from Saul. **13** Therefore Saul removed him from him, and made him his captain over a thousand; and <sup>r</sup>he went out and

<sup>l</sup> Chap. 19, 24; <sup>1</sup> Kings 18, 29; Acts 16, 16.—<sup>m</sup> Chap. 19, 9.—<sup>n</sup> Chap. 19, 10; 20, 33; Prov. 27, 4.—<sup>o</sup> Verses 15, 29.—<sup>p</sup> Chap. 16, 13, 18.—<sup>q</sup> Chap. 16, 14; 28, 15.—<sup>r</sup> Verse 16; Num. 27, 17; 2 Sam. 5, 2.

scribed chap. xvi, 14. **He prophesied in the midst of the house**—The verb is here used in the Hithpael—the reflective voice—*he acted the prophet*. “In this way it is spoken of the seventy elders, and of Eldad and Medad in the camp, (Numbers xi, 25–27;) of the music and dancing of the sons of the prophets, (chap. x, 5;) of Saul's participation in their exercises, (chap. x, 6, 10, 13;) of the excited cries and violent contortions of the prophets of Baal, (1 Kings xviii, 29;) of the prophets who prophesied lies at Jerusalem, (Jer. xiv, 14;) and of those at Samaria who professed to be inspired by Baal. Jer. xxiii, 13. So, too, it is the word employed by Ahab, who probably regarded with something like contempt the wish of Jehoshaphat to know Jehovah's will. 1 Kings xxii, 8, 18. Occasionally, therefore, it is used in a good sense, though scarcely ever of real prophecy.”—*R. P. Smith's Bampton Lecture*, 1869.

Saul first became signalized among his neighbours by ecstatic prophesying, (chap. x, 11,) but that former ecstasy was inspired by the holy Spirit of God. Now that Spirit has left him, and a foul demon occupies his place, and, accordingly, instead of hallowed ecstasy, his religious exercises resemble the frantic ravings of a madman. He utters impassioned cries, and, perhaps, falls prostrate on the floor and breathes forth his inner ravings like one holding communion with an unseen world. “The prophets, when under the power of inspiration, appear to have been greatly agitated, and to have exhibited with-

came in before the people. **14** And David <sup>s</sup>behaved himself wisely in all his ways; and <sup>t</sup>the Lord *was* with him.

**15** Wherefore when Saul saw that he behaved himself very wisely, he was afraid of him. **16** But <sup>u</sup>all Israel and Judah loved David, because he went out and came in before them. **17** And Saul said to David, Behold my elder daughter Merab, <sup>v</sup>her will I give thee to wife: only be thou <sup>w</sup>valiant for me, and fight <sup>x</sup>the Lord's battles. For Saul said, “Let not mine hand be upon him, but let the

<sup>5</sup> Or, *prospered*, verse 5.—<sup>s</sup> Gen. 39, 2, 3, 23; Josh. 6, 27.—<sup>t</sup> Verse 5.—<sup>u</sup> Chap. 17, 25.—<sup>v</sup> Heb. *a son of valour*.—<sup>w</sup> Num. 32, 20, 27, 29; chap. 25, 28.—<sup>x</sup> Verses 21, 25; 2 Sam. 12, 9.

ings and spasmodic affections of the body like delirious persons. Hence the true prophet in 2 Kings ix, 11, is called in scorn *insane*, a madman; and in Jer. xxix, 26 the two ideas are conjoined, *raving and prophesying*, spoken of a pretended prophet. For a like reason the Greeks and Latins apply words connected with raving, *μῦντις*, *furor*, to the frenzied manner of soothsayers, poetic oracles.” etc.—*Gesenius*. **David played . . . as at other times**—Seeking, as before, (chap. xvi, 16,) to quell the mental ravings of the king, and drive out the demon that possessed him.

**11. I will smite David even to the wall**—Literally, *I will smite in David and in the wall*; that is, nail him to the wall by the javelin. Twice he made the deadly attempt, and twice the agile youth avoided the blow. Compare chap. xix, 10.

**12. Saul was afraid of David**—He became sensible that he was fighting against God, and this feeling bred terror, and continued to disturb him more and more. Compare verses 15 and 29.

**13. Made him his captain over a thousand**—This is probably the same appointment as that referred to in verse 5. David was not made the leading officer over all the host, for this position Abner held, (chap. xvii, 55,) but he was made captain of a regiment.

**17. My elder daughter**—Perceiving the growing popularity and influence of David, Saul feels under obligation to redeem his promise, recorded chap. xvii, 25. **Let not mine hand be upon him**—In his calmer moods,

hand of the Philistines be upon him. **18** And David said unto Saul, *"Who am I? and what is my life, or my father's family in Israel, that I should be son in law to the king?"* **19** But it came to pass at the time when Merab Saul's daughter should have been given to David, that she was given unto Adriel the Meholathite to wife. **20** And Michal Saul's daughter loved David: and they told Saul, and the thing pleased him. **21** And Saul said, I will give him her, that she may be a snare to him, and that the hand of the Philistines may be against him. Wherefore Saul said to David, Thou shalt this day be my son in law in the one of the twain. **22** And Saul commanded his servants, saying, Commune with David secretly, and say, Behold, the king hath delight in thee, and all his servants love thee: now

<sup>a</sup> See verse 23; chap. 9. 21; 2 Sam. 7. 18.—  
<sup>v</sup> 2 Sam. 21. 8.—<sup>s</sup> Judges 7. 22.—<sup>a</sup> Verse 28.  
<sup>7</sup> Heb. *was right in his eyes.*—<sup>b</sup> Exod. 10. 7.—<sup>c</sup> Verse 17.—<sup>d</sup> See verse 26.

when his madness had departed, he shrunk from openly attempting to destroy David; but, disguising his fell purpose under fair pretensions, he darkly plotted against his life.

**18. David said unto Saul**—David's words in this verse not only show his unsuspecting innocence and humility of soul, but seem also to indicate that he himself understood Saul's offer of his daughter to be in accordance with his promise.

**19. She was given unto Adriel**—In shameful violation of the king's word. **The Meholathite**—Perhaps a native of Abel-Meholah, the home of Elisha, (1 Kings xix, 16,) and whither Gideon's three hundred men pursued the Midianites. Judges vii, 22. The sons of this marriage were subsequently put to death by the Gibeonites. 2 Sam. xxi, 8.

**20. Michal...loved David**—Keil infers from this that perhaps one reason why Saul broke his promise was that Merab did not love David. **The thing pleased him**—For, as the next verse shows, he hoped to make it a snare for David's life.

**21. In the one of the twain**—Better, *In the second shalt thou become my son in law this day.* That is, by means of the second daughter; or, *thou shalt become doubly my son in law*, for the first

therefore be the king's son in law. **23** And Saul's servants spake those words in the ears of David. And David said, Seemeth it to you a light thing to be a king's son in law, seeing that I am a poor man, and lightly esteemed? **24** And the servants of Saul told him, saying, On this manner spake David. **25** And Saul said, Thus shall ye say to David, The king desireth not any dowry, but a hundred foreskins of the Philistines, to be avenged of the king's enemies. But Saul thought to make David fall by the hand of the Philistines. **26** And when his servants told David these words, it pleased David well to be the king's son in law: and the days were not expired. **27** Wherefore David arose and went, he and his men, and slew of the Philistines two hundred men; and David brought their fore-

<sup>a</sup> Psa. 119. 141.—<sup>8</sup> Heb. *According to these words.*—<sup>f</sup> Gen. 34. 12; Exod. 22. 17.—<sup>o</sup> Chap. 14. 24.—<sup>h</sup> Verse 17.—<sup>i</sup> See verse 31.—<sup>9</sup> Heb. *fulfilled.*—<sup>k</sup> Verse 13.—<sup>l</sup> 2 Sam. 3. 14.

(Merab) was lawfully thine, and now the second shall certainly be given thee. **This day**—Some day designated for the marriage.

**22. Commune with David secretly**—This intrigue of Saul by means of his servants indicates that David had paid little or no attention to the words of the king himself. He had maintained a most prudent reticence.

**23. I am a poor man**—And therefore unable to pay such a dowry as the daughter of the king deserves. In the East the dowry paid to the father of a bride was proportioned to her rank.

**25. A hundred foreskins**—This demand savours of the spirit and manners of that age, and reminds one of the American Indians preserving as trophies the scalps of their victims.

**26. The days were not expired**—The days required by custom or designated by the king (verse 21) for the consummation of the marriage.

**27. Two hundred men**—Twice the number required. "This was another great exploit—far more arduous: although less renowned, than the overthrow of Goliath. It must have attracted great attention at the time, and have conducted in no small degree to the public estimation in which David was held."—*Kitto*.

skins, and they gave them in full tale to the king, that he might be the king's son in law. And Saul gave him Michal his daughter to wife. **28** And Saul saw and <sup>m</sup>knew that the Lord *was* with David, and *that* Michal, Saul's daughter, loved him. **29** And Saul was yet the more afraid of David; and Saul became David's enemy continually. **30** Then the princes of the Philistines <sup>a</sup>went forth: and it came to pass, after they went forth, *that* David <sup>b</sup>behaved himself more wisely than all the servants of Saul; so that his name was much <sup>10</sup>set by.

## CHAPTER XIX.

**A**ND Saul spake to Jonathan his son, and to all his servants, that they should kill David. **2** But Jonathan, Saul's son, <sup>a</sup>delighted much in David: and Jonathan told David, saying, Saul my father seeketh to kill thee: now therefore, I pray thee, take heed to thyself until the morning, and abide in a secret *place*, and hide thyself: **3** And

*m* James 2. 19. — *n* 2 Sam. 11. 1. — *o* Verse 5. — <sup>10</sup> Hebrew, *precious*, chap. 28. 21; 2 Kings 1. 13; Psa. 116. 15. — *a* Chap. 18. 1. — <sup>b</sup> Prov. 31. 8, 9. — *c* Gen. 42. 22; Psa. 85. 12; 109. 5; Prov. 17. 13; Jer. 18. 20.

**29. Saul became David's enemy continually**—By the circumstances here recorded the king's enmity became deep and settled, and the historian has thus prepared the way for his readers to understand the further history of Saul's conduct towards David.

**30. The Philistines went forth**—To battle against the armies of Israel. **David behaved himself more wisely than all the servants of Saul**—Showed more prudence, skill, and prowess in all the tactics of war. **Much set by**—Exceedingly honoured.

## CHAPTER XIX.

JONATHAN'S INTERCESSION FOR DAVID,  
1-7.

Finding that the snares laid for David's life all fail, Saul no longer conceals his dark designs. He instructs his servants, and, fortunately for David, he also instructs Jonathan, to destroy him—Jonathan, his covenant friend, who loved David as his own soul, and who would therefore take speedy measures to frustrate the cruel intentions of his father. In his intercession for David

I will go out and stand beside my father in the field where thou *art*, and I will commune with my father of thee; and what I see, that I will tell thee. **4** And Jonathan <sup>b</sup>spake good of David unto Saul his father, and said unto him, Let not the king <sup>c</sup>sin against his servant, against David; because he hath not sinned against thee, and because his works *have been* to thee-ward very good: **5** For he did put his <sup>d</sup>life in his hand, and <sup>e</sup>slew the Philistine, and <sup>f</sup>the Lord wrought a great salvation for all Israel: thou sawest *it*, and didst rejoice: <sup>g</sup>wherefore then wilt thou <sup>h</sup>sin against innocent blood, to slay David without a cause? **6** And Saul hearkened unto the voice of Jonathan: and Saul sware, *As* the Lord liveth, he shall not be slain. **7** And Jonathan called David, and Jonathan showed him all those things. And Jonathan brought David to Saul, and he was in his presence, <sup>i</sup>as <sup>j</sup>in times past.

**8** And there was war again: and David went out, and fought with the

*d* Judges 9. 17; 12. 3; chapter 28. 21; Psalm 119. 109. — *e* Chapter 17. 49, 50. — *f* 1 Samuel 11. 3; 1 Chronicles 11. 4. — *g* Chapter 20. 32. — *h* Matthew 27. 4. — *i* Chapter 16. 21; 18. 2, 13. — *j* Hebrew, *yesterday third day*.

we have a most touching exhibition of Jonathan's tender, true, and loving heart. By judicious appeals and earnest persuasion he effects a reconciliation, and David walks again in the royal presence as before. It is probable that upon this reconciliation Saul immediately countermanded the orders he had previously given his servants to kill David.

**2. Take heed to thyself until the morning**—For in the darkness of the night Saul's servants would be most likely to execute their master's bloody purpose.

**3. In the field where thou art**—So that, in case Saul persisted in his fell purpose, David might see and hear for himself, and act accordingly; and also that Jonathan might have easier opportunity of communicating to him the result of his intercession.

SAUL'S RENEWED ATTEMPTS UPON THE  
LIFE OF DAVID, 8-17.

**8. There was war again**—Saul's reconciliation soon came to an end. New wars crowned David with fresh laurels, and the king's envious soul be-



Philistines, and slew them with a great slaughter; and they fled from <sup>2</sup>him. **9** And <sup>3</sup>the evil spirit from the Lord was upon Saul, as he sat in his house with his javelin in his hand: and David played with <sup>4</sup>his hand. **10** And Saul sought to smite David even to the wall with the javelin; but he <sup>5</sup>slipped away out of Saul's presence, and he smote the javelin into the wall: and David fled, and escaped that night. **11** <sup>6</sup>Saul also sent messengers unto David's house, to watch him, and to slay him in the morning: and Michal, David's wife, told him, saying, If thou save not thy life to night, to morrow thou shalt be slain. **12** So Michal <sup>7</sup>let David down through a window: and he went, and fled, and escaped. **13** And Michal took an <sup>8</sup>image, and laid <sup>9</sup>it in the bed, and put a pillow

<sup>2</sup> Heb. *his face*.—<sup>3</sup> Chap. 16. 14; 18. 10, 11.  
<sup>4</sup>—<sup>5</sup> Isa. 54. 17; Luke 4. 30; John 8. 59; 10. 39;  
<sup>6</sup> Cor. 11. 33.

came a prey again of deep melancholy and wicked thoughts. Thus invited, the evil spirit again entered, and fired his darkest passions into sevenfold rage.

**10. David fled, and escaped that night**—Fled from the king's presence and first sought refuge in his own house. To some it seems strange that David did not effect his escape altogether from Saul after his former attempt to smite him. Chap. xviii. 11. But doubtless David regarded Saul's former attack as an outburst of his madness, not flowing from any deep-seated design against his life. But now, after the startling revelations which Jonathan had made to him of Saul's deadly purpose, he feels that his life is no longer safe in the royal court.

**11. Sent messengers unto David's house**—Whither he had fled immediately after his escape from the king's presence. See David's psalm on this occasion. Psal. lix. **To slay him in the morning**—When he came forth, unsuspecting of assault and unprepared to defend himself.

**13. An image**—Margin, *teraphim*. See on Gen. xxxi. 17, and Josh. xxiv. 14. These images were common in Israel, as we may readily infer from the fact that they were tolerated in the house of the pious David. They were a relic of the old Aramaic idolatry. They seem to have been of human form, and were,

of goats' <sup>10</sup>hair for his bolster, and covered <sup>11</sup>it with a cloth. **14** And when Saul sent messengers to take David, she said, He <sup>12</sup>is sick. **15** And Saul sent the messengers <sup>13</sup>again to see David, saying, Bring him up to me in the bed, that I may slay him. **16** And when the messengers were come in, behold, <sup>14</sup>there was an image in the bed, with a pillow of goats' <sup>15</sup>hair for his bolster. **17** And Saul said unto Michal, Why hast thou deceived me so, and sent away mine enemy, that he is escaped? And Michal answered Saul, He said unto me, Let me go; <sup>16</sup>why should I kill thee?

**18** So David fled, and escaped, and came to Samuel to Ramah, and told him all that Saul had done to him. And he and Samuel went and dwelt in Naioth. **19** And it was told Saul, saying,

<sup>10</sup> Psa. 59. title.—<sup>11</sup> So Josh. 2. 15; Acts 9. 24, 25.—<sup>12</sup> Heb. *teraphim*, Gen. 31. 19; Judges 17. 5.—<sup>13</sup> 2 Sam. 2. 22.

perhaps, images of deceased ancestors. **A pillow of goats' hair for his bolster**—A better rendering of the Hebrew is, *a texture of goats' hair at its head*, so as to make it resemble the head of a sleeping person with disheveled hair. Or the meaning may be, that she covered the face with a fly net woven of goats' hair, a custom common in hot countries. Josephus, following the Septuagint, supposes that Michal placed under the bed cover a *goat's liver*, yet quivering with life, to make the messengers believe that a living person was breathing there. But how long could she expect the liver of a slain goat to palpitate?

**17. Why should I kill thee**—This was falsehood on the part of Michal, by which she sought to deceive her father. Whatever apology be made for it, it is still a lie. There may be times when we should withhold the truth, but never when we should utter falsehood.

DAVID'S FLIGHT TO RAMAH, AND SAUL'S PURSUIT, 18-24.

**18. David fled ... to Samuel**—Whither could he better go for help and counsel at a time like this? Surely, he thinks, Samuel will defend me against Saul. **He and Samuel went and dwelt in Naioth**—Naioth is not to be regarded as a proper name. The word means *habitations, dwelling places*, and refers to the dwellings of the band

Behold, David *is* at Naioth in Ramah. **20** And <sup>p</sup>Saul sent messengers to take David: 'and when they saw the company of the prophets prophesying, and Samuel standing *as* appointed over them, the Spirit of God was upon the messengers of Saul, and they also <sup>r</sup>prophesied. **21** And when it was told Saul, he sent other messengers, and they prophesied likewise. And Saul sent messengers again the third time, and they prophesied also. **22** Then went he also to Ramah, and came to a great well that

<sup>p</sup> See John 7. 32, 45, &c. — <sup>q</sup> Chapter 10. 5, 6; 1 Corinthians 14. 3, 24, 25. — <sup>r</sup> Numbers 11. 25; Joel 2. 28.

of prophets over whom Samuel presided. The plural is used because of the number of cells or huts in this locality. The Targum renders the word *house of instruction*, and Ewald defines it as *studium*, or *school*. Here these disciples of Samuel dwelt, and disciplined themselves in holy exercises. How long David enjoyed this society of Samuel and these prophets before Saul ascertained whether he had fled we cannot determine, but probably not long.

**20. The company of the prophets prophesying**—See note on chap. x, 5. **Samuel standing as appointed over them**—Or, *standing chief over them*. He was their president and leader. The scene presented by the aged prophet standing as leader in the assembly of prophets, and all together engaged in worship according to some impressive ceremonial, was in itself awe-inspiring. **When they saw** the impressive spectacle, and heard the thrilling strains of song and prayer, the messengers were overwhelmed with awe, forgot their mission, and fell helpless before the power of prophecy.

**21. Sent... the third time**—Here we have a striking exhibition of Saul's blind infatuation. In the face of signal displays of Divine power frustrating the mission of his messengers, he seems to take no warning, but still insists on invading the sanctity of the prophetic schools to capture David. His action reminds one of Ahaziah, who dispatched successive bands of men to take Elijah, and took no warning, though fire from heaven twice consumed his messengers. 2 Kings i, 1-12.

*is* in Sechu: and he asked and said, Where *are* Samuel and David? And *one* said, Behold, *they be* at Naioth in Ramah. **23** And he went thither to Naioth in Ramah: and 'the Spirit of God was upon him also, and he went on, and prophesied, until he came to Naioth in Ramah. **24** 'And he stripped off his clothes also, and prophesied before Samuel in like manner, and 'lay down 'naked all that day and all that night. Wherefore they say, 'Is Saul also among the prophets?

<sup>s</sup> Chapter 10. 10. — <sup>t</sup> Isaiah 20. 2. — <sup>u</sup> Hebrew, *fell*: Numbers 24. 4. — <sup>v</sup> Micah 1. 8; see 2 Samuel 6. 14, 20. — <sup>w</sup> Chapter 10. 11.

**22. Well**—Or *pit*, as the word is rendered chap. xiii, 6. In the Hebrew it is made emphatic by the article, *to the great pit*, referring to some well-known spot. **Sechu**—This word means *a watching place*; and since it is made definite by the article, it is better to translate it as a common noun, thus: *He came to the great pit which is by the watching place*. Some spot near Ramah is meant; probably a height where watchmen were stationed, in the vicinity of a notable cistern or pit, which has since been filled up. **He asked**—Probably of some watchman there.

**23. The Spirit of God was upon him also**—The same Spirit that had so powerfully affected the three successive bands of messengers that had been sent before him. **He went on, and prophesied**—The Spirit seized him sooner than it did his messengers, and also wrought upon him more powerfully. Before he reached the dwellings of the prophets he became the helpless subject of a mighty spiritual power, and was driven on, in spite of himself, to speak and do what he intended not.

**24. He stripped off his clothes**—That is, his outer raiment; his royal and military vesture. **Lay down naked**—Not in a state of utter nudity, but divested of his upper garments, as just stated. Compare Isa. xx, 2; Micah i, 8; Mark xiv, 52; John xxi, 7. **All that day and all that night**—From ten to twenty hours. And when he recovered again his consciousness and self-possession he probably returned to his home at once, without any further attempt at that time to capture David. God thus

indicated to Saul that in seeking to destroy David he was fighting against the divine Power—a Power that holds the hearts of all men in subjection, and can turn them whithersoever he will. This remarkable scene served to revive the proverb that originated with a former somewhat similar occasion (chap. x, 12) —**Is Saul also among the prophets?**

The profoundly mysterious and interesting subject of the prophesying and catalepsy of Saul and his messengers is one of the physical and psychological problems connected with religion that has been the subject of extensive speculation. We regard this whole matter of Saul's prophesying and falling down under the power of the Spirit as an ancient instance of substantially the same marvellous religious phenomena which the Christian Church has so often witnessed in modern times. The extensive religious revivals in the Western States fifty years ago were attended with hundreds of such phenomena, commonly called "the jerks." In the great awakening in New England in Edwards's day similar scenes were of frequent occurrence, and also in the British Isles during the ministry of Wesley, and earlier. They seem to have been always more or less common during seasons of great religious excitement, and to have a peculiar affinity for a certain class of minds. Persons, like Saul, of quick and powerful emotions, and given to sudden changes of feeling, have been the readiest subjects of this mysterious affection. But not only have pious and devoted persons, but wicked and blasphemous opposers of the truth, been seized upon by this strange influence. Some, in attempting to disturb religious meetings, and while yet, like Saul, beyond the bounds of the company of worshippers, and hastening on to intended acts of violence, have been seized by an unseen power, and held in subjection to it in spite of all their efforts to regain their self control. Some have remained in such a state for nearly a week at a time. See facts and references in Stevens' History of Methodism, vol. ii, p. 425.

What the precise nature of Saul's

prophesying on this occasion was we are not informed. In one of the seasons of his madness, and when possessed by a demon, his prophesying seems to have been prompted by the evil spirit, and to have consisted of impassioned cries and incoherent ravings. See chapter xviii, 10, and note. But when he first prophesied at Gibeah, (chapter x, 10,) his exercises, like those of the band of prophets whom he met, seem to have been the ecstatic utterance of prayer and praise to God. So, on this occasion, it was the Spirit of God that made him prophesy; and it is therefore probable that his utterances now, like the later ones recorded chap. xxiv, 17-20, and xxvi, 21, 25, were confessions of his own sins, and predictions of David's ultimate triumph.

We have space only to suggest that an explanation of these mysterious phenomena may be brought out in the scientific elaboration of the following propositions: All human beings have a common sympathetic nature, universally pervaded by a subtle and mysterious medium of influence, by means of which mind is brought in *rappor*t with mind and heart with heart. This influence becomes intensely active in an assembly of persons where all hearts and minds are highly electrified by one common all-absorbing thought and state of feeling, and in such cases it may pass beyond the bounds of the assembly and make itself powerfully felt at a distance. It furnishes the psychical basis on which demoniacal possessions are possible, and also by which the Holy Spirit holds personal intercourse with man. By it these different external agencies will affect the different persons in different degrees of power, according to their different organism and temperament. But any attempt at a scientific explanation, which assumes all the phenomena to be merely physical, and not also psychical, must fail, as well as any explanation that denies that the Spirit of God may have often been exerted in their production; for this mysterious medium of influence seems to be the psychological basis both of divine and demoniacal possession.

## CHAPTER XX.

**A**ND David fled from Naioth in Ramah, and came and said before Jonathan, *'What have I done? what is mine iniquity? and what is my sin before thy father, that he seeketh my life?'* **2** And he said unto him, God forbid; thou shalt not die: behold, my father will do nothing either great or small, but that he will *'show it me: and why should my father hide this thing from me? it is not so.'* **3** And David sware moreover, and said, Thy father certainly knoweth that I have found grace in thine eyes; and he saith, Let not Jonathan know this, lest he be grieved: but truly, *as the Lord liveth, and as thy soul liveth, 'there is but a step between me and death.'* **4** Then said Jonathan unto David, *'Whatsoever thy soul desireth, I will even do it for thee.'* **5** And David said unto Jonathan, Behold, to-morrow is the new moon, and I should not fail to sit with the king at meat: but

let me go, that I may *'hide myself in the field unto the third day at even.'* **6** If thy father at all miss me, then say, David earnestly asked leave of me that he might run *'to Beth-lehem his city: for there is a yearly sacrifice there for all the family.'* **7** If he say thus, *It is well; thy servant shall have peace: but if he be very wroth, then be sure that evil is determined by him.'* **8** Therefore thou shalt deal kindly with thy servant; for *'thou hast brought thy servant into a covenant of the Lord with thee: notwithstanding, 'if there be in me iniquity, slay me thyself; for why shouldest thou bring me to thy father?'* **9** And Jonathan said, Far be it from thee: for if I knew certainly that evil were determined by my father to come upon thee, then would not I tell it thee? **10** Then said David to Jonathan, Who shall tell me? or what if thy father answer thee roughly? **11** And Jonathan said unto David, Come and let us go out

*a* Psa. 7. 35; 2 Cor. 1. 12; 1 John 3. 21.—*1* Heb. *uncover mine ear*, verse 12; chap. 9. 15.—*b* Deut. 28. 66; Psa. 116. 3; 2 Cor. 1. 9, 10.—*2* Or, *Say what is thy mind, and I will do, &c.*—*3* Hebrew, *speakeeth, or, thinketh.*—*c* Num. 10. 10; 28. 11.

*d* Chap. 19. 2.—*e* Chap. 16. 4.—*4* Or, *feast*, chap. 9. 12.—*f* See Deuteronomy 1. 23; 2 Samuel 17. 4.—*g* Chap. 25. 17; Esther 7. 7.—*h* Joshua 2. 14.—*i* Verse 16; chap. 18. 3; 23. 18.—*k* 2 Samuel 14. 32.—*l* Genesis 42. 7, 30; 1 Kings 12. 13; Proverbs 18. 23.

## CHAPTER XX.

## JONATHAN'S LAST INTERCESSION FOR DAVID, 1-42.

**1. David fled**—Probably very soon after he witnessed the desperate attempts of Saul to seize upon him in the presence of Samuel and the prophets. Recently he fled to Samuel, (chapter xix. 18,) hoping, in the sanctity of the school of the prophets, to find a secure asylum; but now he sees that his persecutor will rashly invade even that sacred retreat. Next he flies to his tried friend, Jonathan. **What have I done**—David feels conscious of innocence. He probably did not yet understand that he was destined to supersede Saul, and that the king looked upon him as a rival. In all his intercourse with him at Ramah Samuel seems not to have deemed it prudent to acquaint the young psalmist with this matter of the kingdom.

**4. Whatsoever thy soul desireth**—Literally, *Whatever thy soul shall say even I will do for thee.* This conversation, up to verse 11, took place in the city, and perhaps in or near Saul's house.

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**5. To-morrow is the new moon**—The beginning of the Jewish month, when, according to the law, (Num. xxviii. 11,) all Israel was to offer a burnt offering unto the Lord. It was Saul's custom to hold also at this time a civil festival, at which his chief officers were expected to be present.

**6. David earnestly asked leave of me**—The whole narrative assumes that the king's son had authority to grant such leave of absence. **A yearly sacrifice there for all the family**—Jesse was now a very old man, (chap. xvii. 12,) and once a year, at the time of some set sacrifice for all the people, he had his children and his children's children come together at his own city for the purpose of a great sacrifice and festival. It is probable that such family gatherings were no uncommon things in Israel. At this time, however, David hid himself in a field near Gibeah, and did not meet with his father's family.

**11. Come and let us go out into the field**—There to fix upon some signal by which David might learn the result of Jonathan's interview with his father.

O. T.

into the field. And they went out both of them into the field. **12** And Jonathan said unto David, O LORD God of Israel, when I have <sup>sounded</sup> my father about to-morrow any time, *or* the third day, and, behold, *if there be good toward* David, and I then send not unto thee, and <sup>show</sup> it thee; **13** <sup>the</sup> LORD do so and much more to Jonathan: but if it please my father *to do* thee evil, then I will show it thee, and send thee away, that thou mayest go in peace: and <sup>the</sup> LORD be with thee, as he hath been with my father. **14** And thou shalt not only while yet I live show me the kindness of the LORD, that I die not: **15** But *also* <sup>thou</sup> shalt not cut off thy kindness from my house forever: no, not when the LORD hath cut off the enemies of David every one from the face of the earth. **16** So Jonathan <sup>made a covenant</sup> with the house of David, *saying*, <sup>Let the LORD even require it at the hand of David's enemies.</sup> **17** And Jonathan caused David to swear again, <sup>because he loved him:</sup> <sup>for he loved him as he loved his own soul.</sup> **18** Then Jonathan said to David, <sup>To-morrow</sup>

<sup>is</sup> the new moon: and thou shalt be missed, because thy seat will be <sup>empty</sup>. **19** And *when* thou hast stayed three days, *then* thou shalt go down <sup>quickly</sup>, and come to <sup>the place where</sup> thou didst hide thyself <sup>when the business was in hand</sup>, and shalt remain by the stone <sup>Ezel</sup>. **20** And I will shoot three arrows on the side *thereof*, as though I shot at a mark. **21** And, behold, I will send a lad, *saying*, Go, find out the arrows. If I expressly say unto the lad, Behold, the arrows *are* on this side of thee, take them; then come thou: for *there is* peace to thee, and <sup>no hurt</sup>; *as the LORD liveth*. **22** But if I say thus unto the young man, Behold, the arrows *are* beyond thee; go thy way: for the LORD hath sent thee away. **23** And *as touching* <sup>the matter which thou and I have spoken of</sup>, behold, the LORD *be* between thee and me forever. **24** So David hid himself in the field: and when the new moon was come, the king sat him down to eat meat. **25** And the king sat upon his seat, as at other times, *even upon a seat by the wall*: and Jonathan arose, and Abner sat by

5 Heb. *sounded*.—6 Heb. *uncover thine ear*, ver. 2.—*m* Ruth 1.17.—*n* Josh. 1.5; chap. 17.37; 1 Chron. 22.11,16.—*o* 2 Sam. 9.1,3,7; 21.7.—7 Heb. *cut*.—*p* Chap. 25.23; chap. 31.2; 2 Sam. 4.7; 21.8.—8 Or, *by his love towards him*.

*q* Chap. 18.1.—*r* Verse 5.—9 Heb. *missed*.—10 Or, *diligently*. Heb. *greatly*.—*s* Chap. 19.2.—11 Heb. *in the day of the business*.—12 Or, *that sheweth the way*.—13 Heb. *no any thing*.—1 Jer. 4.2.—*u* Verses 14, 15, 43.

**13. The LORD be with thee, as he hath been with my father**—These words, according to Keil, express the presentiment in Jonathan's soul that David was yet to occupy the throne of Israel. This conviction is expressed more clearly in the next two verses. We may believe that Saul had now fully made up his mind that David was his rival for the throne; that he was the man after God's own heart of whom Samuel had told him; and perhaps the fact that Samuel had anointed him at Beth-lehem was now generally known. Jonathan's entering, with all these facts before him, into a solemn covenant with the house of David, and with no animosity, no jealousy, no harsh words, but still loving his rival as his own soul, is the most marvellous instance of human friendship and tenderness with which the records of our race acquaint us.

**19. When the business was in hand**—Margin, *in the day of the business*. Referring to the circumstance of Jonathan's previous intercession for David,

(chap. xix. 3,) that *business or affair* so similar to the one now in hand. Ewald thinks the *affair* here referred to was Saul's personal attempt to take David's life, and that "a sort of filial reverence here induces Jonathan to call that day simply *the day of the affair*, to avoid having to give that affair its right name." **Ezel**—The name of a stone near Gibeah well known to Jonathan and David, but now unknown.

**22. Go thy way**—Jonathan thus provides for informing David of Saul's designs without making a personal interview between them necessary. Such an interview might be hazardous to both of them, and so they make provision for the worst. They had, however, the opportunity of another personal interview. Verses 41, 42.

**25. Upon a seat by the wall**—The uppermost seat opposite the entrance to the room, and consequently by the wall. See cut appended to note on Matt. xxiii. 6. **And Jonathan arose**—The meaning seems to be that Jona-

Saul's side, and David's place was empty. **26** Nevertheless Saul spake not any thing that day: for he thought, Something hath befallen him, he is not clean; surely he is not clean. **27** And it came to pass on the morrow, *which was the second day of the month*, that David's place was empty: and Saul said unto Jonathan his son, Wherefore cometh not the son of Jesse to meat, neither yesterday, nor to day? **28** And Jonathan answered Saul, David earnestly asked leave of me to go to Beth-lehem: **29** And he said, Let me go, I pray thee; for our family hath a sacrifice in the city; and my brother, he hath commanded me to be there: and now, if I have found favour in thine eyes, let me get away, I pray thee, and see my brethren. Therefore he cometh not unto the king's table. **30** Then Saul's anger was kindled against Jonathan, and he said unto him, Thou son of the perverse rebellious woman, do not I know that thou hast

*v Lev. 7. 21; 15. 5, &c.—w Verse 6.—x Job 5. 2; Prov. 14. 29; James 1. 19. 20.—14 Or, Thou perverse rebel. Heb. Son of perverse*

than was sitting by Saul's side, and when Abner entered he arose and gave to him the seat of honour he had himself been occupying.

**26. He is not clean.**—Some ceremonial defilement prevents his attendance at this festival of the new moon. Compare marginal references.

**27. Wherefore cometh not the son of Jesse to meat.**—But how could Saul reasonably expect him to come after all his dark attempts upon his life? Those attempts had all been made during real or apparent fits of madness, and he probably supposed that David would not regard them as the result of deep-seated intentions. He may also have learned that David had returned from Ramah, and had been seen with Jonathan since he had sent messengers and had gone himself to take him.

**30. Son of the perverse rebellious woman.**—On this passage the versions vary, but ours conveys the meaning of the Hebrew. "There are some traces of this form of abuse, in principle, among the least refined portion of our own population; but in the East no man is too high or too refined to be above it. Even a son will abuse his brother by casting contempt upon his mother, re-

chosen the son of Jesse to thine own confusion, and unto the confusion of thy mother's nakedness? **31** For as long as the son of Jesse liveth upon the ground, thou shalt not be established, nor thy kingdom. Wherefore now send and fetch him unto me, for he shall surely die. **32** And Jonathan answered Saul his father, and said unto him, Wherefore shall he be slain? what hath he done? **33** And Saul cast a javelin at him to smite him: whereby Jonathan knew that it was determined of his father to slay David. **34** So Jonathan arose from the table in fierce anger, and did eat no meat the second day of the month: for he was grieved for David, because his father had done him shame. **35** And it came to pass in the morning, that Jonathan went out into the field at the time appointed with David, and a little lad with him. **36** And he said unto his lad, Run, find out now the arrows which I shoot. And as the lad ran,

*rebellion.—15 Heb. is the son of death.—y Chap. 19. 5; Matt. 27. 23; Luke 23. 22.—z Chap. 18. 11.—m Verse 7.*

gardless of the fact that she is also his own mother, and whom, as such, he venerates and loves. The mother herself is not held to be affronted in such cases, but the son who hears such words applied to her is insulted, and is meant to be insulted, beyond expiation."—*Kitto*.

**31. As long as the son of Jesse liveth... thou shalt not be established.**—Here for the first time Saul reveals the reason of his wrath towards David; for though the probability of David's attaining the throne may have been at other times talked over between himself and Jonathan, and others, (see note on verse 13,) yet he seems to have been careful hitherto of expressing his own feelings on the subject.

**33. Jonathan knew that it was determined... to slay David.**—He had before been disposed to attribute his father's acts of violence towards David to his madness, and the demon that at times possessed him; but now he is convinced that David's suspicions of his bloody design (verse 3) are well founded, and he arose from the table in a wild tumult of passions, and the next morning, true to his word, he went forth to bid David fly.

he shot an arrow <sup>16</sup>beyond him. **37** And when the lad was come to the place of the arrow which Jonathan had shot, Jonathan cried, after the lad, and said, *Is not the arrow beyond thee?* **38** And Jonathan cried after the lad, Make speed, haste, stay not. And Jonathan's lad gathered up the arrows, and came to his master. **39** But the lad knew not any thing: only Jonathan and David knew the matter. **40** And Jonathan gave his <sup>17</sup>artillery unto <sup>18</sup>his lad, and said unto him, Go, carry *them* to the city. **41** And as soon as the lad was gone, David arose out of *a place* toward

the south, and fell on his face to the ground, and bowed himself three times: and they kissed one another, and wept one with another, until David exceeded. **42** And Jonathan said to David, "Go in peace, <sup>19</sup>forasmuch as we have sworn both of us in the name of the Lord, saying, The Lord be between me and thee, and between my seed and thy seed for ever. And he arose and departed: and Jonathan went into the city.

#### CHAPTER XXI.

**T**HEN came David to <sup>a</sup>Nob to <sup>b</sup>Ahimelech the priest: and Ahimelech

<sup>16</sup> Heb. *to pass over him*.—<sup>17</sup> Heb. *instruments*.—<sup>18</sup> Heb. *that was his*.—<sup>a</sup> Chap. 1. 17.—<sup>19</sup> Or, the Lord be witness of that *which*,

&c.; see verse 23.—<sup>a</sup> Neh. 11. 32; Isa. 10. 32.—<sup>b</sup> Chap. 14. 3, *Ahiath*. Called also *Abiathur*, Mark 2. 26.

**40. Artillery**—Rather, *his implements*. His bow, arrows, and quiver. Jonathan is not content to dismiss David with a mere signal; he covets one more interview and fond embrace.

**41. Out of a place toward the south**—Or, more literally, *from the side of the south*; that is, southwards from where Jonathan was standing. **Bowed himself three times**—In token of his profound gratitude, obligation, and reverence. **Until David exceeded**—Surpassed Jonathan in the exhibition of his grief, and wept aloud over his sorrows; for, says Bishop Patrick, he was now about to become an exile from his friends, his wife, his kindred, the people of God, and all the solemnities of sacred worship.

"This is the culminating point," says Ewald, "in the mutual relations of the two friends, who furnish the eternal type of the perfection of noble friendship. In these last hours before their separation all the threads of their destinies, henceforth so widely different, are secretly woven together. As Jonathan here foresees, David afterwards obtains the kingdom; and, in accordance with his oath to his friend, he afterwards, when a powerful king, always spares the descendants of Jonathan, in grateful remembrance of his dearly loved friend, and never loses an opportunity of showing them kindness. We may well believe that when, in after years, David drew to his court the posterity of Jonathan, he often told them himself of these last events be-

fore their separation, with which no one but the two friends could be acquainted, and that our present narrative springs ultimately from this source."

#### CHAPTER XXI.

##### DAVID'S FLIGHT TO NOB, 1-9.

Finding that his beloved Jonathan cannot defend him from the wrath of Saul, David next flies to the high priest, to inquire of the Lord concerning his way. The presence there of Doeg, the Edomite, was an obstacle in his way.

**1. Nob**—This city was situated a little to the north of Jerusalem, and apparently upon an eminence in sight of it, so that the Assyrian army, having advanced thus far, could "shake his hand against the mount of the daughter of Zion." Isa. x, 32. Many travellers have sought in vain to identify its sight. Dr. J. L. Porter made the discovery of Nob a special subject of research, and as the result of his investigation gives us the following: "Less than a mile south of Tuleil el-Ful, the site of Gibeah, is a conical rocky tell [hill] separated from the former by a valley. On the summit and sides of this tell are traces of a small but very ancient town—cisterns cut in the rock; large, hewn stones; portions of the rocky sides levelled and hewn away; and on the southeast the remains of a small tower. From the summit there is a wide view. Mount Zion is distinctly seen, though Moriah is

was "afraid at the meeting of David, and said unto him, Why *art* thou alone, and no man with thee? 2 And David said unto Ahimelech the priest, "The king hath commended me a business, and hath said unto me, Let no man know any thing of the business whereabout I send thee, and what I have commanded thee: and I have appointed *my* servants

**c** Chapter 16. 4.—**d** Genesis 27. 20, 24; 1 Kings 18. 18; 2 Kings 5. 22, 25.

hid by an intervening ridge. The position, south of Gibeon and not far from Anathoth; the elevation, commanding a view of Zion, against which Isaiah represents the Assyrian as shaking his hand; the ancient remains—all convinced the writer that this is the site of the long-lost Nob." **Ahimelech the priest**—Supposed to be the same as the Ahiah mentioned chap. xiv. 3. This high priest was assisted by eighty-five priests who wore linen ephods, and hence Nob was called the city of the priests. Chapter xxii, 18, 19. The mention of these, and also of the showbread, shows that the tabernacle was at this time at Nob. **Ahimelech was afraid**—At seeing a person of David's rank coming to him unattended and alone.

2. **The king hath commanded me a business**—The statements of David in this verse, and the addition, in verse 8, that the king's business required such haste that he thought not to bring his weapons, are to be regarded as utter falsehood, pure fabrications, framed for the purpose of deceiving Ahimelech, allaying suspicion, and aiding himself in his escape. Perhaps the presence of Doeg, the Edomite, (verse 7,) led to his uttering this fictitious plea. This is one of the occasions on which the noble David sinned. We shall meet with other instances in the subsequent history. It should be remembered, however, that according to the morals of that age falsehood, like polygamy and other sins which the ethics of our Gospel system utterly condemn, was not looked upon as criminal. Prevarication and falsehood that did not amount to perjury seem not to have been regarded as violations of the ninth commandment. Accord-

to such and such a place. 3 Now therefore what is under thine hand? give *me* five *loaves* of bread in mine hand, or what there is 'present. 4 And the priest answered David, and said, *There is* no common bread under mine hand, but there is 'hallowed bread; 'if the young men have kept themselves at least from women. 5 And David answered

1 Heb. *found*.—**e** Exod. 25. 30; Lev. 24. 5; Matt. 12. 4.—**f** Exod. 19. 15; Zech. 7. 8.

ingly, Otto von Gerlach well observes, in his comment on the ninth commandment, that "although it enjoins, when properly understood, full, entire, and unequivocal truthfulness towards our neighbour in every relation, yet the practical understanding of this meaning was very imperfectly attained to in the Old Testament times, since we find so many servants of God allowing themselves, in their perplexities, to have recourse to lying." David subsequently deplored the fact that he had occasioned the death of all the priests of Nob, (chap. xxii, 22,) but he showed not the least compunction over the falsehood by which he deceived the high priest, not even in the psalm (Psa. lii) which he composed on the occasion, and in which he accuses his enemy of lying. **My servants**—David probably had a few followers with him, and had left them in the distance while he personally went to the high priest for bread. These were the *young men* referred to in verses 4 and 5, and mentioned in Mark ii, 25, 26.

3. **What is under thine hand**—What provision? what food hast thou ready made, or on hand?

4. **Common bread**—Bread not consecrated; such as might lawfully be eaten by ordinary persons. **Hallowed bread**—That is, the showbread, which it was unlawful for any but the priests to eat. Exod. xxix, 32; Lev. xxiv, 9. **If the young men have kept themselves...from women**—If they take of the hallowed bread, it is necessary that they should be at least ceremonially clean in the matter here specified. Sexual intercourse made a person unfit for contact with holy things. Exodus xix, 15; Lev. xv, 16. Thus the high priest judges that in a case of necessity



the priest, and said unto him, Of a truth women *have been* kept from us about these three days, since I came out, and the *vessels* of the young men are holy, and *the bread is* in a manner common, *yea*, though it were sanctified this day

*a* 1 Thess. 4. 4.—*2* Or, *especially when this day there is other sanctified in the vessel.*

the requirements of the law regarding this bread might be set aside. Compare Matt. xii, 4, and Mark ii, 26.

5. **Since I came out**—Upon this secret business of the king. The conjunction *and*, which immediately follows these words, shows that they belong to the preceding sentence. David falsely tells Ahimelech that about three days had already passed since he started upon the king's business. **The vessels of the young men are holy**—By their vessels their bodies are intended—their persons. This word is thus used in 1 Thess. iv, 4, and 2 Cor. iv, 7; and in this same verse it is again used in this same sense, for the question was one of bodily purity. Some understand the word to refer to the implements or clothes of the young men; but Thenius well asks: What mattered it about the purity of their implements if their persons were not pure? David's object certainly was to conciliate the priest so as to obtain through him the hallowed bread; and so he endeavoured to persuade him that himself and the servants mentioned (verse 2) were ceremonially clean, and that therefore there could be no reason to refuse them the show-bread on the ground of their personal defilement. **And the bread is in a manner common, yea, though it were sanctified this day in the vessel**—If this were the meaning of the Hebrew it would represent David as contradicting both the high priest and the law itself. The marginal reading relieves the case but little. What Jehovah had sanctified David most certainly would not, in the presence of the priest, call common or unclean. The Hebrew text here says nothing about *bread*, but, literally rendered, reads thus: *And this way is common, and how much more is it to-day sancti-*

*in the vessel.* 6 So the priest *gave* him hallowed *bread*: for there was no bread there but the showbread, *that* was taken from before the Lord, to put hot bread in the day when it was taken away. 7 Now a certain man of the ser-

*h* Lev. 8. 26.—*i* Matt. 12. 3, 4; Mark 2. 25, 26; Luke 6. 3, 4.—*k* Lev. 24. 8, 9.

*fied in the vessel?* By *this way* we understand, with Keil and Ewald, the business on which David pretends the king has sent him. It was *common*, that is, *ordinary*, or *secular*, as distinguished from religious business, and therefore did not require such ceremonial purity as did a holy service. By *the vessel* the bodies or persons of the young men are meant, the phrase being equivalent to *in body*. In this sense the word *vessel* has already been used in this same verse. *To day* has reference to the *three days* previously mentioned, during which the young men had been kept from women, and the thought is, *How much more are they pure in body to-day than three days ago!* All that stands in the way of the conclusiveness of this interpretation is the verb יקדש in the singular number—it *is sanctified*. But in view of the obscurity that attaches to every other exposition, we feel constrained to emend the text by adding the plural ending to this verb, יקדשו, *they are sanctified*. Then the whole verse may be thus paraphrased: Truly women have been kept from us yesterday and the day before, when I came out, and so the bodies of the young men are in this respect pure; and though our business is not of a religious character, yet how much more are they pure in body to-day!

6. **That was taken from before the Lord, to put hot bread in the day when it was taken away**—This was done every sabbath day, (Lev. xiv, 8, 9,) and it is therefore probable that this incident of David's life occurred on the sabbath. On this supposition our Lord's appeal to this incident, as a vindication of his plucking the ears of corn on the sabbath, has double force. See Matt. xii, 1-4. Kitto remarks

vanta of Saul *was* there that day, detained before the Lord; and his name *was* 'Doeg, an Edomite, the chiefest of the herdmen that *belonged* to Saul. 8 And David said unto Ahimelech, And is there not here under thine hand spear or sword? for I have neither brought my sword nor my weapons with me, because the king's business required haste. 9 And the priest said, The

sword of Goliath the Philistine, whom thou slewest in <sup>a</sup>the valley of Elah, <sup>a</sup>behold, it *is here* wrapped in a cloth behind the ephod: if thou wilt take that, take *it*: for *there is* no other save that here. And David said, *There is* none like that; give it me.

10 And David arose, and fled that day for fear of Saul, and went to <sup>a</sup>Achish the king of Gath. 11 And <sup>o</sup>the ser-

1 Chapter 22, 9; Psalm 53, title. — *m* Chapter 17, 2, 50. — *n* See chapter 31, 10.

3 Or, *Ahimelech*, Psalm 34, title. — *o* Psalm 56, title.

"As it was not lawful to travel on the sabbath day, it seems to us that, seeing it was not safe for him to remain at Gibeah, and that the little time which remained before the commencement of the sabbath would preclude further travelling, he had concluded to go to Nob as a place of safety, till the termination of the holy day should enable him to resume his journey."

7. **Detained before the Lord**—But what detained him? Various answers have been given, as that he was fulfilling some vow at the tabernacle, or offering some special sacrifice. But if the supposition of the above note be correct, that David's interview with the priest occurred on the sabbath day, then we may naturally understand that Doeg was detained there by the sabbath, since it would be unlawful to be abroad at his work on that holy day. **The chiefest of the herdmen**—Overseer and chief manager of this department of the king's affairs. Doeg is introduced here in anticipation of what is related in chap. xxii, 9–22, and also, perhaps, to account for David's words and action. David had often inquired of the Lord through Ahimelech, (chap. xxii, 15,) and had probably come to Nob to do so now, but, finding Doeg there, he seems to have been confused and embarrassed, so framed a fictitious pretext as to his coming alone, and then took his departure as soon as possible. His strange action may have led Doeg to suspect conspiracy between him and Ahimelech against the government of Saul. Compare chap. xxii, 9–13.

9. **Wrapped in a cloth behind the ephod**—It is probable that, after he had exhibited Goliath's sword at his own home, (chap. xvii, 54,) David had

it deposited in the sanctuary as a dedicatory offering. Here it had now been hanging many years, carefully kept behind the high priest's shoulder-dress. David now thought that he might justly claim it as his own. Ahimelech's allowing him to take it was construed by Doeg as further evidence of collusion between them.

#### DAVID AT GATH, 10–15.

10. **Fled that day**—Even before that day had closed so great became his fear of being suspected and detained that he secretly fled from Nob. **For fear**—Rather, *from the face* of Saul. Mark his successive flights. First from the court of Saul to his own house, (chap. xix, 10;) thence to Samuel at Ramah, (18;) thence to Jonathan in the field of Gibeah, (chap. xx, 1;) thence to the high priest at Nob. Chap. xxi, 1. He might well feel, at this point, that there was now no asylum for him in Israel. **Went to Achish the king of Gath**—On the site of Gath, see note on chap. v, 8. Achish was, perhaps, a title of royalty, applied, like Ahimelech, to all the Philistine kings. It indeed seems strange that David should have fled so soon for refuge into the land of Israel's bitterest enemy, and, with Goliath's sword in his hand, should nevertheless have sought an asylum in Gath, lately the home of Goliath. But we must remember that several years had passed since David's victory over the giant, and verse 12 gives us to understand that David did not expect to be recognised. This account, however, of David at Gath is very brief, and the difficulty in question may be owing to our ignorance of all the circumstances of the case. Per-

vants of Achish said unto him, *Is not this David the king of the land? did they not sing one to another of him in dances, saying, 'Saul hath slain his thousands, and David his ten thousands?'* 12 And David laid up these words in his heart, and was sore afraid of Achish the king of Gath. 13 And he changed his behaviour before them, and feigned himself mad in their hands, and 'scrabbled on the doors of the gate, and let his spittle fall down upon his

p Chap. 18. 7; 29. 5.—q Luke 2, 19.—r Psalm 84, title.—4 Or, *made marks*.

haps David's coming to Gath was not intentional on his own part, but, having fled into the territory of Achish, he was seized by the servants of that king, and forcibly carried into the royal presence. This supposition is in entire accord with the particulars of this narrative, and has the sanction of the title of *Psa. lvi*, which David composed on this occasion.

11. **The servants of Achish**—Who brought David into the royal presence. Where and in what manner these servants met with David we are not told; but the supposition, based on the title of *Psalm lvi*, is exceedingly plausible: that they had taken him captive while he was wandering in the land of Philistia. **King of the land**—"Thus they call David, not because his anointing and Divine election were known to them, but on account of his victorious deeds, which had thrown Saul entirely into the shade."—*Keil*.

12. **David laid up these words in his heart**—Until he heard the servants say these things he hoped to escape recognition; but now, when he finds that they suspect him to be the great hero who slew Goliath, he is oppressed with a host of fears.

13. **Changed his behaviour**—Rather, *changed his reason*; pretended to lose his mind.

14. **The man is mad**—"A sort of respect for persons thus afflicted, as if they were under some kind of supernatural influence, has always existed, and does now exist, in the East; so that David knew his personal safety, and even his freedom, were guaranteed by the belief in his madness."—*Kitt*.

beard. 14 Then said Achish unto his servants, Lo, ye see the man <sup>is</sup> mad: wherefore *then* have ye brought him to me? 15 Have I need of madmen, that ye have brought this *fellow* to play the madman in my presence? shall this *fellow* come into my house?

## CHAPTER XXII.

DAVID therefore departed thence, and <sup>and</sup> <sup>escaped</sup> to the cave Adullam: and when his brethren and all his

5 Or, *playeth the madman*.—a *Psa. 57*, title: 143, title.—b 2 Sam. 23. 13.

## CHAPTER XXII.

### DAVID IN THE CAVE OF ADULLAM, 1, 2.

David has now found that neither the privacy of his own house, nor the sanctity of Samuel, nor the love of Jonathan, nor the favour of the high priest, avails to save him from the persecutions of Saul. Nor will he dare again trust himself alone in the hands of a heathen king. He now resolved to act, for the time, the part of a Jephthah, and gather around himself a band of warriors, in whom he may find at least a powerful body-guard.

1. **Departed thence, and escaped**—Whether he was thrust out of the land or escaped by stealth we are not here told, but from the title of *Psalm xxxiv* we infer that he was driven away. Having thus effected his escape, his joyful heart gives vent to its feelings in that inimitable psalm. **The cave Adullam**—A city Adullam was situated in or near the plain of Philistia, (*Joshua xv, 35*;) but there is no passage of Scripture that necessarily connects the cave of Adullam with the city of that name. There appears, therefore, no sufficient reason to disturb the tradition of seven hundred years, which fixes this cave about six miles southeast of Bethlehem, in the side of the wild gorge el-Kureitun. It has been visited by many travellers, who all describe it as an immense natural cavern in the side of the cliff, and very difficult of access. Dr. J. P. Newman, who explored it in 1861, thus writes: "Entering the cave through a passage way six feet high, four wide, and thirty long, but which

father's house heard it, they went down thither to him. **2** And every one *that was* in distress, and every one that *was* in debt, and every one *that was* discontented, gathered themselves unto him; and he became a captain over them: and there were with him about four hundred men.

c Judges 11. 3.—1 Heb. *had a creditor*.

soon contracted to such dimensions as to compel us first to stoop and then to creep, we at length found ourselves in the hiding place of David. Owing to the curve in the entrance, no sunlight ever penetrates this dismal abode. Lighting our candles, we began to explore. We found the interior divided into chambers, halls, galleries, and dungeons, connected by intricate passages. The chief hall is one hundred and twenty feet long, and fifty wide; the ceiling is high and arched, ornamented with pendants resembling stalactites; and from the walls extend sharp projections, on which the ancient warriors hung their arms. The effect was grand as our tapers revealed each irregular arch, graceful pendant, and sharp projection, giving the whole the appearance of a grand Gothic hall. Lateral passages radiate in every direction from this chamber, but ultimately converge in a central room. The darkness and silence were oppressive, and the seclusion and intricacies of the cave would have baffled any attempt of Saul to capture the object of his pursuit. From the side of the first chamber we reached a pit ten feet deep, and from it a low, narrow alley, two hundred and ten feet long leads to another hall, the inner *sanctum*, where David held his secret counsels. David probably became familiar with this cave in his childhood, when he kept his father's flocks near Beth-lehem. **His brethren and all his father's house... went down thither**—Because, on account of Saul's rage, their lives were no longer safe at Beth-lehem.

**2. Every one... in distress**—Suffering from want, or in difficulty with their neighbours. **In debt**—Hebrew, *had a creditor*; and who, having no means of meeting their obligations, were like-

**3** And David went thence to Mizpeh of Moab: and he said unto the king of Moab, Let my father and my mother, I pray thee, come forth, *and be with you*, till I know what God will do for me. **4** And he brought them before the king of Moab: and they dwelt with him all the while that David was in the hold.

2 Heb. *bitter of soul*.

ly to be sold to their creditors. Lev. xxv, 39. **Discontented**—Dissatisfied with the government of Saul. **About four hundred men**—A band of outlaws, who, however, under David's wise management, became a band of mighty heroes. A catalogue of the bravest is given in 2 Sam. xxiii, 8-39; 1 Chron. xi, 10-47. How long David remained in the cave of Adullam before his flight to Moab we are nowhere told.

DAVID IN MIZPEH OF MOAB, 3, 4.

**3. Mizpeh of Moab**—The name of this place does not occur again, and we are left in uncertainty as to its situation. Some have supposed that the place was identical with Kir-Moab, the modern Kerak; but greater plausibility attaches to the supposition that this Mizpeh was some commanding eminence on the east of the Jordan, like Nebo or Pisgah, at that time in the possession of the Moabites. David had reason to expect a kind reception among the Moabites, on the ground that his great grandmother, Ruth, was a Moabitess. **Let my father and my mother... be with you**—He regarded their age and feebleness as too great to endure the anxieties and hardships of his wild mode of life, and the cave of Adullam was for them too dark and cheerless an asylum. **Till I know what God will do for me**—He knew that he was innocent, and the victim of a wicked persecution, but he cherished a strong hope that in the end his cause would be vindicated.

**4. The hold**—מְצוּדָה, *a stronghold, a fortress, or citadel*. The reference is to some fortified place at Mizpeh, where David and his company abode during their stay in the land of Moab. See note on next verse. This is the last we hear of David's father and mother;

**5** And the prophet *Gad* said unto David, Abide not in the hold; depart, and get thee into the land of Judah. Then David departed, and came into the forest of Hareth.

**6** When Saul heard that David was discovered, and the men that *were* with him; (now Saul abode in Gibeah under a *tree* in Ramah, having his spear in his hand, and all his servants *were* standing about him;) **7** Then Saul said unto his servants that stood about him, Hear now, ye Benjamites; will the

son of Jesse *\*give* every one of you fields and vineyards, *and* make you all captains of thousands, and captains of hundreds; **8** That all of you have conspired against me, and *there is* none that *\*showeth* me that *'my son hath made a league with the son of Jesse, and there is* none of you that is sorry for me, or showeth unto me that my son hath stirred up my servant against me, to lie in wait, as at this day? **9** Then answered *\*Doeg* the Edomite, which was set over the servants of Saul, and said, I saw the

*d* 2 Samuel 24. 11; 1 Chronicles 21. 9; 2 Chronicles 29. 25.—*3* Or, *grove in a high place*.—*e* Chapter 8. 14.

*4* Heb. *uncovereth mine ear*, chap. 20. 2.—*f* Chap. 18. 3; 20. 30.—*g* Chap. 21. 7; Psa. 52, title; verses 1, 2, 3.

but an old Jewish tradition has it, that after David returned to the land of Judah his parents and brothers were put to death by the king of Moab.

#### DAVID'S RETURN TO THE LAND OF JUDAH, 5.

**5. The prophet Gad**—With much plausibility supposed to have been a member of Samuel's school of prophets. Having made David's acquaintance at Ramah, (chap. xix. 18,) he now joins his company at Mizpeh of Moab, and advises him to return to his native land. Whether he remained with David during the period of his wanderings we know not; but at a later day we find him attached to the royal household, and spoken of as David's seer. 2 Sam. xxix. 11. He was also the author of a book of the acts of David. 1 Chron. xxix. 29. **Abide not in the hold**—Dwell no longer in this fortress at Mizpeh. **Get thee into the land of Judah**—A long sojourn away from his fatherland might have a tendency to alienate from him the affections of the people of Israel. These words show that when David received the message of Gad he was not in the land of Judah, and therefore *the hold* in which he was no longer to abide could not have been the cave of Adullam, as many have supposed, nor any other stronghold in the land of Judah. Hence our reason for regarding this hold as some fortified place in the land of Moab. **The forest of Hareth**—Some wooded part of the wilderness of Judah, whose exact locality is no longer known. Here it seems Abiathar joined him. Ver. 20.

#### SAUL'S ANGER, AND HIS SLAUGHTER OF THE PRIESTS OF NOB, 6-19.

**6. Saul heard that David was discovered**—That is, Saul received information that David had gathered around him a band of men. This fact became generally known, and the events of this section probably took place while David was in the forest of Hareth. **Under a tree in Ramah**—Rather, *Under the tree on the height*, referring to some well known tree at Gibeah, perhaps the pomegranate mentioned chap. xiv. 2. **All his servants were standing about him**—As an assembly called together for a council of war.

**7. Benjamites**—From this address Keil infers that Saul had chosen his immediate attendants from his own tribe.

**8. All of you have conspired against me**—The monarch's suspicions carry him very far beyond the actual facts. **My son hath stirred up my servant against me**—Perhaps he had learned something of Jonathan's last interview with David, (chap. xx,) and surmised that even his son was in conspiracy against him.

**9. Doeg the Edomite**—Already introduced to us by anticipation in chap. xxi. 7. He was evidently a dark-hearted man, having no sympathy for injured innocence, and a ready instrument to execute Saul's bloody purposes. He readily embraces this opportunity to ingratiate himself with his king; and even goes so far as to stain his hands with the blood of the priests, and of all the inhabitants of Nob. Verses 18, 19.

son of Jesse coming to Nob to <sup>h</sup>Ahimelech the son of <sup>i</sup>Ahitub. **10** <sup>k</sup>And he inquired of the LORD for him, and <sup>l</sup>gave him victuals, and gave him the sword of Goliath the Philistine. **11** Then the king sent to call Ahimelech the priest, the son of Ahitub, and all his father's house, the priests that <sup>m</sup>were in Nob: and they came all of them to the king. **12** And Saul said, Hear now, thou son of Ahitub. And he answered, <sup>n</sup>Here I am, my lord. **13** And Saul said unto him, <sup>o</sup>Why have ye conspired against me, thou and the son of Jesse, in that thou hast given him bread, and a sword, and hast inquired of God for him, that he should rise against me, to lie in wait, as at this day? **14** Then Ahimelech answered the king, and said, And who <sup>p</sup>is so faithful among all thy servants as David, which is the king's son in law, and goeth at thy bidding, and is honourable in thine house? **15** Did I then begin to inquire of God for him? be it far from me: let not the king impute <sup>q</sup>any thing unto his servant, <sup>r</sup>nor to all the house of my father: for thy servant knew nothing of all this, <sup>s</sup>less or more. **16** And the king said, Thou shalt surely die, Ahimelech, thou, and all thy fa-

ther's house. **17** And the king said unto the <sup>t</sup>footmen that stood about him, Turn, and slay the priests of the LORD; because their hand also <sup>u</sup>is with David, and because they knew when he fled, and did not show it to me. But the servants of the king <sup>v</sup>would not put forth their hand to fall upon the priests of the LORD. **18** And the king said to Doeg, Turn thou, and fall upon the priests. And Doeg the Edomite turned, and he fell upon the priests, and <sup>w</sup>slew on that day fourscore and five persons that did wear a linen ephod. **19** <sup>x</sup>And Nob, the city of the priests, smote he with the edge of the sword, both men and women, children and sucklings, and oxen, and asses, and sheep, with the edge of the sword.

**20** <sup>y</sup>And one of the sons of Ahimelech the son of Ahitub, named Abiathar, <sup>z</sup>escaped, and fled after David. **21** And Abiathar showed David that Saul had slain the LORD's priests. **22** And David said unto Abiathar, I knew <sup>aa</sup>it that day, when Doeg the Edomite <sup>ab</sup>was there, that he would surely tell Saul: <sup>ac</sup>I have occasioned <sup>ad</sup>the death of all the persons of thy father's house. **23** Abide thou with me, fear not: <sup>ae</sup>for he that seeketh my

<sup>h</sup> Chap. 21. 1. — <sup>i</sup> Chap. 14. 3. — <sup>k</sup> Num. 27. 21. — <sup>l</sup> Chap. 21. 6. 9. — <sup>m</sup> Heb. *Behold me.* — <sup>n</sup> Amos 7. 10; Luke 23. 2. 5. — <sup>o</sup> Heb. *little or great.*

<sup>1</sup> Or, *guard.* Heb. *runners.* — <sup>n</sup> See Exod. 1. 17. — <sup>o</sup> See chap. 2. 31. — <sup>p</sup> Verses 9, 11. — <sup>q</sup> Chap. 23. 6. — <sup>r</sup> Chap. 2. 33. — <sup>s</sup> Chap. 21. 1, 9; Ps. 44. 22.

**10. He inquired of the Lord for him**—We have no account of this in the narrative of David's interview with Ahimelech, (chap. xxi, 1-9;) and Doeg's statement was probably only the bold utterance of his own suspicions; but the priest's words in verse 15 imply that he was in the habit of inquiring of the Lord for David. This was not the first time that he sought by urim to obtain Divine counsel for this most faithful of all the royal servants.

**14 Goeth at thy bidding**—Rather, *approaches into thy privy council*; that is, has access to thy private audience, and is one of thy confidential advisers.

**15. Did I then begin to inquire**—It was not the first time I inquired for David respecting important enterprises; I had often done the same thing before: nor in doing this did I ever suspect myself of treason against the king.

**17. The footmen**—Runners; halberdiers; members of the king's body guard, who ran or walked before him

to guard his way. **The servants of the king would not**—An act so sacrilegious they shuddered at the thought of doing. Perhaps they regarded the order as another freak of the king's madness.

**18. Doeg...fell upon the priests**—Assisted, no doubt, by many of the herdsman of whom he had the command. Chap. xxi, 7. Not only the priests, but the entire city of Nob was given over to destruction.

#### ABIATHAR'S ESCAPE, 20-23.

**20. Escaped and fled after David**—This occurred probably at the time David was in the forest of Hareth. Abiathar continued with David during all his wanderings, received divine communications for him, (chap. xxiii, 2; xxx, 8; 2 Sam. ii. 1,) and remained in honour until deposed by Solomon. 1 Kings ii, 26.

**22. I have occasioned**—David now remembers with regret the falsehoods

life seeketh thy life: but with me thou shalt be in safeguard.

### CHAPTER XXIII.

**THEN** they told David, saying, Behold, the Philistines fight against Keilah, and they rob the threshing-floors. **2** Therefore David inquired of the Lord, saying, Shall I go and smite these Philistines? And the Lord said unto David, Go, and smite the Philistines, and save Keilah. **3** And David's men said unto him, Behold, we be afraid here in Judah: how much more then if we come to Keilah against the armies of the Philistines? **4** Then David inquired of the Lord yet again. And the Lord answered him and said, Arise, go down to Keilah; for I will deliver the Philistines into thine hand. **5** So David and his men went to Keilah, and fought with the Philistines, and brought away their cattle, and smote them with a great slaughter. So David saved the inhabitants of Keilah. **6** And it came to pass, when Abiathar the son of Ahimelech fled to David to Keilah, that he came down with an ephod in his hand. **7** And it was told Saul that David was come to Keilah. And Saul said, God

hath delivered him into mine hand; for he is shut in, by entering into a town that hath gates and bars. **8** And Saul called all the people together to war, to go down to Keilah, to besiege David and his men. **9** And David knew that Saul secretly practised mischief against him; and he said to Abiathar the priest, Bring hither the ephod. **10** Then said David, O Lord God of Israel, thy servant hath certainly heard that Saul seeketh to come to Keilah, to destroy the city for my sake. **11** Will the men of Keilah deliver me up into his hand? will Saul come down, as thy servant hath heard? O Lord God of Israel, I beseech thee, tell thy servant. And the Lord said, He will come down. **12** Then said David, Will the men of Keilah deliver me and my men into the hand of Saul? And the Lord said, They will deliver thee up. **13** Then David and his men, which were about six hundred, arose and departed out of Keilah, and went whithersoever they could go. And it was told Saul that David was escaped from Keilah; and he forbore to go forth.

**14** And David abode in the wilderness in strong holds, and remained in

<sup>d</sup> 1 Kings 2. 26. — <sup>a</sup> Josh. 15. 44. — <sup>b</sup> Verses 4, 6, 9; chap. 30. 8; 2 Sam. 5. 19, 23. — <sup>c</sup> Josh. 8. 7; Judges 7. 7; 2 Sam. 5. 19; 2 Kings 3. 18.

<sup>d</sup> Chap. 22. 20. — <sup>e</sup> Exod. 14. 3; 15. 9; Judg. 16. 2, 3. — <sup>f</sup> Num. 27. 21; chap. 30. 7. — <sup>g</sup> Chap. 22. 19. — <sup>h</sup> Heb. shut up. — <sup>h</sup> Chap. 22. 2; 23. 13.

by which he had deceived Ahimelech and acknowledges his guilt. But the rash and bloody deed of Saul convinces him that the king is God-forsaken, and he strengthens himself in view of this, and utters the feelings of his heart in an inimitable psalm. See Psalm lii, which is not so much against Doeg as against Saul, and at the conclusion of which David expresses his own hope and trust in the mercy of God.

### CHAPTER XXIII.

#### DAVID AT KEILAH, 1-13.

**1. Keilah**—The modern Kila, situated about four miles northwest of Hebron on a projecting cliff on the right bank of Wady el-Feranj. See on Josh. xv, 44. It was a fortified place defended by gates and bars. Verse 7. **Threshing floors**—See on Judges vi, 11, and Ruth iii, 2.

**2. David inquired of the Lord**—Through the urim and thummin of the priest Abiathar.

**3. We be afraid here in Judah**—Afraid of Saul's pursuit and sudden attack. They thought that any engagement against an enemy would expose them to still greater danger.

**6. When Abiathar . . . fled to David to Keilah**—This does not refer to the time when Abiathar first fled to David from Nob, but to a subsequent flight from the wilderness of Judah to Keilah, after David and his men had taken possession of that city. This verse is not out of its proper place, as Houbigant supposes, but is inserted here to prepare the reader for what immediately follows. When David went forth to defend the inhabitants of Keilah, Abiathar remained in the wilderness until he heard that Saul was making preparations to besiege David and his men at Keilah; then he hastened down thither with the ephod in his hand. By means of this ephod David received communications from Jehovah, which enabled him to make a timely escape from Keilah.

'a mountain in the wilderness of <sup>1</sup>Ziph. And Saul <sup>1</sup>sought him every day, but God delivered him not into his hand. **15** And David saw that Saul was come out to seek his life: and David *was* in the wilderness of Ziph in a wood. **16** And Jonathan Saul's son arose, and went to David into the wood, and <sup>1</sup>strengthened his hand in God. **17** And he said unto him, Fear not: for the hand of Saul my father shall not find thee; and thou shalt be king over Israel, and I shall be next unto thee; and <sup>2</sup>that also Saul my father knoweth. **18** And they two <sup>3</sup>made a covenant before the Lord:

<sup>1</sup> i Psal. 11. 1.—<sup>2</sup> k Josh. 15. 55.—<sup>3</sup> l Psal. 54. 3, 4.  
—<sup>4</sup> m Deut. 3. 28; Nehemiah 2. 18; Job 4. 4.—  
n Chapter 21. 20.—<sup>5</sup> o Chapter 18. 3; 20. 16, 42;  
2 Samuel 21. 7.

#### DAVID IN THE DESERTS OF ZIPH AND MAON, 14-29.

**14. A mountain in the wilderness of Ziph**—Perhaps the same eminence, about three miles southeast of Hebron, that still bears the name Tell Zif; at all events, some mountain in this vicinity is meant. Compare Josh. xv, 55. **Saul sought him every day**—He probably supposed that David was gathering troops around him for hostile purposes against himself, and that when adequately strong he would not hesitate to make an attempt upon the throne. He may have feared also that David would issue a call to the tribes of Israel for help, for he well knew how popular the young hero was wherever he was known.

**16. Jonathan...arose and went to David**—Whether Jonathan ever accompanied his father in the pursuit after David we are nowhere told, but it is very evident that he never sought to take his friend. His true heart was incapable of such duplicity. **Strengthened his hand in God**—Encouraged and cheered him in his faith and hope. He was now satisfied that David was destined to be king; his anointing by Samuel was probably well known, and Jonathan's greatest desire was to be next to him in the kingdom, and in that position to share his friendship as in the past.

**18. They two made a covenant before the Lord**—Alone in the wilderness of Ziph, and probably at the still

and David abode in the wood, and Jonathan went to his house. **19** Then <sup>1</sup>came up the Ziphites to Saul to Gibeah, saying, Doth not David hide himself with us in strong holds in the wood, in the hill of Hachilah, which <sup>2</sup>is <sup>3</sup>on the south of <sup>4</sup>Jeshimon? **20** Now therefore, O king, come down according to all the desire of thy soul to come down; and <sup>5</sup>our part *shall be* to deliver him into the king's hand. **21** And Saul said, <sup>6</sup>Blessed be ye of the Lord; for ye have compassion on me. **22** Go, I pray you, prepare yet, and know and see his place where his <sup>7</sup>haunt is, *and* who hath seen

<sup>1</sup> p See chapter 26. 1; Psalm 51, title.—<sup>2</sup> Hebrew, *on the right hand*.—<sup>3</sup> Or, *The wilderness*.—<sup>4</sup> q Psalm 54. 3.—<sup>5</sup> r Judges 17. 2; Psalm 10. 3.—<sup>6</sup> Hebrew, *foot shall be*.

hour of night, with none but Jehovah to witness, they solemnly renewed the covenant in which they had bound themselves twice before. Chap. xviii, 30; xx, 16. This was the last time that Jonathan and the son of Jesse met.

**19. Came up the Ziphites to Saul to Gibeah**—From which it appears that Saul had now for a season given up his search for David. The treachery of the Ziphites is mentioned in marked contrast with the constancy of Jonathan. Encouraged by his interview with Jonathan, and strong in hope and faith, David composes on this occasion Psalm liv. **The hill of Hachilah**—Perhaps the same eminence mentioned in verse 14, for no hill of this name has been discovered in the neighbourhood of Ziph. The word *Hachilah* means *dark*, and may be regarded as an adjective descriptive of the hill in question, which was then covered with dark forest shades. **On the south of Jeshimon**—Rather, as in the margin, *on the right hand of the wilderness*; that is, as we see at chap. xxvi, 1, *before*, or *in front of the wilderness*. Uncertainty as to the particular hill in question leads to like uncertainty as to the desert mentioned here and verse 24, but the reference is most probably to the desert wastes lying between the wilderness of Ziph and the Dead Sea. A person at Gibeah would naturally speak of the wildernesses of Ziph and of Maon as lying *to the right of the desert*, on the west of the Dead Sea.



him there: for it is told me *that* he dealt very subtilly. **23** See therefore, and take knowledge of all the lurking places where he hideth himself, and come ye again to me with the certainty, and I will go with you: and it shall come to pass, if he be in the land, that *I* will search him out throughout all the thousands of Judah. **24** And they arose, and went to Ziph before Saul: but David and his men *were* in the wilderness of Maon, in the plain on the south of Jeshimon. **25** Saul also and his men went to seek *him*. And they told David: wherefore he came down into a rock, and abode in the wilderness of Maon. And when Saul heard *that*, he pursued after David in the wilderness of Maon. **26** And Saul went on this side of the mountain, and David and his men on that side of the mountain: and David made haste to get

<sup>a</sup> 2 Sam. 17. 11, 13; Prov. 1. 16.—<sup>t</sup> Josh. 15. 55; chap. 2. 2.—<sup>5</sup> Or, *from the rock*.—<sup>u</sup> Psa. 31. 22.—<sup>v</sup> Psa. 17. 9.—<sup>w</sup> 2 Kings 19. 9.—<sup>6</sup> Heb.

**24. Wilderness of Maon**—This lay about four miles southeast of Ziph, and is still marked by the modern Main. Compare Josh. xv, 55. Thus as David found himself pursued and hunted even by the Ziphites, he retreated still further to the south. **On the south of Jeshimon**—Rather, *on the right of the desert*. See note on verse 19.

**25. He came down into a rock**—Literally, *he went down the rock*. The margin gives the meaning, he went down *from the rock*. The rock was probably the summit of the hill Main, which is two hundred feet high, and from which there is a wide prospect over the country around.

**26. Saul went on this side of the mountain, and David. . . on that side**—From his rocky height David watched the approach of his enemy, and by his knowledge of the wilderness and his strategic skill he baffled all the efforts made to entrap him. But the verse implies that David's plight at this time was a most hazardous one, and his pursuers had well nigh taken him.

**27. There came a messenger**—This was a signal working of Providence to deliver the son of Jesse from most imminent peril.

**28. Sela-hammah-lekoth**—According to the ancient versions, *the rock of*

away for fear of Saul; for Saul and his men compassed David and his men round about to take them. **27** But there came a messenger unto Saul, saying, Haste thee, and come; for the Philistines have invaded the land. **28** Wherefore Saul returned from pursuing after David, and went against the Philistines: therefore they called that place *Sela-hammah-lekoth*. **29** And David went up from thence, and dwelt in strong holds at *En-gedi*.

#### CHAPTER XXIV.

**AND** it came to pass, when Saul was returned from following the Philistines, that it was told him, saying, Behold, David *is* in the wilderness of En-gedi. **2** Then Saul took three thousand chosen men out of all Israel, and went to seek David and his men upon the rocks of the wild goats. **3** And

*spread themselves upon*, &c.—<sup>7</sup> That is, *The rock of divisions*.—<sup>a</sup> 2 Chron. 20. 2.—<sup>a</sup> Chap. 23. 28.—<sup>1</sup> Heb. *after*.—<sup>b</sup> Psa. 35. 12.

*divisions*, so called because there Saul and David were divided or separated. According to Gesenius and other recent critics, *the rock of escapes*, from פלח, *to be smooth*; then, *to slip away* and *escape* referring to David's escape from Saul.

**29. En-gedi**—See on Josh. xv, 62, and verse 1 of the next chapter

#### CHAPTER XXIV.

DAVID AND SAUL IN THE WILDERNESS OF EN-GEDI, 1-22.

**1. When Saul was returned from following the Philistines**—This was another of those bitter contests with that enemy against whom Saul was obliged to carry on war all his days, (chap. xiv, 52;) but how long this war with the Philistines lasted, and of its relative importance, we are not informed.

**En-gedi**—The modern Ain-Jidy, situated about the middle of the western coast of the Dead Sea. Its name was transferred from a fountain near the sea to the whole neighbouring wilderness on the west, which is full of deep ravines, rocky ridges and dark caverns.

**2. The rocks of the wild goats**—Dr. Robinson thus speaks of his travels in this region: "As we now came in view of the ravine of the Wady Ghar a mountain goat started up and bounded

he came to the sheepcotes by the way, where *was* a cave; and <sup>c</sup>Saul went in to <sup>c</sup>cover his feet: and <sup>c</sup>David and his men remained in the sides of the cave. **4** <sup>c</sup>And the men of David said unto him, Behold the day of which the LORD said unto thee, Behold, I will deliver thine enemy into thine hand, that thou mayest do to him as it shall seem good unto thee. Then David arose, and cut off the skirt of <sup>c</sup>Saul's robe privily. **5** And it came to pass afterward, that <sup>c</sup>David's heart smote him, because he had cut off Saul's skirt. **6** And he said unto his men, <sup>b</sup>The LORD forbid that I should do this thing unto my master, the LORD's anointed, to stretch forth mine hand against him, seeing he *is* the anointed of the LORD. **7** So David <sup>a</sup>stayed his servants with these words, and suffered

<sup>c</sup> Psa. 141. 6. —<sup>d</sup> Judges 3. 24. —<sup>e</sup> Psa. 57. title: 142. title. —<sup>f</sup> Chap. 26. 8. —<sup>2</sup> Hebrew, *the robe which was Saul's*. —<sup>g</sup> 2 Sam. 24. 10. —<sup>h</sup> Chap. 26. 11.

along the face of the rocks on the opposite side. Indeed, we were now in the wilderness of Eng-edi, where David and his men lived among 'the rocks of the wild goats,' and where the former cut off the skirts of Saul's robe in a cave. The whole scene is drawn to the life. On all sides the country is full of caverns, which might then serve as lurking places for David and his men, as they do for outlaws at the present day."

**3. The sheepcotes by the way**—Not caves in the rocks, but enclosures built by the shepherds in the valley for the purpose of protecting their flocks. These sheep perhaps belonged to Nabal. Compare chap. xxv, 7. **To cover his feet**—Not to lie down for sleep, for that idea could have been expressed more simply, but a euphemism for performing the necessities of nature, which was done in a sitting posture, the person covering himself with the folds of his garment. Compare Judges iii, 24. **In the sides of the cave**—The note on chap. xxii, 1, on the cave of Adullam, shows that these mountain caverns afforded sufficient room for all the facts here mentioned.

**4. Behold the day of which the Lord said unto thee**—We have no mention elsewhere of any such oracle as this, though David may have received it through Gad or Abiathar. But prob-

ably we should understand it as a free construction by David's friends of all such prophecies and events as had designated this son of Jesse for the throne of Israel. Chap. xv, 28; xvi, 1, 12; xx, 15; xxiii, 17. **The skirt of Saul's robe**—A corner or flap of his outer garment. This garment Saul had probably laid off when he entered the cave, and so David was able the more easily to cut a piece from it unobserved by the king.

<sup>3</sup> Hebrew, *cut off*. —<sup>i</sup> Psa. 7. 4; Matt. 5. 44; Rom. 12. 17, 19. —<sup>k</sup> Psa. 141. 6; Prov. 16. 28; 17. 9. —<sup>l</sup> Verse 4; chap. 26. 8. —<sup>m</sup> Chap. 26. 9; Psa. 105. 15

**5. David's heart smote him**—He felt that even the rending of Saul's garment was going too far against the Lord's anointed. Clarke supposes that David arose with the purpose of killing Saul, but was prevented by the remembrance of God in his conscience; but we see no sufficient evidence of such purpose.

**7. David stayed his servants**—Literally, *He split them*. Vulgate: *confregit; he broke them to pieces*. The idea is, that by his words he completely nonplussed them, so as to check their furious desire to make an end of Saul.

**11. My father, see**—A reverential form of addressing an esteemed superior, (2 Kings ii, 12; v, 13,) but in this place it may mean more. Saul was David's father in law, and by this address the son of Jesse shows the king a childlike respect and reverence. It

killed thee not, know thou and see that *there is* neither evil nor transgression in mine hand, and I have not sinned against thee; yet thou *huntest* my soul to take it. **12** *The Lord judge between me and thee, and the Lord avenge me of thee: but mine hand shall not be upon thee.* **13** As saith the proverb of the ancients, *Wickedness proceedeth from the wicked: but mine hand shall not be upon thee.* **14** After whom is the king of Israel come out? after whom dost thou pursue? *after a dead dog, after a flea.* **15** *The Lord therefore be judge, and judge between me and thee, and see, and plead my cause, and deliver me out of thine hand.* **16** And it came to pass, when David had made an end of speaking these words unto Saul, that Saul said, *Is this thy voice, my son David? And Saul lifted up his voice, and wept.* **17** *And*

he said to David, Thou *art* more righteous than I: for *thou hast rewarded me good, whereas I have rewarded thee evil.* **18** And thou hast showed this day how that thou hast dealt well with me: forasmuch as when *the Lord had delivered me into thine hand, thou killedst me not.* **19** For if a man find his enemy, will he let him go well away? wherefore the Lord reward thee good for that thou hast done unto me this day. **20** And now, behold, *I know well that thou shalt surely be king, and that the kingdom of Israel shall be established in thine hand.* **21** *Swear now therefore unto me by the Lord, that thou wilt not cut off my seed after me, and that thou wilt not destroy my name out of my father's house.* **22** And David swore unto Saul. And Saul went home; but David and his men *gat them up unto the hold.*

*a* Psa. 7. 8; 35. 7.—*c* Chap. 26. 20.—*p* Gen. 16. 5; Judges 11. 27: chap. 26. 10; Job 5. 8.—*q* Matt. 7. 16, 18.—*r* Chap. 17. 43; 2 Sam. 9. 8.—*s* Chap. 26. 20.—*t* Verse 12.—*u* 2 Chron. 24. 22.—*v* Psa. 35. 1; 43. 1; 119. 154; Micah 7. 9.

—4 Heb. *judge*.—*w* Chap. 26. 17.—*x* Chap. 26. 21.—*y* Gen. 28. 26.—*z* Matt. 5. 44.—*a* Chap. 26. 23.—5 Heb. *shut up*, chap. 23. 13; 26. 8.—*b* Chap. 23. 17.—*c* Gen. 21. 23.—*d* 2 Sam. 21. 6, 8.—*e* Chap. 23. 29.

was a word of love that touched the heart of Saul, and brought the response *My son.* Verse 16.

**13. Wickedness proceedeth from the wicked**—And therefore were I the wicked man that some represent me, (verse 9,) I would have wrought wickedness against the king when it lay in my power. But the fact that I leave Jehovah to avenge me, and refuse to lift my hand against the king, shows that wickedness proceedeth not from me. These words of David also contain a tacit implication that wickedness was proceeding from Saul.

**14. After a dead dog, after a flea**—A term of contempt and a term of insignificance. By these terms David represents himself as one so contemptible and insignificant that it was beneath the dignity of Israel's royal monarch to pursue him.

**16. Saul lifted up his voice, and wept**—"Behold," says Kitto, "how that stern heart is melted! The hard wintry frosts thaw fast before the kindly warmth of David's generous nature."

**20. I know well that thou shalt surely be king**—The anointing by Samuel, the triumph over Goliath, the

homage paid him by the enthusiastic people, and all the providential deliverances from the deadly pursuits of Saul, together with this last affair in the cave, thoroughly convinced the king that David was that neighbour who, according to Samuel's prophecy, (chap. xv, 28,) was destined to succeed him on the throne. Here again, in fact, Saul is among the prophets, and thus confirms by his own words the predictions of Samuel.

**22. The hold**—The particular stronghold in this wilderness (chap. xxiii, 29) in which at the time David and his men had their headquarters. Yielding himself now to holy meditation and song, he commemorates his deliverance by the composition of Psalm cxlii.

## CHAPTER XXV.

NABAL AND ABIGAIL, 1-44.

The episode of this chapter is a narrative so clear and simple as to require little textual comment; but it furnishes us several most interesting pictures of domestic life in the East, and also shows that David and his men were neither idle nor useless during all the time of their life in the wilderness.

## CHAPTER XXV.

**A**ND <sup>a</sup>Samuel died; and all the Israelites were gathered together, and <sup>b</sup>lamented him, and buried him in his house at Ramah. And David arose, and went down <sup>c</sup>to the wilderness of Paran. **2** And *there was* a man <sup>d</sup>in Maon, whose <sup>e</sup>possessions were in <sup>f</sup>Carmel; and the man *was* very great, and he had three thousand sheep, and a thousand goats: and he was shearing his sheep in Carmel. **3** Now the name of the man *was* Nabal, and the name of his wife Abigail; <sup>g</sup>and *she was* a woman of good understanding, and of a beautiful countenance: but the man *was* <sup>h</sup>churlish and evil in his doings; and he *was* of the house of Caleb. **4** And David heard in the wilderness that Nabal did <sup>i</sup>shear his sheep. **5** And David sent out ten young men, and David said unto the young men, Get you up to Carmel, and

go to Nabal, and <sup>j</sup>greet him in my name: **6** And thus shall ye say to him that liveth *in prosperity*, <sup>k</sup>Peace be both to thee, and peace be to thine house, and peace be unto all that thou hast. **7** And now I have heard that thou hast shearers: now thy shepherds which were with us, we <sup>l</sup>hurt them not, <sup>m</sup>neither was there aught missing unto them, all the while they were in Carmel. **8** Ask thy young men, and they will show thee. Wherefore let the young men find favour in thine eyes; for we come in <sup>n</sup>a good day: give, I pray thee, whatsoever cometh to thine hand unto thy servants, and to thy son David. **9** And when David's young men came, they spake to Nabal according to all those words in the name of David, and <sup>o</sup>ceased. **10** And Nabal answered David's servants, and said, <sup>p</sup>Who *is* David? and who *is* the son of Jesse? there be many servants nowa

<sup>a</sup> Chap. 28. 3.—<sup>b</sup> Num. 20. 29; Deut. 34. 8.—<sup>c</sup> Gen. 31. 21; Psa. 120. 5.—<sup>d</sup> Chap. 23. 34.—<sup>e</sup> 1 Or. *business*.—<sup>f</sup> Josh. 15. 55.—<sup>g</sup> Prov. 14. 1; 31. 26, 30.—<sup>h</sup> Psa. 10. 3; Isa. 52. 5, 7.—<sup>i</sup> Gen. 28. 13; 2 Sam. 13. 23.—<sup>j</sup> 2 Heb. *ask him in my*

*name of peace*, chap. 17. 22.—<sup>k</sup> 1 Chron. 12. 18; Psa. 122. 7; Luke 10. 5.—<sup>l</sup> 3 Heb. *shamed*.—<sup>m</sup> Verses 15, 21.—<sup>n</sup> 1 Neh. 9. 10; Esther 9. 19.—<sup>o</sup> 4 Heb. *rested*.—<sup>p</sup> Jud. 9. 28; Psa. 73. 7, 8; 123. 3, 4.

**1. Samuel died**—This fact seems to have been recorded here because it occurred about this period of David's wanderings. **Lamented him**—And well they might, not only in view of his historical greatness and moral worth, but also in view of their past ingratitude to him. They probably felt that many of the disasters of Saul's reign had befallen them because they rejected Samuel and clamoured for a king like the nations. **Buried him in his house**—In the buryingplace belonging to his house, perhaps in the court or garden immediately contiguous thereto, where, like Joseph of Arimathea, (Matthew xxvii, 60,) he may have had his tomb prepared long before his decease. **Wilderness of Paran**—This bounds the wilderness of Judah on the south. See on Gen. xxi, 21, and Num. x, 12.

**2. Carmel**—Not the noted promontory of this name in Central Palestine, on the seacoast of the Mediterranean, but one of the cities of Judah about six miles south of Hebron and one mile northwest of Maon, where Saul erected his monument. Chap. xv, 12. See also Josh. xv, 55. Nabal's work kept him most of the time at Carmel, though his residence was at Maon, and therefore

it was at Carmel that David sent his young men to greet him. Verse 5.

**3. Churlish**—Harsh, stern, cross, and surly. **Of the house of Caleb**—Who inherited Hebron. Josh. xiv, 13; xv, 13. The Septuagint renders *Καλεβίτης*, *Calebite*, by *κυνικός*, *doggish*.

**6. That liveth in prosperity**—It is better to regard the word *חַי* as a salutation, *For life!* that is, *Health! Prosperity!* Then render: *Thus shall ye say, Health! Peace be both to thee, etc.*

**8. We come in a good day**—A day of festivity and rejoicing. The occasion of sheep-shearing was accompanied with a festal meal, and the owner of the flocks was expected to deal liberally with all who had helped care for his possessions. Compare 2 Sam. xiii, 24. **Give, I pray thee**—"On such a festive occasion near a town or village, even in our own time, an Arab sheik of the neighbouring desert would hardly fail to put in a word, either in person or by message; and his message, both in form and substance, would be only the transcript of that of David."—*Robinson*.

**9. Ceased**—Rather, as the margin has it, they *rested*. They sat down to wait the fulfilment of their request.

days that break away every man from his master. **11** "Shall I then take my bread, and my water, and my <sup>o</sup> flesh that I have killed for my shearers, and give <sup>it</sup> unto men, whom I know not whence they be? **12** So David's young men turned their way, and went again, and came and told him all those sayings. **13** And David said unto his men, <sup>o</sup> Gird ye on every man his sword. And they girded on every man his sword; and David also girded on his sword: and there went up after David about four hundred men; and two hundred <sup>o</sup> abode by the stuff. **14** But one of the young men told Abigail, Nabal's wife, saying, Behold, David sent messengers out of the wilderness to salute our master; and he <sup>o</sup> railed on them. **15** But the men were very good unto us, and <sup>o</sup> we were not hurt, neither missed we any thing, as long as we were conversant with them, when we were in the fields. **16** They were <sup>o</sup> a wall unto us both by night and day, all the while we were with them keeping the sheep. **17** Now therefore know and consider what thou wilt do; for <sup>o</sup> evil is determined against our master, and against all his household: for he is <sup>such</sup> a son of <sup>o</sup> Belial, that a man cannot speak to him. **18** Then Abigail made haste, and <sup>o</sup> took two hun-

dred loaves, and two bottles of wine, and five sheep ready dressed, and five measures of parched corn, and a hundred <sup>o</sup> clusters of raisins, and two hundred cakes of figs, and laid <sup>them</sup> on asses. **19** And she said unto her servants, <sup>o</sup> Go on before me; behold, I come after you. But she told not her husband Nabal. **20** And it was <sup>so</sup>, as she rode on the ass, that she came down by the covert of the hill, and, behold, David and his men came down against her; and she met them. **21** Now David had said, Surely in vain have I kept all that <sup>it</sup> is fellow hath in the wilderness, so that nothing was missed of all that <sup>o</sup> pertained unto him: and he hath <sup>o</sup> requited me evil for good. **22** <sup>o</sup> So and more also do God unto the enemies of David, if I leave of all that <sup>o</sup> pertain to him by the morning light <sup>o</sup> any that pisseth against the wall. **23** And when Abigail saw David, she hastened, and <sup>o</sup> lighted off the ass, and fell before David on her face, and bowed herself to the ground, **24** And fell at his feet, and said, Upon me, my lord, <sup>upon</sup> me let this iniquity be: and let thine handmaid, I pray thee, speak in thine <sup>o</sup> audience, and hear the words of thine handmaid. **25** Let not my lord, I pray thee, <sup>o</sup> regard this man of Belial, <sup>even</sup> Nabal: for as his name

<sup>n</sup> Judges 8. 6. — <sup>5</sup> Heb. slaughter. — <sup>o</sup> Josh. 9. 14; Prov. 14. 29; 25. 8. — <sup>p</sup> Chap. 30. 24. — <sup>6</sup> Heb. flew upon them. — <sup>q</sup> Verse 7. — <sup>7</sup> Heb. ashamed. — <sup>r</sup> Exod. 14. 22; Job 1. 10. — <sup>s</sup> Chap. 20. 7. — <sup>t</sup> Deut. 13. 13; Judges 19. 22. — <sup>u</sup> Gen. 32. 13; Prov. 18. 16; 21. 14.

<sup>8</sup> Or, lumps. — <sup>v</sup> Gen. 32. 16. 20. — <sup>w</sup> Gen. 44. 4; Psa. 35. 12; 38. 20; 109. 5; Prov. 17. 13. — <sup>x</sup> Ruth 1. 17; chap. 3. 17; 20. 13. 16. — <sup>y</sup> Verse 34. — <sup>z</sup> 1 Kings 14. 10; 21. 21; 2 Kings 9. 8. — <sup>a</sup> Josh. 15. 13; Judges 1. 14. — <sup>b</sup> Heb. ears. — <sup>c</sup> 10 Heb. lay it to his heart.

**16. A wall unto us both by night and day**—This shows that David used his men not for purposes of plunder, but for the protection of the helpless. The son of Jesse therefore had a just claim on Nabal for the services he had rendered him.

**17. Son of Belial**—See note on chap. i. 16.

**20. Covert of the hill**—A concealed place in the fastnesses of the mountains, away from human habitation.

**22. Any that pisseth against the wall**—Here this proverbial expression first occurs, and we give the reader the several opinions on it. Bochart, Rödiger and Keil understand by the phrase a male person. But it is a sufficient objection to this opinion that in the East men perform this office of nature in a sitting posture. And were this objection removed, there is no apparent rea-

son for characterizing men generally by this term. For similar reasons we regard as unsatisfactory the opinion that a little boy is meant. More plausibility attaches to the explanation of Ephraem Syrus, Vatablus, and others, that the expression characterizes a dog. But it seems clear from 1 Kings xiv. 10, xvi. 11, and some other passages, that persons are intended; and Jahn, Fürst and others have well inferred that, from being primarily applied to dogs, which are thus fittingly characterized, the expression was at length used of slaves and persons of the lowest class. Thus the phrase would be used contemptuously of an enemy whom one designed utterly to exterminate. He would cut off an entire household, even to the lowest, most insignificant, and contemptible member. Compare marginal references.

is, so is he; <sup>11</sup> Nabal is his name, and folly is with him: but I thine handmaid saw not the young men of my lord, whom thou didst send. <sup>26</sup> Now therefore, my lord, <sup>b</sup> as the Lord liveth, and as thy soul liveth, seeing the Lord hath withholden thee from coming to shed blood, and from <sup>12</sup> avenging thyself with thine own hand, now let thine enemies, and they that seek evil to my lord, be as Nabal. <sup>27</sup> And now this blessing which thine handmaid hath brought unto my lord, let it even be given unto the young men that follow my lord. <sup>28</sup> I pray thee, forgive the trespass of thine handmaid: for the Lord will certainly make my lord a sure house; because my lord fighteth the battles of the Lord, and evil hath not been found in thee all thy days. <sup>29</sup> Yet a man is risen to pursue thee, and to seek thy soul: but the soul of my lord shall be bound in the bundle of life with the Lord thy God; and the souls of thine enemies, them shall he sling out,

<sup>16</sup> as out of the middle of a sling. <sup>30</sup> And it shall come to pass, when the Lord shall have done to my lord according to all the good that he hath spoken concerning thee, and shall have appointed thee ruler over Israel; <sup>31</sup> That this shall be no grief unto thee, nor offence of heart unto my lord, either that thou hast shed blood causeless, or that my lord hath avenged himself: but when the Lord shall have dealt well with my lord, then remember thine handmaid. <sup>32</sup> And David said to Abigail, Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, which sent thee this day to meet me: <sup>33</sup> And blessed be thy advice, and blessed be thou, which hast kept me this day from coming to shed blood, and from avenging myself with mine own hand. <sup>34</sup> For in very deed, as the Lord God of Israel liveth, which hath kept me back from hurting thee, except thou hadst hastened and come to meet me, surely there had not been left unto Nabal by the morning light any

<sup>11</sup> That is, Fool.—<sup>b</sup> 2 Kings 2. 2.—<sup>c</sup> Gen. 20. 6; Verse 33.—<sup>12</sup> Heb. *saving thyself*.—<sup>d</sup> Rom. 12. 19.—<sup>e</sup> 2 Sam. 18. 32.—<sup>f</sup> Gen. 33. 11; chap. 30. 26; 2 Kings 5. 15.—<sup>13</sup> Or, *present*.—<sup>14</sup> Heb. *walk at the feet of*, &c., verse 42; Judg. 4. 10.—<sup>g</sup> 2 Sam. 7. 11, 27; 1 Kings 9. 5; 1 Chron.

17. 10, 25.—<sup>h</sup> Chap. 18. 17.—<sup>i</sup> Chap. 24. 11.—<sup>k</sup> Jer. 10. 18.—<sup>15</sup> Heb. *in the midst of the bought of a sling*.—<sup>16</sup> Heb. *no staggering, or, stumbling*.—<sup>l</sup> Gen. 24. 27; Exod. 18. 10.—<sup>17</sup> Psa. 41. 13; 72. 18; Luke 1. 68.—<sup>m</sup> Verse 25.—<sup>n</sup> Verse 26.—<sup>o</sup> Verse 23.

**25. Nabal...his name, and folly...with him**—In the Hebrew there is a play upon the words, the word for folly being *nebalah*; Nabal is his name and nebalah is with him.

**26. The Lord hath withholden thee from coming to shed blood**—By providentially bringing Abigail in his way to appease him with presents and words of prudent counsel. David's dark purpose against Nabal was rash and unjustifiable; for, though certainly treated with contempt, he had suffered no wrongs sufficient to demand such bloody vengeance as he had purposed in his heart. **Be as Nabal**—Be such a fool as he is, for that is sufficient punishment in itself.

**28. Forgive the trespass of thine handmaid**—The trespass of coming unbidden into thy way and opposing thy purposes. **For**—This casual particle refers to what is implied in the preceding words. Thou canst afford to forgive, for the Lord, etc.

**29. A man is risen to pursue thee**—Saul. All David's persecutions, and his royal destiny, seem to have

been fully known to Abigail. She may have learned them from some prophet during one of her journeys to the tabernacle. **Shall be bound in the bundle of life with the Lord**—"The metaphor is taken from the custom of binding up valuable things in a bundle, to prevent their being injured. The words do not refer primarily to eternal life with God in heaven, but only to the safe preservation of the righteous on this earth in the grace and fellowship of the Lord. But whosoever is so hidden in the gracious fellowship of the Lord in this life that no enemy can harm him or injure his life, the Lord will not allow to perish, even though temporal death should come, but will then receive him into eternal life."—*Keil*. **Sling out**—Hurled away and scattered where they may not be found. Vivid contrast to being gathered and bound together in "the bundle of life."

**31. This...no grief unto thee**—An act of cruel bloodshed might have been an occasion of anguish to him at a later day, but an act of forgiveness and mercy never.

that pisseth against the wall. **35** So David received of her hand *that* which she had brought him, and said unto her, *Go up in peace to thine house; see, I have hearkened to thy voice, and have accepted thy person.* **36** And Abigail came to Nabal; and, behold, *he* held a feast in his house, like the feast of a king; and Nabal's heart *was* merry within him, for he *was* very drunken: wherefore she told him nothing, less or more, until the morning light. **37** But it came to pass in the morning, when the wine was gone out of Nabal, and his wife had told him these things, that his heart died within him, and he became as a stone. **38** And it came to pass about ten days *after*, that the Lord smote Nabal, that he died. **39** And when David heard that Nabal was dead, he said, *Blessed be the Lord, that hath pleaded the cause of my reproach from the hand of Nabal, and hath kept his*

*p* Chap. 20. 42; *2* Sam. 15. 9; *2* Kings 5. 19; Luke 7. 50; 8. 49.—*q* Gen. 19. 21.—*r* *2* Sam. 13. 23.—*s* *2* Sam. 13. 29; *1* Kings 20. 16; Prov. 20. 1; Isa. 28. 3, 7, 8.—*t* Verse 32.—*u* Prov. 22. 23.—*v* Verses 26, 34.

**36. A great feast in his house**—The continuation of the festival of his sheep-shearing, of which David had sought to share a part.

**37. His heart died within him**—Through vexation, as some suppose, that his wife had so far complied with the desires of David; but more likely through excessive terror at learning the danger from which he had so narrowly escaped. **He became as a stone**—Utterly paralyzed with horror and fear.

**38. The Lord smote Nabal**—With another stroke, similar in nature to the first, but much more terrible, and which resulted in putting an end to his life. Interpreters have generally, and very naturally, supposed it to have been a stroke of apoplexy.

**39. My reproach**—The disgrace and contempt David received from Nabal. **David sent . . . to take her to . . . wife**—How soon after Nabal's death is not said, but probably not long. She doubtless mourned, according to custom, a set time for her husband, (comp. *2* Sam. xi. 26,) but the haste with which, seemingly, David consummated his marriage with her as ill agrees with our notions of propriety as does his polygamy with our Christian law of marriage.

servant from evil: for the Lord hath returned the wickedness of Nabal upon his own head. And David sent and communed with Abigail, *let* <sup>1</sup>take her to him to wife. **40** And when the servants of David were come to Abigail to Carmel, they spake unto her, saying, David sent us unto thee, to take thee to him to wife. **41** And she arose, and bowed herself on *her* face to the earth, and said, Behold, *let* <sup>2</sup>thine handmaid be a servant to wash the feet of the servants of my lord. **42** And Abigail hastened, and arose, and rode upon an ass, with five damsels of hers that went <sup>3</sup>after her; and she went after the messengers of David, and became his wife. **43** David also took Ahinoam <sup>4</sup>of Jezreel; <sup>5</sup>and they were also both of them his wives. **44** But Saul had given <sup>6</sup>Michal his daughter, David's wife, to <sup>7</sup>Phalti the son of Laish, which *was* of <sup>8</sup>Gallim.

*w* *1* Kings 2. 44; Psa. 7. 16.—*x* Prov. 18. 22; 19. 14.—*y* Ruth 2. 10, 13; Prov. 15. 33.—<sup>1</sup>17 Heb. at her feet, verse 27.—*z* Josh. 15. 56.—*a* Chap. 27. 3; 30. 5.—*b* *2* Sam. 3. 14.—*c* *18 Phaltiel*, *2* Sam. 3. 15.—*c* Isa. 10. 30.

**41. To wash the feet**—To perform the most humble services.

**42. She . . . became his wife**—And shared his varying fortunes during his life in the wilderness, and afterwards at Ziklag and Hebron. Chap. xxvii, 3; xxx, 5; *2* Sam. ii, 2.

**43. Ahinoam**—Who also shared his fortunes, and was the mother of his eldest son, Amnon. *2* Sam. iii, 2. **Of Jezreel**—Not the Jezreel of Central Palestine, which fell to the tribe of Issachar, (Josh. xix, 18,) but a city somewhere in the vicinity of Carmel and Maon. Josh. xv, 56. Its site has not been identified with any modern town. **Both of them his wives**—See note on chap. i, 2.

**44. Saul had given Michal . . . David's wife, to Phalti**—Hoping thereby to cut off one of David's pretensions to the throne, and to attach a new family to his cause. Compare the restoration of Michal to David, *2* Sam. iii, 14–16, where the son of Laish is called Phaltiel. **Gallim**—This place is mentioned Isa. x, 30, in connection with several towns in the tribe of Benjamin, and was probably somewhere between Gibeah and Michmash; but its site is now unknown.

## CHAPTER XXVI.

**A**ND the Ziphites came unto Saul to Gibeah, saying, "Doth not David hide himself in the hill of Hachilah, which is before Jeshimon?" 2 Then Saul arose, and went down to the wilderness of Ziph, having three thousand chosen men of Israel with him, to seek David in the wilderness of Ziph. 3 And Saul pitched in the hill of Hachilah, which is before Jeshimon, by the way. But David abode in the wilderness, and he saw that Saul came after him into the wilderness. 4 David therefore sent out spies, and understood that Saul was come in very deed. 5 And David arose, and came to the place where Saul had pitched: and David beheld the place where Saul lay, and Abner the son of Ner, the captain of his host: and Saul lay in the trench, and the people pitched round about him.

6 Then answered David and said to Ahimelech the Hittite, and to Abishai "the son of Zeruiah, brother to Joab,

*a* Chap. 23. 19; *Psa.* 54. title.—*b* Josh. 2. 1; Matt. 10. 16.—*c* Chap. 14. 50; 17. 55.—1 Or, *midst of his carriages*, chapter 17. 20.—*d* 1 Chron. 2. 16.—*e* Judges 7. 10, 11.—2 Heb. *shut up*, chap. 24. 18.

## CHAPTER XXVI.

THE ZIPHITES' SECOND ATTEMPT TO BETRAY DAVID, 1-5.

1. **Ziphites . . . Hachilah . . . Jeshimon**—See notes on chap. xxiii, 14, 19. The assumption of certain critics, that because this account resembles the one in chap. xxiii it is therefore one and the same, is unworthy of serious attempt at refutation. In their argument the major premise is: Whenever two narratives resemble each other they must always be regarded as based upon the same identical facts!

2. **Three thousand chosen men**—His select standing army. Chap. xiii, 2.

4. **David . . . sent out spies**—Who knew all the windings of that desert. A most wily chieftain was David, and not to be taken unawares by Saul, or any other foe.

5. **David arose**—Probably just after dark. **Beheld the place where Saul lay**—David was not content with the report of his men; he wished to survey the situation with his own eyes. **The trench**—The wagon rampart. See note on chap. xvii, 20.

saying, Who will go down with me to Saul to the camp? And Abishai said, I will go down with thee. 7 So David and Abishai came to the people by night: and, behold, Saul lay sleeping within the trench, and his spear stuck in the ground at his bolster: but Abner and the people lay round about him. 8 Then said Abishai to David, God hath delivered thine enemy into thine hand this day: now therefore let me smite him, I pray thee, with the spear even to the earth at once, and I will not smite him the second time. 9 And David said to Abishai, Destroy him not: for who can stretch forth his hand against the LORD's anointed, and be guiltless? 10 David said furthermore, As the LORD liveth, the LORD shall smite him; or his day shall come to die; or he shall descend into battle, and perish. 11 The LORD forbid that I should stretch forth mine hand against the LORD's anointed: but, I pray thee, take thou now the spear that is at his

*f* Chap. 24. 6, 7; 2 Sam. 1. 16.—*g* Chap. 25. 38; *Psa.* 94. 1, 2, 23; Luke 18. 7; Rom. 12. 19.—*h* See Gen. 47. 29; Deut. 31. 14; Job 7. 1; 14. 5; *Psa.* 37. 13.—*i* Chap. 31. 6.—*k* Chap. 24. 6, 12.

DAVID SPARES SAUL A SECOND TIME, 6-25.

6. **Ahimelech the Hittite**—Mentioned here only. **Abishai . . . Joab**—Both sons of Zeruiah, and nephews of David. Compare 1 Chron. ii, 16. These brothers ever devoted themselves with the utmost loyalty and zeal to their uncle, both during the time of his wanderings and after he became king. See on 2 Sam. ii, 18. **Abishai said, I will go**—Did Ahimelech decline through fear of danger?

7. **Spear . . . at his bolster**—Or, *at his head*, as we have rendered the Hebrew at chap. xix, 13. "I noticed at all the encampments which we passed," says Dr. Thomson, "that the sheik's tent was distinguished from the rest by a tall spear stuck upright in the ground in front of it; and it is the custom, when a party is out on an excursion for robbery or for war, that when they halt to rest, the spot where the chief reclines or sleeps is thus designated."

8. **I will not smite him the second time**—So complete will be the execution of the first stroke that there will be no need of a second.



bolster, and the cruse of water, and let us go. **12** So David took the spear and the cruse of water from Saul's bolster; and they gat them away, and no man saw *it*, nor knew *it*, neither awaked: for they *were* all asleep; because 'a deep sleep from the Lord was fallen upon them. **13** Then David went over to the other side, and stood on the top of a hill afar off; a great space *being* between them: **14** And David cried to the people, and to Abner the son of Ner, saying, Answerest thou not, Abner? Then Abner answered and said, Who *art* thou *that* criest to the king? **15** And David said to Abner, *Art* not thou a *valiant* man? and who *is* like to thee in Israel? wherefore then hast thou not kept thy

*l* Gen. 2. 21; 15. 12; Esther 6. 1; Isa. 29. 10.  
*3* Heb. *the sons of death*, 2 Sam. 12. 5.

**11. The cruse of water**—Of which the king might drink if he awoke thirsty. "The cruse of water at Saul's head," adds Thomson, "is in exact accordance with the customs of the people at this



MODERN ORIENTAL TRAVELING FLASKS.

day. No one ventures to travel over these deserts without his cruse of water, and it is very common to place one at the bolster, so that the owner can reach it during the night."

**12. David took the spear and the cruse**—From this the most careless reader might see that we have in this chapter a different occurrence from that of chap. xxiv. There David cuts off a piece of Saul's garment for a trophy; here he takes his spear and cruse. And, it may be added, there Saul was in a cave, here in the midst of the baggage wagons of his army; there he was performing an act of nature, here he was fast asleep. **A deep sleep from the Lord was fallen upon them**—So that Divine Providence favoured David in his daring enterprise.

lord the king? for there came one of the people in to destroy the king thy lord. **16** This thing *is* not good that thou hast done. *As* the Lord liveth, ye *are* 'worthy to die, because ye have not kept your master, the Lord's anointed. And now see where the king's spear *is*, and the cruse of water that *was* at his bolster. **17** And Saul knew David's voice, and said, *'Is* this thy voice, my son David? And David said, *It is* my voice, my lord, O king. **18** And he said, 'Wherefore doth my lord thus pursue after his servant? for what have I done? or what evil *is* in mine hand? **19** Now therefore, I pray thee, let my lord the king hear the words of his servant. If the Lord have 'stirred thee

*m* Chapter 24. 16.—*n* Chapter 24. 9, 11.  
*o* 2 Sam. 16. 11; 24. 1.

**13. To the other side**—Of the wady or valley which lay between the place of Saul's encampment and the top of a hill afar off from which David cried to the people. "Saul had probably encamped with his fighting men on the slope of the hill Hachilah, so that a valley separated him from the opposite hill, from which David had no doubt reconnoitred the camp and then *gone down* to it, (verse 6.), and to which [hill] he returned after the deed was accomplished."—*Keil*.

**14. David cried to the people**—"The people in these mountainous countries are able, from long practice, so to pitch their voices as to be heard distinctly at distances almost incredible. They talk with persons across enormous wadies, and give the most minute directions, which are perfectly understood. In the stillness of evening, after the people have returned home from their distant fields, the public crier of villages on Lebanon ascends the mountain side, above the place, or to the roof of some prominent house, and gives forth his proclamation with such distinctness that all can hear and understand it."—*Thomson*.

**17. Saul knew David's voice**—The distance and the dimness of the early morning hindered him from recognising David by sight.

**19. If the Lord have stirred thee up against me**—That God sometimes impels men into evil actions is seen

up against me, let him 'accept an offering: but if *they be* the children of men, cursed *be* they before the Lord; 'for they have driven me out this day from 'abiding in the 'inheritance of the Lord, saying, Go, serve other gods. **20** Now therefore, let not my blood fall to the earth before the face of the Lord: for the king of Israel is come out to seek 'a flea, as when one doth hunt a partridge in the mountains. **21** Then said Saul, 'I have sinned: return, my son David; for I will no more do thee harm, because my soul was 'precious in thine eyes this day: behold, I have played the fool, and have erred exceedingly. **22** And David answered and said, Behold the

king's spear! and let one of the young men come over and fetch it. **23** The Lord render to every man his righteousness and his faithfulness: for the Lord delivered thee into *my* hand to day, but I would not stretch forth mine hand against the Lord's anointed. **24** And, behold, 'as thy life was much set by this day in mine eyes, so let my life be much set by in the eyes of the Lord, and let him deliver me out of all tribulation. **25** Then Saul said to David, Blessed *be* thou, my son David: thou shalt both do great things, and also shalt still 'prevail. So David went on his way, and Saul returned to his place.

4 Heb. *small*. Gen. 8. 21; Lev. 26. 31. — *p* Deut. 4. 28; Psa. 120. 5. — 5 Heb. *cleaving*. — *q* 2 Sam. 14. 16; 20. 19. — *r* Chap. 24. 14. — *s* Chap. 15. 24;

24. 17. — *t* Chap. 18. 30. — *u* Psa. 7. 8; 18. 20. — *v* 1 Kings 8. 32; Neh. 13. 14; Psa. 7. 8, 9. — *w* Psa. 18. 25; Matt. 5. 7; 7. 2. — *x* Gen. 33. 28.

from 2 Sam. xvi, 10; xxiv, 1; but those very examples show that such instigation is but a part of the punishment of sins already committed. God tempts no man to sin, and the instigations to evil above referred to are not temptations, but judgments for sins already done and demanding punishment. David therefore tells the king that if the Lord has stirred him up to this evil persecution, then he (Saul) should regard himself as a sinner, and seek reconciliation by an offering. **Let him accept an offering**—Both at thy hands and at mine. David here implies that he himself is a sinner and may need atonement, but that fact does not lessen Saul's sin. **If...the children of men**—Such as the Ziphites and Doeg the Edomite. **Go, serve other gods**—This was the effect of their driving him out of the inheritance of the Lord, that is, from among the chosen people, Israel. They thereby obliged him to be far away from the tabernacle and all the sacred services required by the law. Perhaps Psalms xlii and xliii were composed about this time.

**20. Before the face of the Lord**—Rather, *At a distance from, or far off from, the face of the Lord.* That is, in a distant land, or an enemy's country. **A flea**—An insignificant insect. Compare chap. xxiv, 14. **As when one doth hunt a partridge in the mountains**—Additional comparison, instead of *dead dog*, in chap.

xxiv, 14. The partridge does not so much frequent the mountains as the fields and lowlands; it would therefore be idle for one to hunt a single partridge far off on the mountains, when he could find flocks of them in the lower brushwoods and the fields.

**25. Saul returned to his place**—To his home in Gibeah. These rivals never saw each other again.

## CHAPTER XXVII.

DAVID AT GATH THE SECOND TIME, 1-4.

David had now good reason to believe that his life would be in continual jeopardy as long as he remained in the land of Saul; and seeing in that monarch's conduct so striking a display of human treachery and deceitfulness, he may have even felt that some of his own men might find occasion at some time to betray him into the hands of his enemy. But the method by which he sought to escape from danger was a very questionable one. Far better for him to have gone away into the wilds of Horeb, as did Elijah in the time of his persecution, and to have there awaited the death of his royal foe. Dr. A. Clarke's comments on this wrong step in David's life are not too strong. "There is not one circumstance in this transaction that is not blamable. David joins the enemies of his God and of his country; acts a most inhuman part against the Geshurites and Amalekites,

## CHAPTER XXVII.

**A**ND David said in his heart, I shall now <sup>1</sup>perish one day by the hand of Saul: *there is* nothing better for me than that I should speedily escape into the land of the Philistines; and Saul shall despair of me, to seek me any more in any coast of Israel: so shall I escape out of his hand. **2** And David arose, <sup>a</sup>and he passed over with the six hundred men that *were* with him <sup>b</sup>unto Achish, the son of Maach, king of Gath. **3** And David dwelt with Achish at Gath, he and his men, every man with

<sup>1</sup> Heb. *be consumed*.—<sup>a</sup> Chap. 25. 13.  
<sup>b</sup> Chap. 21. 10.

without even the pretence of Divine authority; tells a most deliberate falsehood to Achish, his protector, relative to the people against whom he had perpetrated this cruel act, giving him to understand that he had been destroying the Israelites, his enemies. I undertake no defence of this conduct of David; it is all bad, all defenceless; God vindicates him not." "This measure was calculated to alienate the affections of the Israelites, and to give credit to the slanders of his accusers; he thus ran himself and his men into the temptations to idolatry; and he laid himself under obligations to those whom he could never favour without betraying the cause of God."—*Scott*.

**1. I shall now perish**—This was taking too dark a view of the case. Dangers, indeed, encompassed him; but he had received too many tokens of the Divine favour to allow himself to yield to such unworthy fears.

**2. Achish, the son of Maach**—Probably the same person mentioned chap. xxi, 11. But David's reception in Gath was very different from that of the former occasion. "The inveterate hatred of Saul, now so well known, was his recommendation, and no distrust could be entertained of a man who fled for his life to the enemies of his country—exasperated by wrongs, and willing, it might be supposed, to avenge them."—*Kitto*.

**3. Every man with his household**—From which it appears that many of David's men, like their leader, had their families with them.

his household, *even* David <sup>c</sup>with his two wives, Ahinoam the Jezreelitess, and Abigail the Carmelitess, Nabal's wife. **4** And it was told Saul that David was fled to Gath: and he sought no more again for him.

**5** And David said unto Achish, If I have now found grace in thine eyes, let them give me a place in <sup>d</sup>some town in the country, that I may dwell there: for why should thy servant dwell in the royal city with thee? **6** Then Achish gave him Ziklag that day: wherefore <sup>e</sup>Ziklag pertaineth unto the kings of

<sup>c</sup> Chap. 25. 43.—<sup>d</sup> Gen. 46. 34; 2 Cor. 6. 17.  
<sup>e</sup> See Josh. 15. 31, 19. 5.

## DAVID IN POSSESSION OF ZIKLAG, 5-12.

David was known at Gath as the conqueror of Goliath, and at one time at least, if not now, was looked upon as an aspirant to the throne of Israel. Chap. xxi, 11. To many persons in Gath he must therefore have been an object of suspicion. Also, as Kitto well observes, "it must have been obviously difficult for him and his men to be living there among idolaters without giving or taking offence; and there was constant danger lest, with so many strong and reckless men moving about among their old enemies, some affray might arise on religious or national grounds, which might have a fatal and ruinous termination. He, therefore, at length ventured to ask the king to assign him some town in the land where he might live apart with his men; and where, as seems to be adroitly implied, they might provide for themselves, and be no longer burdensome as guests in the royal city."

**6. Gave him Ziklag**—This town was situated in the extreme south of Palestine, (Joshua xv, 31; xix, 5,) but its exact location is unknown. A trace of the name may linger in the Wady *Ashuj*, a day's journey southwest of Beersheba. Near here are found the extensive ruins of *Khalasah*, identified by Robinson and Palmer with the *Elusa* of the Peutinger tables and of Jerome; but the ruins, says Palmer, are "so utterly destroyed that it is impossible to make out what the original ground plan might have been, though the course of one broad street can still be traced.

Judah unto this day. **7** And <sup>2</sup>the time that David dwelt in the country of the Philistines was <sup>3</sup>a full year and four months. **8** And David and his men went up, and invaded <sup>4</sup>the Geshurites, <sup>5</sup>and the <sup>6</sup>Gezrites, and the <sup>7</sup>Amalekites: for those *nations were* of old the inhabitants of the land, <sup>8</sup>as thou goest to Shur, even unto the land of Egypt. **9** And David smote the land, and left neither man nor woman alive, and took away the sheep, and the oxen, and the asses, and the camels, and the apparel, and returned, and came to Achish. **10** And

Achish said, <sup>9</sup>Whither have ye made a road to day? And David said, Against the south of Judah, and against the south of <sup>10</sup>the Jerahmeelites, and against the south of <sup>11</sup>the Kenites. **11** And David saved neither man nor woman alive, to bring *tidings* to Gath, saying, <sup>12</sup>Lest they should tell on us, saying, So did David, and so *will be* his manner all the while he dwelleth in the country of the Philistines. **12** And Achish believed David, saying, He hath made his people Israel <sup>13</sup>utterly to abhor him; therefore he shall be my servant for ever.

<sup>2</sup> Heb. *the number of days*.—<sup>3</sup> Heb. a year of days: see chap. 29, 3, till 1058.—<sup>4</sup> Josh. 13, 2.—<sup>5</sup> Josh. 16, 10; Judg. 1, 29.—<sup>6</sup> Or, *Gerzites*.—<sup>7</sup> Exod. 17, 16; see chap. 15, 7, 8.

<sup>9</sup> Gen. 25, 18.—<sup>10</sup> Or, *Did you not make a road*, &c.—<sup>11</sup> See 1 Chron. 2, 9, 25.—<sup>12</sup> Judges 1, 18.—<sup>13</sup> m Chap. 22, 22: Psa. 12, 19; 29, 25.—<sup>14</sup> Heb. *to stink*.

The inhabitants of Gaza are in the habit of removing the stones for building purposes, and have thus nearly cleared the site, in many cases actually digging out the foundations of the houses.<sup>15</sup> May not this be the site of the ancient Ziklag? **Ziklag...unto this day**—A remark inserted, probably, by a transcriber after the Book of Samuel was otherwise complete. See Introduction.

**7. A full year and four months**—This doubtless gives the true sense of the Hebrew, which is, literally, *days and four months*. The Septuagint and Vulgate render: *The number of days which David dwelt in the country of the Philistines was four months*. Josephus has *four months and twenty days*. The confusion seems to have come from misapprehension of the idiomatic use of ימים in the sense of a year. While David abode at Ziklag he was reinforced by multitudes from the land of Israel. See at 1 Chron. xii, 1–22.

**8. The Geshurites**—A nomadic people occupying the desert south of the Philistines. See at Josh. xiii, 2, 13. **The Gezrites**—Rather, *The Gerzites*, as in the margin. Of these we have no certain trace elsewhere, but from this verse we readily infer that their territory was contiguous to that of the Geshurites and Amalekites. **The Amalekites**—See Exod. xvii, 8. **Shur**—The name given to the wilderness extending from the Isthmus of Suez eastward to an indefinite extent, and comprising a considerable portion of Northern Arabia. Gen. xvi, 7; Exod. xv, 22.

**9. David smote the land**—What was the occasion or reason of this terrible slaughter we are not informed, but probably roving bands from these tribes had made incursions into the land adjoining Ziklag. Compare 1 Chron. xii, 21. The question of Achish, in verse 10, seems to imply that David was wont to make such predatory excursions; and some have sought to justify him in this slaughter on the ground that these nations were under the curse of God, and the Israelites were divinely authorized to exterminate them. But this was no sufficient warrant for David, while a fugitive from his native land, and without special instruction from God, to undertake the work on his own responsibility. If any apology is to be offered, it is the supposition that these tribes were disturbing the country by their lawless raids for plunder.

**10. Jerahmeelites**—The family of Jerahmeel, the son of Hezron, and descendant of Judah. 1 Chron. ii, 9, 25. **Kenites**—See note on chap. xv, 6. In making this reply to Achish David uttered a deliberate lie, for which no apology can be offered.

**11. Lest they should tell**—This craftiness shows that David's extermination of these tribes was not with the intention of executing the curse of God upon them, but to save himself from suspicion. By such foul means did he establish himself in the confidence of Achish, who now began to regard David as a powerful ally.

## CHAPTER XXVIII.

**A**ND it came to pass in those days, that the Philistines gathered their armies together for warfare, to fight with Israel. And Achish said unto David, Know thou assuredly, that thou

a Chap.

## CHAPTER XXVIII.

THE PHILISTINES PREPARE TO FIGHT WITH ISRAEL, 1, 2.

**1. The Philistines gathered their armies**—These inveterate enemies of Israel had hitherto been unable to regain the dominion which they lost in the time of Samuel's rule, (see note on chap. vii. 13,) though they made repeated efforts to do so all the days of Saul. Now, however, they are about to enjoy a momentary triumph. **Thou shalt go out with me to battle**—This demand was placing David and his men in a difficult position, for how could they take up arms against their own nation and kindred?

**2. Surely thou shalt know what thy servant can do**—This was an ambiguous reply, and capable of being construed for or against Achish. The king, however, understood it in a favourable sense. **Keeper of mine head**—Guard of my person; chief of my life-guards. How David was providentially delivered from his difficult position we learn in chap. xxix.

SAUL'S DISTRESS, AND INTERVIEW WITH THE WITCH OF ENDOR, 3-25.

Saul's interview with the witch of Endor has ever been regarded as a subject beset with peculiar difficulties, and variously has it been explained. Justin Martyr and Origen held that by the incantations of the witch the spirit of Samuel actually appeared and conversed with Saul. Modern spiritism also affirms that the witch was a medium through whom the king of Israel received communications from the spirit of Samuel. But the majority of the older expositors, and some few moderns, believing it absurd for a holy prophet to be raised from the dead by the arts of witchcraft, regard the supposed apparition of Samuel as Satan personating that prophet. This

shalt go out with me to battle, thou and thy men. **2** And David said to Achish, Surely thou shalt know what thy servant can do. And Achish said to David, Therefore will I make thee keeper of mine head for ever.

29. 1.

opinion, however, has not been generally received by later commentators; and the present prevailing opinion seems to be, that not by the arts of the witch, but contrary to her expectations, and by the express permission and command of God, the deceased Samuel actually appeared and spoke to Saul.

It is usually assumed that the expressions, "The woman saw Samuel," verse 12; "Saul perceived that it was Samuel," verse 14; "Samuel said to Saul," verses 15, 16; "the words of Samuel," verse 20—necessarily imply the actual presence of the deceased prophet. And this conclusion cannot well be avoided if we take this narrative of Saul's interview with the witch to be an actual communication of the Holy Spirit to the writer of the books of Samuel. But was it thus divinely communicated to the sacred writer? or is it the report of the two men (verse 8) who accompanied Saul to Endor? Inasmuch as the greater portion of these books is a compilation from pre-existing documents—often the reports of eye-witnesses of the events recorded, (see Introduction,)—we are perfectly safe in taking the ground that this narrative originated with those who were eye and ear witnesses of the interview, and who reported the matter just as it appeared to them. Perhaps one of them was the king's scribe. See note on 2 Sam. viii. 17. It is, therefore, a most natural supposition that Saul and his two attendants believed that the witch had really brought up Samuel from the dead, and, so believing, they would naturally report the matter just as it is here recorded. Hence such expressions as "Samuel said to Saul," may be legitimately explained in this case as the manner in which the witnesses understood and reported what they heard. See, further, the notes on verses 14 and 15.

We are driven to this view of the subject by the insuperable difficulties that attend the belief that Samuel actually appeared. Admitting this belief, we are forced to admit, also, not only that he was at least apparently brought up by the instrumentality of the witch, but also, according to ver. 15, that he was disturbed, and forced up against his will. For, assuming the real appearance of the prophet, it is idle to say, as some do, that the witch did not bring Samuel up, but that he appeared, to her great surprise and terror, before she had yet resorted to her incantations. Verses 11 and 12 most clearly imply that she was instrumental in causing Samuel to appear, and the alarm of the witch, as her own words show, (verse 12,) was not at suddenly seeing the prophet, but at recognising Saul. Here, then, appears an insuperable difficulty—we might well say, an utter absurdity—to suppose that after Jehovah had refused to answer Saul by urim, by prophets, and by dreams, and had also, in his law, denounced the heaviest punishments against all forms of witchcraft, and had forbidden all resort to such as had familiar spirits, he would yet send Samuel from heaven to communicate with Saul through the agency of a miserable witch!

Another difficulty is the character of the communication which is pretended to come from Samuel. It contains nothing worth sending a sainted prophet from heaven to tell; nothing which the witch might not, under the circumstances, have naturally and easily devised to awe and terrify the king. Its language, too, savours more of the spirit of witchcraft than of the spirit of divine revelation. See notes on vers. 15 to 19.

The manner of Samuel's appearance is also of a strange and suspicious character. He comes up out of the earth, not as one from heaven; he bears the marks of decrepitude and age, and apparently wears the cast-off garments of his earthly life. All this agrees well enough with the superstitions of ancient necromancy, but is hardly in keeping with that lofty conception of the glorious appearing of a sainted spirit which

other parts of the Scriptures suggest. How different from Moses and Elijah, who appeared "in glory!" Luke ix, 31. This is the more noticeable when we observe that the witch is the only one who sees Samuel. She alone sees the gods ascending; she alone sees the old man with the mantle; and it is not until after she tells her pretended vision that Saul understands and is convinced that it is Samuel. See note on verse 14. So, then, Saul did not see Samuel; he only heard, as he supposed, the words of the angry prophet.

In view of all these difficulties we feel obliged to reject that interpretation which assumes an actual appearance of Samuel.

There are two other methods of explaining this subject, either of which is beset with fewer difficulties. According to one theory the witch of Endor had known Samuel in life, had often seen him, and had heard some of his oracles. His venerable form and mantle were familiar to all Israel. His last words to Saul, predicting the ruin of his house and the transfer of the kingdom to David, were also known throughout the land, and would be particularly remembered by one who was devoted to the arts of divination. The witch, also, knew Saul, and had reason to believe that the hour of his ruin was at hand, for the field of his last battle was near her home, and she may have known the position, plans, and prospects of both armies. She not only recognised the king as soon as he came into her presence, but at a glance discerned the anxiety of his soul, and the real object of his coming; and all her words and actions on the occasion were in perfect keeping with the arts of witchcraft, and designed to awe and overwhelm him.

It is impossible successfully to controvert the above suppositions, for they are not only possible but probable; and if any one has doubts of the ability of a professional witch to apprehend a person's thoughts and feelings, and utter some surprising oracles, he will do well to ponder the following observations of a distinguished medical writer:

"A person of close observation and

**3** Now <sup>b</sup> Samuel was dead, and all Israel had lamented him, and buried him in Ramah, even in his own city. And

<sup>b</sup> Chap. 25. 1. — c Verse 9; Exod. 22. 18;

great shrewdness can acquire a degree of skill in furnishing communications purporting to be spiritual, which can hardly be appreciated by one who has not given much thought to the subject. This is a kind of acquirement not sought for, except by those who mean to use it for deception, and therefore by most persons is but little understood. Let an individual of proper capacity make it a business to study the significance of every slight movement, intonation of voice, and expression of countenance, as *criteria* of concealed thoughts, and let this pursuit be prosecuted for years, under the incentives afforded by the love of gain or applause, or the fear of detection, and the tact thus acquired will be likely to develop results that appear almost incredible."

—*Dr. Austin Flint*, (in *Quart. Jour. of Psychological Medicine*, July, 1869.)

There is another, and, to our mind, more complete exposition of this subject, which we present in these notes. It assumes that the woman of Endor was a superior clairvoyant. All the parts of the narrative are so happily explained on this hypothesis as to evidence its probable correctness and worth. Careful and continued investigations in clairvoyance have, within the last century, shed much light on the mysteries of magic. We know that men have charmed serpents and serpents have charmed men. Man, too, can charm man; and it has been shown beyond successful contradiction that, in accordance with certain occult laws of our being, one person can so fascinate another, and place himself in such sympathetic rapport with his soul, as to become sensible of what he feels or imagines. This power, however, exists in different persons in different degrees. Some persons it seems impossible to mesmerize at all, while others are highly susceptible to mesmeric operations, and are easily thrown into a clairvoyant state. Others, again, have the unusual power of spontaneously inducing upon them-

Saul had put away <sup>a</sup> those that had familiar spirits, and the wizards, out of the land. **4** And the Philistines gath-

Lev. 19. 31; 20. 27; Deut. 18. 10, 11.

selves the clairvoyant state, and, by coming into contact or association with the soul of another, the superior clairvoyant becomes cognizant of the feelings and emotions of that soul. By the power of an inner vision he appears to see in that soul the thoughts and impressions that are deeply fixed in the imagination or the memory.

We assume, then, that the witch of Endor was a clairvoyant who could spontaneously place herself in mesmeric intercourse with the souls of those who came to inquire of her; and that with this power she united the practice of lying and deceit as she found occasion to serve her own dark purposes. We hope to show, by fair and worthy criticism, that upon this hypothesis the narrative before us is capable of a happy and consistent interpretation, and is relieved of the difficulties which attend the assumption of the actual appearance of Samuel.

**3. Samuel was dead**—This fact had been already recorded, (chap. xxv, 1,) but is repeated here for the purpose of introducing the narrative that follows. **Saul had put away**—Of this act of Saul's reign we have no record elsewhere, but it was probably done soon after he received the kingdom, and by the advice of Samuel. It was required by the law. Exod. xxii, 18; Lev. xx, 27. **Familiar spirits**—The primary sense of the Hebrew word **פִּיִּם** is a *skin bottle*. Compare Job xxxii, 19. Fürst defines the word as "*the hollow belly of conjurers*, in which the conjuring spirit resides, and speaks hollow, as if out of the earth." Persons of this craft were supposed to possess a divinity or spirit within them by which they were enabled to hold intercourse with the realm of the dead. The Septuagint renders the word by *εγγαστριμυθος*, a *ventriloquist*; in reference, probably, to the manner in which some of these conjurers uttered their responses. **Wizards**—See on Deut. xviii, 10-12.

ered themselves together, and came and pitched in Shunem: and Saul gathered all Israel together, and they pitched in Gilboa. **5** And when Saul saw the host of the Philistines, he was afraid, and his heart greatly trembled. **6** And

when Saul inquired of the LORD, the LORD answered him not, neither by dreams, nor by urim, nor by prophets. **7** Then said Saul unto his servants, Seek me a woman that hath a familiar spirit, that I may go to her, and inquire

*d* Joshua 19. 18; 2 Kings 4. 8.—*e* Chap. 31. 1.  
—*f* Job 18. 11.—*g* Chap. 14. 37; Proverbs 1. 28;  
Lamentations 2. 9.

*h* Numbers 12. 6.—*i* Exodus 28. 30; Numbers 27. 21; Deuteronomy 33. 8.—*k* Deuteronomy 18. 11; Isaiah 19. 3; Acts 16. 6.

**4. Shunem**—The modern Solam, on the south-western declivity of Jebel Duhy, (Little Hermon,) and on the eastern border of the great Plain of Esdraelon. Josh. xix. 18. **Gilboa**—On the mountains of this name, which lie just south of Shunem. From these heights Saul could have seen the assembling hosts of the Philistines. Here Gideon and his host once encamped. Judges vii. 1.

**5. He was afraid, and his heart greatly trembled**—He was a skilful and far-sighted general, and he felt that the Philistines had every probability of victory. He was also probably deeply affected with the feeling that Jehovah had forsaken him. Jehovah's Spirit came not now mightily upon him as in former years; no cunning player on the harp was with him to charm away the evil spirit.

**6. The Lord answered him not**—Which showed that the divine anger was against him. **By dreams**—This may mean that he had prayed God to give him some significant dream, but no such dream had been granted him; or it may refer to the prophets, who neither by vision nor by dream (Num. xii. 6) had recently received any communication for Saul. **By urim**—On the breastplate of the high priest. See Exod. xxviii. 30. But what high priest did Saul resort to after the murder of Ahimelech? Most probably another had been immediately appointed by Saul, and a new ephod had been made for him. It is in no way likely that



SAUL'S LAST BATTLEFIELD.

Saul sent away to David's camp to inquire by the priest Abiathar. **By prophets**—Some of the most distinguished of Samuel's school, whom Saul had with him in the camp.

**7. Seek me a woman that hath a familiar spirit**—He finds that God has utterly forsaken him, and with fell purpose and that impulsive rashness which was ever his easily besetting sin, he rushes into still greater evil. Swept down by the raging cataract of accumulating woes, he still, like a drowning man, grasps at a straw. What wonder that God allowed him to be imposed upon by the arts of necromancy! **Endor**—This place lay about three miles south of mount Tabor, and about seven northeast of



of her. And his servants said to him, Behold, *there is* a woman that hath a familiar spirit at Endor. **8** And Saul disguised himself, and put on other raiment, and he went, and two men with him, and they came to the woman by night: and he said, I pray thee, divine unto me by the familiar spirit, and bring me *him* up, whom I shall name unto thee. **9** And the woman said unto him, Behold, thou knowest what Saul hath done, how he hath <sup>cut off</sup> those that have familiar spirits, and the wizards,

*l* Deut. 18. 11; 1 Chron. 10. 13; Isa. 8. 19.

Shunem, so that to reach it from the heights of Gilboa, Saul and his two men must have partly compassed the Philistine encampment. They probably passed down the northeastern slope of Gilboa to the valley of the modern Jalud, and thence northward, along the eastern slope of the Little Hermon. See note on verse 25. The village is overhung by a mountain declivity which is full of caverns, and it is probable that in one of these the witch concealed herself.

**8. Disguised himself**—So as not to be recognised by the woman. **By night**—The only time when it would be at all safe for him to venture so far in the rear of his enemy, and perhaps the only time when he could go at all, for the morrow might require his presence with his army, and the battle might drive him far from Endor. **Divine unto me**—Saul made known his errand in language such as any one who inquired of a necromancer would naturally use.

**9. Wherefore then layest thou a snare for my life**—We have seen (note introductory to verse 3) that according to some interpreters the witch knew Saul as soon as he came into her presence, and her words to him are but a device to deceive him and secure herself. The possibility of this cannot be denied. She might have recognised his stately form though in disguise, or possibly some secret sympathizer with her craft might have advised her of the king's approach. But it is more in harmony with the narrative to understand that she knew him not until she entered the clairvoyant state. Her

out of the land: wherefore then layest thou a snare for my life, to cause me to die? **10** And Saul sware to her by the Lord, saying, *As the Lord liveth*, "there shall no punishment happen to thee for this thing. **11** Then said the woman, Whom shall I bring up unto thee? And he said, Bring me up Samuel. **12** And when the woman saw Samuel, she cried with a loud voice: and the woman spake to Saul, saying, Why hast thou deceived me? for thou *art* Saul. **13** And the king said unto her, Be not afraid:

*m* Verse 3.—*n* Gen. 3. 4, 5; 2 Sam. 14. 11.

words in this verse virtually charge Saul with a purpose of convicting her of sorcery that he might bring her to capital punishment.

**11. Whom shall I bring up**—She assumes to be, and the whole narrative implies that she was, the instrument and medium of all the spiritual phenomena and communications of the occasion.

**12. When the woman saw Samuel, she cried with a loud voice**—As soon as he said whom he wished to consult, she proceeded, by her peculiar arts, to place herself in a clairvoyant state, and as soon as she came in sensational rapport with Saul's soul, she saw imaged there the venerable form of the mantled Samuel. She saw him just as he appeared to Saul the last time, and just as his stern and threatening form had haunted that monarch's soul for years. But Saul and his two men supposed and reported that she saw Samuel actually arise. She discerned, also, the many harrowing fears of defeat that took shape and form in Saul's imagination, and thus became aware that her consulter was no less a person than the king of Israel. Excessively alarmed at her discovery, she came suddenly out of her clairvoyant state, and said to Saul, **Why hast thou deceived me? for thou art Saul.** Observe that her alarm is not at the sight of Samuel, but at finding that the very monarch of Israel who had put away all wizards out of the land (see verse 3) had himself detected her in her sorceries. Those interpreters who affirm that Samuel really appeared, and

for what sawest thou? And the woman said unto Saul, I saw <sup>o</sup>gods ascending out of the earth. **14** And he said unto her, <sup>1</sup>What form *is* he of? And she said, An old man cometh up; and he

*o* Exod. 22. 28; Psa. 82. 6, 7.—1 Heb. *What is*

frightened the witch by his unexpected coming, are at a loss to tell how she learned so soon that her guest was Saul. Some say she inferred it from the venerable appearance of Samuel; but how this should be when Saul had asked her to bring up Samuel, does not appear. Others say she learned it from something that Samuel said; but as yet Samuel had not spoken. Keil well says, though he teaches that Samuel actually appeared: "Her recognition of Saul may be easily explained if we assume that the woman had fallen into a clairvoyant state, in which she recognised persons who, like Saul in his disguise, were unknown to her by face."

**13. Be not afraid: for what sawest thou**—She probably, at first, after returning from her clairvoyant state, refused, in her fear, to hold any more intercourse with the king; but after he had allayed her fears, perhaps by further oaths, (compare verse 10,) she answered: **I saw gods ascending out of the earth**—Neither the sacred historian nor his interpreter is responsible for the truth or falsehood of these words of the witch. But whatsoever of truth they may contain, we regard them as a part of those devices by which she sought to awe and impose upon, both Saul and his servants. She probably alluded to the ghostly pictures which she saw passing, like so many shadows, over his excited imagination. What she saw in that one vision of Saul's soul was a sufficient basis for her to devise and utter the responses that follow.

**14. What form is he of**—He uses the singular, מוֹרֵה, *his form*, though the witch had spoken in the plural of *gods*. But having seen the image of the mantled prophet in his soul, she proceeds to describe it just as it was pictured there. **An old man cometh up; and he is covered with a man-**

*is* covered with <sup>a</sup> mantle. And Saul perceived that it *was* Samuel, and he stooped with ~~his~~ face to the ground, and bowed himself. **15** And Samuel said to Saul, Why hast thou disquieted me,

*his form?*—*p* Chap. 15. 27; 2 Kings 2. 8, 13.

**tle**—Saul vividly remembered Samuel in connexion with that mantle the skirt of which he had laid hold of and rent at Gilgal, when the prophet uttered against him the last bitter oracle of judgment, (chap. xv. 27;) and a clairvoyant might see his mantled form just as it was imaged in the soul of Saul. **Saul perceived that it was Samuel**—Observe, it is not said that he *saw* Samuel. He formed his opinion from the woman's words. She described the form of Samuel just as he appeared in the memory of Saul—an old man wearing a mantle; and from this description, not from actual sight, he *knew* or *understood* (עָרַךְ; Septuagint, ἐγνώ; Vulgate, intellexit) that it was Samuel. There is no evidence in the whole passage that Samuel was seen by any one except the witch. • **He stooped**—Made obeisance, for he believed that Samuel was there.

**15. Samuel said to Saul**—Did, then, Samuel actually speak? We understand that as the witch did all the seeing for Saul, so also she did all the speaking to him. She was the medium both of sight and sound. The Septuagint version calls her a ventriloquist; and she may have caused her voice to sound from some dark corner, so that Saul and his attendants believed it to be the voice of Samuel. But it is not necessary to suppose this. Any one who sought unto the dead in this way, even though he saw and heard the necromancer utter the words with her own lips, if he believed that the communication came from the person sought, would naturally speak of it in this way. So when Saul's servants afterwards reported this affair, they would naturally say, "Samuel said to Saul," not "the woman said;" for though they may have known that the woman was the medium of the sound, they doubtless believed that the communication itself came from Samuel.

to bring me up? And Saul answered, 'I am sore distressed; for the Philistines make war against me, and 'God is departed from me, and 'answereth me no more, neither 'by prophets, nor by dreams: therefore I have called thee, that thou mayest make known unto me what I shall do. **16** Then said Samuel,

*q* Prov. 5. 11-13; 14. 14.—*r* Chap. 18. 12.—*s* Verse 6.—*2* Heb. *by the hand of prophets*.—*3* Or, *for himself*, Prov. 16. 4.

It should here be observed how perfectly noncommittal the sacred historian is in recording this mysterious transaction. He records the whole matter precisely as it was reported by the two eye-witnesses, and these witnesses reported it precisely as it appeared to them. They believed that Samuel had spoken to their king; but the sacred historian expresses no opinion in the case. He may have believed their report, as they did, but he does not say so. And it is noticeable that none of the sacred writers commit themselves to any explanation of the mysteries which they record. The magicians of Egypt are represented as working actual miracles in opposition to Moses; but no attempt is made to explain the nature of those miracles. So here the sacred writer records a mysterious event just as it was currently reported and believed, but attempts no explanation.

**Why hast thou disquieted me, to bring me up**—This utterance is unworthy of a holy prophet sent on a mission of God from heaven. He charges Saul with forcing him up from the grave against his will. The common interpretation affirms that Samuel rose from the dead by special permission and express command of God; but how absurd, in the light of Christian truth, to imagine the sainted Samuel coming thus from the world of spirits, and angrily complaining to Saul that he had disturbed him! Can it be aught but a pleasure for any of the saints in light to obey Jehovah's orders? Or, if the order involve a painful duty, would it not be rebellion for the servant to complain? The words are rationally explicable only when regarded as a device of the witch to awe

Wherefore then dost thou ask of me, seeing the LORD is departed from thee, and is become thine enemy? **17** And the LORD hath done 'to him, 'as he spake by 'me: for the LORD hath rent the kingdom out of thine hand, and given it to thy neighbour, *even* to David: **18** 'Because thou obeyedst not the

*z* Chapter 15. 28.—*4* Hebrew, *mine hand*.—*u* Chap. 15. 9; 1 Kings 20. 42; 1 Chronicles 10. 13; Jeremiah 48. 10.

and terrify the soul of the king. They strongly savour of witchcraft.

**16. Wherefore then dost thou ask of me**—It required no prophet from heaven to suggest this question to the God-forsaken king, and if we regard it as any thing more than another device of the woman to increase Saul's terror and impose upon him, we involve ourselves in the absurdity of supposing that after Jehovah had in his law condemned all seeking unto necromancers, and after he had refused to answer the king by urim and by prophets, he nevertheless disturbed a holy prophet from his rest in heaven, and suffered him to rise from the dead, apparently as if forced up against his will by the arts of witchcraft!

**17. The Lord hath done to him**—Rather, *for himself*, as in the margin; that is, for the accomplishment of his own purposes. The Septuagint and Vulgate have thought to correct the text by reading *to thee*, instead of *to him*. **As he spake by me**—See chap. xv, 18, 26, 28. These words, let it be noticed, were the last oracles Samuel uttered in Saul's hearing, (compare chap. xv, 35,) and they seem to have been ringing in his ears ever since that last solemn meeting with the prophet. What sufficient reason can be given for Samuel's coming from the bosom of Abraham to repeat these words to Saul, who already had them deeply imprinted on his memory? If Lazarus could not revisit the world to warn the living of their danger because they had Moses and the prophets, (Luke xvi, 31,) still less can we suppose that a sainted prophet would be permitted to return and repeat to an incorrigible transgressor the very words of his earthly ministry.

voice of the LORD, nor executedst his heroe wrath upon Amalek, therefore hath the LORD done this thing unto thee this day. **19** Moreover the LORD will also deliver Israel with thee into the hand of the Philistines: and to-morrow shalt thou and thy sons be with me: the LORD also shall deliver the host of Israel into the hand of the Philistines. **20** Then Saul fell straightway all along on the earth, and was sore afraid, because of the words of Samuel: and there was no strength in him; for he had eaten no bread all the day, nor all the night. **21** And the woman came unto

*o* Jer. 23. 16, 17; Dan. 5. 25, 28; Acts 5. 5.—  
*5* Heb. *made haste, and fell with the fulness of his stature.*

**19. The Lord will also deliver Israel with thee into the hand of the Philistines: and to-morrow shalt thou and thy sons be with me**—To take these words as a revelation from Samuel involves the evangelical interpreter in the dilemma expressed by Charles Wesley:

What do these solemn words portend?  
 A ray of hope when life shall end.  
 "Thou and thy sons, though slain, shall be  
 To-morrow in repose with me."  
 Not in a state of hellish pain,  
 If Saul with Samuel do remain;  
 Not in a state of dark despair,  
 If loving Jonathan be there.

But if Saul, Samuel, and the "loving Jonathan" find after death the same abode, what matters it that "Saul died for his transgressions," and especially for the crime of inquiring of a necromancer? See 1 Chron. x. 13. Universalism may then well comfort the incorrigible sinner, and assure him of immediate "repose" after death with the saints in light!! Such theology may do for the witch of Endor, but not for the holy Samuel. Beholding Saul's despair and terror, the witch knew that the Philistines had every probability of victory in the approaching battle, and that warriors like Saul and his sons would not be likely to survive defeat. We have, therefore, no evidence of a supernatural communication here. \*It ought to be noted that there is no evidence outside of this verse that the disastrous battle of Mount Gilboa was fought and Saul slain on the *morrow* after this interview with

Saul, and saw that he was sore troubled, and said unto him, Behold, thine handmaid hath obeyed thy voice, and I have \*put my life in my hand, and have hearkened unto thy words which thou spakest unto me. **22** Now therefore, I pray thee, hearken thou also unto the voice of thine handmaid, and let me set a morsel of bread before thee; and eat, that thou mayest have strength, when thou goest on thy way. **23** But he refused, and said, \*I will not eat. But his servants, together with the woman, \*compelled him; and he hearkened unto their voice. So he rose from the earth,

*o* Judges 12. 3; chapter 19. 5; Job 13. 14.—  
*o* 1 Kings 21. 4; Psalm 25. 20.—*y* 2 Kings 4. 8.  
 Luke 14. 23, Acts 18. 18.

the witch. Here she herself, perhaps, made a blunder, for very possibly several days elapsed before the fatal battle in which Saul and his sons were slain.

**20. Fell straightway all along**—See margin. He was completely overwhelmed with fear. **Because of the words of Samuel**—He believed that the words he had heard were the words of the holy Samuel. The witch was perfectly successful in making him believe that she had called up the holy prophet from his rest in hades. **No strength in him**—Before his interview with the woman he must have been weak from his long fasting, and now these impressive oracles completely prostrate him.

**21. The woman came unto Saul**—During the interview she had been standing at a distance from him, not out of sight, or in an adjoining room, as some have supposed, but a little removed from the king's presence, so as to be less liable to detection in her arts. **Saw that he was sore troubled**—Saw how completely her oracles had overwhelmed him with terror and excitement.

**22. Let me set a morsel of bread before thee**—Even the witch neglects not the customs of eastern hospitality.

**23. I will not eat**—Extreme mental anguish takes away all appetite. **Compelled him**—Constrained him by urgent importunity. **Sat upon the bed**—The couch or divan beside the table, on which guests are wont to recline at meals.

and sat upon the bed. **24** And the woman had a fat calf in the house; and she hasted, and killed it, and took flour and kneaded it, and did bake unleavened bread thereof: **25** And she brought it before Saul, and before his servants; and they did eat. Then they rose up, and went away that night.

a Chap. 28, 1.

**24. A fat calf in the house**—At this day cattle are kept stalled in the caves of Endor. Dr. Thomson saw little calves at the mouths of these caves, where they were kept while their mothers were at pasture. **She hasted, and killed it**—"With the Bedouin it is nearly universal to cook the meat immediately after it is butchered, and to bake fresh bread for every meal.... A sheep or a calf will be brought and killed before you, thrust *instantly* into the great caldron, which stands ready on the fire to receive it, and, ere you are aware, it will reappear on the great copper tray, with a bushel of *burgul*, (cracked wheat,) or a *hill* of boiled rice and *leben*.... It seems that this killing, cooking, and eating in rapid succession is a very old custom. Abraham, and Manoah, and many others, besides the witch of Endor, were expert in getting up such impromptu feasts; and our Saviour has given it a proverbial expression in the fatted calf of the prodigal son."—*The Land and the Book*; vol. ii, p. 162.

**25. Went away that night**—And returned to his camp on the heights of Gilboa. Some have questioned whether Saul could have travelled from the top of Gilboa to Endor and back in one night, besides holding the interview with the witch. Supposing him to have taken the route indicated in the note on verse 7, it can be shown to have been by no means impossible. In May, 1852, Dr. Robinson travelled from the Wady Jalud, at the eastern base of Gilboa, to within a mile of Endor, in two hours and forty minutes, besides stopping thirty-five minutes to lunch.—*Bib. Res.*, vol. ii, pp. 338–340. Doubtless Saul, travelling probably more rapidly and by well known paths, could have gone down from the top of Gilboa

## CHAPTER XXIX.

**NOW** \*the Philistines gathered together all their armies <sup>c</sup> to Aphek: and the Israelites pitched by a fountain which <sup>is</sup> in Jezreel. **2** And the lords of the Philistines passed on by hundreds, and by thousands: but David and his men passed on in the rearward <sup>c</sup> with

b Chap. 4, 1.—c Chap. 28, 1, 2.

to the same valley, and thence nearly in the route pursued by Dr. Robinson, and have reached Endor in less than three hours. His return could have been effected in the same length of time; and, allowing two hours for his interview with the witch, the whole affair need not have occupied more than eight hours, while it is possible it may have been done in much less time.

## CHAPTER XXIX.

### DAVID'S REMOVAL FROM THE PHILISTINE ARMY, 1–11.

In this chapter we are informed how David was providentially delivered from the embarrassing position in which Achish's demand had placed him. See chap. xxviii, 1, 2. This removal of David from the Philistine camp probably took place before Saul's interview with the witch of Endor, and is introduced here as being preliminary to that which is recorded in the next chapter.

**1. Aphek**—Supposed by some to be the modern el Afuleh, a little to the northwest of Shunem, but it has not been identified with certainty. More likely it is the same as the Aphek of chap. xli, somewhere northwest of Jerusalem, and this gathering of the Philistines is to be understood as occurring before they "came and pitched in Shunem." Chap. xxviii, 4. The historian goes back in this chapter to narrate events that took place before the two armies approached very near to each other. This is the more likely, since the Philistine lords would have objected to David's presence before he had gone with them as far as Shunem. **A fountain which is in Jezreel**—The modern Ain Jalud, situated about six miles south of Shunem, at the base of the mountains of Gilboa. It is "a

Achish. **3** Then said the princes of the Philistines, What *do* these Hebrews *here*? And Achish said unto the princes of the Philistines, *Is* not this David, the servant of Saul the king of Israel, which hath been with me *these* days, or these years, and I have *found* no fault in him since he fell *unto me* unto this day? **4** And the princes of the Philistines were wroth with him; and the princes of the Philistines said unto him, 'Make this fellow return, that he may go again to his place which thou hast appointed him, and let him not go down with us to battle, lest *in* the battle he be an adversary to us: for wherewith should he reconcile himself unto his master? *should it* not be with the heads of these men? **5** *Is* not this David, of whom they sang one to another in dances, saying, *Saul slew his thousands, and David his ten thousands?* **6** Then Achish called David, and said unto him, Surely, *as* the Lord liveth, thou hast been upright, and *thy* going out and thy coming in with me in the host *is* good in my

sight: for *I* have not found evil in thee since the day of thy coming unto me unto this day: nevertheless *the* lords favour thee not. **7** Wherefore now return, and go in peace, that thou *dis*please not the lords of the Philistines. **8** And David said unto Achish, But what have I done? and what hast thou found in thy servant so long as I have been *with* thee unto this day, that I may not go fight against the enemies of my lord the king? **9** And Achish answered and said to David, I know that thou *art* good in my sight, *as* an angel of God: notwithstanding, *the* princes of the Philistines have said, He shall not go up *with* us to the battle. **10** Wherefore now *rise* up early in the morning with thy master's servants that are come with thee: and as soon as ye be up early in the morning, and have light, depart. **11** So David and his men rose up early to depart in the morning, to return into the land of the Philistines. *And* the Philistines went up to Jezreel.

*d* See chap. 27. 7. — *e* Dan. 6. 5. — *f* 1 Chron. 12. 19. — *g* As chapter 14. 21. — *h* Chapter 18. 7; 21. 11. — *i* 2 Samuel 3. 26; 2 Kings 19. 27. — *k* Verse 3. — *l* Heb. *thou art not good in the eyes of the lords.*

*2* Heb. *do not evil in the eyes of the lords.* — *3* Heb. *before thee.* — *l* 2 Sam. 14. 17, 20; 19. 27. — *m* Verse 4. — *n* Chap. 30. 1, 2; Gen. 22. 14; Psa. 37. 23, 24; 1 Cor. 10. 18; 2 Peter 2. 9 — *o* 2 Sam. 4. 4.

very large fountain, flowing out from under a sort of cavern in the conglomerate rock which here forms the base of Gilboa. The water is excellent, and, issuing from crevices in the rocks, it spreads out at once into a fine limpid pool, forty or fifty feet in diameter, in which great numbers of small fish were sporting. From the reservoir, a stream sufficient to turn a mill flows off eastward down the valley. There is every reason to regard this as the ancient fountain of Jezreel, where Saul and Jonathan pitched before their last fatal battle."—*Robinson.*

**3. These days, or these years—**That is, a time sufficiently long to convince him of David's loyalty.

**4. With the heads of these men—**When the princes uttered these words they meant, and probably pointed towards, the Philistine soldiers that stood around them.

**5. Is not this David—**Could the Philistines ever forget the disgraceful fall of their proud chief Goliath? Yet they never dared lay violent hands on David, or, at least, they preferred that

he would quietly depart from them. They had a sort of reverence for him, yet they dreaded his presence among them.

**8. David said unto Achish—**Whether David was really anxious to go into battle with the Philistines we have no means of clearly deciding. It is possible that, as the Philistine lords conjectured, he designed to reconcile himself unto Saul by treacherously fighting against Achish and his compeers, and so was much disappointed when he found this opportunity cut off by the suspicions of the lords. In this case, by **my lord the king** David would have meant Saul, though he knew that Achish would understand him differently. He who had so deliberately lied to the king of Gath on a former occasion (chap. xxvii, 10) was none too good to betray his hospitality and kindness. But Divine Providence arranged for him a more excellent way.

**11. The Philistines went up to Jezreel—**The village of Jezreel, the modern Zerim, (see on Josh. xix, 18.) was about three miles south of Shu-

## CHAPTER XXX.

**A**ND it came to pass, when David and his men were come to Ziklag on the third day, that the Amalekites had invaded the south, and Ziklag, and smitten Ziklag, and burned it with fire; **2** And had taken the women captives, that were therein: they slew not any, either great or small, but carried them away, and went on their way. **3** So David and his men came to the city, and, behold, it was burned with fire; and their wives, and their sons, and their daughters, were taken captives. **4** Then David and the people that were with him lifted up their voice and wept, until they had no more power to weep. **5** And David's two wives were taken captives, Ahinoam the Jezreelitess, and Abigail the wife of Nabal the Carmelite. **6** And David was greatly distressed; for the people spake of stoning him,

*a* See chap. 15. 7; 37. 8.—*b* Verse 19; chap. 27. 11; Job 38. 11; Psal. 76. 10.—*c* Chap. 25. 42, 43; 2 Sam. 2. 2.—*d* Exod. 17. 4.—*e* Heb. *bitter*, Judges 18. 25; chap. 1. 10; 2 Sam. 17. 8;

nem, so that in this movement the Philistines advanced towards the Israelites. The modern village stands "upon the brow of a very steep rocky descent of one hundred feet or more towards the northeast."—*Robinson*.

## CHAPTER XXX.

DAVID'S RETURN TO ZIKLAG, AND REVENGE UPON THE AMALEKITES, 1-31.

**1. On the third day**—The third day after his removal from the Philistine army. So David must have this time been absent from Ziklag at least five or six days. **The Amalekites**—Another predatory horde of the same nation as those whom David had but recently smitten. Chap. xxvii. 8.

**2. Taken the women captives**—The men were all absent with David, but the wives and children (see chap. xxvii. 3, and note) remained in Ziklag. Upon finding the town burned and their wives and children gone, David and his men probably thought first of all that plunderers from the south had been wreaking vengeance for David's late conquests in that country, and had every reason to suppose that their families had been massacred.

**6. The people spake of stoning**

because the soul of all the people was <sup>1</sup>grieved, every man for his sons and for his daughters: "but David encouraged himself in the Lord his God. **7** 'And David said to Abiathar the priest, Ahimelech's son, I pray thee, bring me hither the ephod. And Abiathar brought thither the ephod to David. **8** 'And David inquired at the Lord, saying, Shall I pursue after this troop? shall I overtake them? And he answered him, Pursue: for thou shalt surely overtake them, and without fail recover all. **9** So David went, he and the six hundred men that were with him, and came to the brook Besor, where those that were left behind stayed. **10** But David pursued, he and four hundred men: <sup>2</sup>for two hundred abode behind, which were so faint that they could not go over the brook Besor. **11** And they found an Egyptian in the field, and brought him

2 Kings 4. 27.—*c* Psal. 42. 5; 56. 3, 4, 11; Hab. 2. 17, 18.—*f* Chap. 23. 6, 9.—*g* Chap. 23. 3, 4; Judges 20. 18, 23, 28; 2 Sam. 5. 19, 23; Prov. 3. 5, 6.—*h* Verse 21.

**him**—They may have thought at first that David's readiness to go to the war with Achish was unwise, and now as they felt their loss, they blamed him as the cause of all, and in the emotion of the hour were ready to mutiny. This was not strange when we consider the antecedents of many of these men. See chap. xxii. 2. **David encouraged himself in the Lord**—Betook himself to prayer, and through the ephod of the priest, as narrated in the following verses, received counsel and promise from Jehovah. Happy he, who in the hour of trouble knows how to encourage himself in Jehovah, for such a man shall surely triumph over all foes.

**9. The brook Besor**—Some have supposed this might be the Wady Shehiah, a few miles to the south of Gaza; but it is more likely to have been far south of this, for Ziklag must have been situated far south of Gaza. Compare chap. xxvii. 6, note. **Those that were left behind stayed**—As further explained in verse 10, 21, two hundred became so faint and weary that they were unable to proceed, and so they stationed themselves on the banks of this wady, and there remained till David and the four hundred returned.

David, and gave him bread, and he did eat; and they made him drink water; **12** And they gave him a piece of a cake of figs, and two clusters of raisins: and when he had eaten, his spirit came again to him: for he had eaten no bread, nor drunk *any* water, three days and three nights. **13** And David said unto him, To whom *belongest* thou? and whence *art* thou? And he said, I *am* a young man of Egypt, servant to an Amalekite; and my master left me, because three days ago I fell sick. **14** We made an invasion upon the south of the Cherethites, and upon the coast which *belongeth* to Judah, and upon the south of Caleb; and we burned Ziklag with fire. **15** And David said to him, Canst thou bring me down to this company? And he said, Swear unto me by God, that thou wilt neither kill me, nor deliver me into the hands of my master, and I will bring thee down to this company. **16** And when he had brought him down, behold, they were spread abroad upon all the earth, eating and drinking, and dancing, because of all the great spoil that they had taken out of the land of the Philistines, and out of the land of Judah. **17** And David smote them from the twilight even unto the evening of the next day: and there

*i* Deut. 15. 7, 11; 23. 7; Prov. 25. 21; Matt. 25. 35; Luke 10. 36, 37; Rom. 12. 20, 21. — *k* So Judges 15. 19; chap. 14. 27. — *l* Job 31. 13, 15; Prov. 12. 10. — *m* Verse 16; 2 Sam. 8. 13; 1 Kings 1. 38, 44; Ezek. 25. 16; Zeph. 2. 5. — *n* Josh. 14. 13; 15. 13.

**12. His spirit came again to him**—That is, he revived from the half-unconscious and dreamlike state into which, through anxiety and lack of food, he had fallen.

**14. The Cherethites**—The inhabitants of southern Philistia. Compare Ezek. xxv. 16; Zeph. ii. 5. The origin of the name is involved in obscurity, but the most plausible opinion is, that both the Cherethites and the Philistines came from Crete, and that the Cherethites, as distinguished from the Philistines, were the later immigrants who settled in the land after the colonial origin of their neighbours had become generally forgotten or ignored. See note on 2 Sam. viii. 18. Compare Deut. ii. 23; Amos ix. 7; Jer. xlvii. 4. **The south of Caleb**—The neighbourhood just south of Hebron. Compare Josh. xiv. 14.

**20. David took all the flocks**

escaped not a man of them, save four hundred young men, which rode upon camels, and fled. **18** And David recovered all that the Amalekites had carried away: and David rescued his two wives. **19** And there was nothing lacking to them, neither small nor great, neither sons nor daughters, neither spoil, nor any thing that they had taken to them: David recovered all. **20** And David took all the flocks and the herds, which they drave before those other cattle, and said, This is David's spoil. **21** And David came to the two hundred men, which were so faint that they could not follow David, whom they had made also to abide at the brook Besor: and they went forth to meet David, and to meet the people that were with him: and when David came near to the people, he saluted them. **22** Then answered all the wicked men, and men of Belial, of those that went with David, and said, Because they went not with us, we will not give them *ought* of the spoil that we have recovered, save to every man his wife and his children, that they may lead them away, and depart. **23** Then said David, Ye shall not do so, my brethren, with that which the Lord hath given us, who hath preserved us, and delivered the company that came

*o* 1 Thess. 5. 3. — *2* Heb. *their morrow*. — *p* Gen. 14. 14, 16; Num. 31. 49; Job 1. 10; Psa. 34. 9, 10. — *q* Verse 8. — *r* Verse 10. — *3* Or, *asked them how they did*, Judges 18. 15. — *s* Deut. 13. 13; Judges 19. 22. — *4* Heb. *men*.

**and the herds**—Which belonged to the Amalekites. **Which they drave before those other cattle**—Those other cattle mean the cattle which belonged to David and his men. So David not only recovered his own cattle, but he took all that belonged to the Amalekites besides, and called it his spoil. Of this spoil he sent to his friends in Judah. Verses 26-31.

**22. All the wicked men**—Envious, avaricious, selfish persons, who wished to appropriate all the booty among themselves.

**23. Ye shall not do so**—Strong in the glory of his victory, and in his confidence in God, David is not now afraid of mutiny among his men, and bravely speaks his mind. **Which the Lord hath given us**—They owed their victory to the overruling providence of Jehovah, but of this David's men were prone to be forgetful.



against us into our hand. **24** For who will hearken unto you in this matter? but 'as his part *is* that goeth down to the battle, so *shall* his part *be* that tarrieth by the stuff: they shall part alike. **25** And it was so from that day \*forward, that he made it a statute and an ordinance for Israel unto this day. **26** And when David came to Ziklag, he sent of the spoil unto the elders of Judah, *even* to his friends, saying, Behold a 'present for you of the spoil of the enemies of the Lord; **27** To *them* which *were* in Beth-el, and to *them* which *were* in "south Ramoth, and to *them* which *were* in "Jattir, **28** And to *them* which *were* in "Aroer, and to *them*

\* See Num. 31. 27; Josh. 22. 8.—5 Heb. *and forward*.—6 Heb. *blessing*. Gen. 33. 11; chap. 25. 27.—u Josh. 19. 8.—v Josh. 15. 48.

**25. He made it a statute**—But it had been known in Israel before. See Num. xxxi, 27; Josh. xxii, 8.

**26. To his friends**—Those who had given him shelter and encouragement during the time of his wanderings. "Sending these gifts could not fail to make the elders of these cities well disposed towards him, and so to facilitate his recognition as king after the death of Saul, which occurred immediately afterwards."—*Keil*.

**27. Beth-el**—Not the Beth-el of the tribe of Benjamin, but the Bethul of Simeon. Josh. xix, 4. Its site has not been identified; nor has that of **South Ramoth**, or *Ramath of the south*. Josh. xix, 8. **Jattir**—The modern Attir, ten miles south of Hebron. Josh. xv, 48.

**28. Aroer**—By Dr. Robinson identified with the ruins of an ancient town in a valley twenty miles south of Hebron, called Wady Ar'arah. **Siphmoth**—This place is never mentioned again, and its site is unknown. **Eshtemoa**—Identical with es-Semna, eight miles south of Hebron. Josh. xv, 50.

**29. Rachal**—This place, like Siphmoth, is now utterly unknown. On the **Jerahmeelites** and **Kenites** see note on chap. xxvii, 10. What cities they possessed we are not told.

**30. Hormah**—A city formerly inhabited by Canaanites and called Zephath. Robinson identified it with the pass es Sufah, some forty miles south

which *were* in Siphmoth, and to *them* which *were* in Eshtemoa, **29** And to *them* which *were* in Rachal, and to *them* which *were* in the cities of 'the Jerahmeelites, and to *them* which *were* in the cities of the 'Kenites, **30** And to *them* which *were* in "Hormah, and to *them* which *were* in Chorashan, and to *them* which *were* in Athach, **31** And to *them* which *were* in "Hebron, and to all the places where David himself and his men were wont to haunt.

#### CHAPTER XXXI.

**N**OW \*the Philistines fought against Israel: and the men of Israel fled from before the Philistines, and fell

v Josh. 13. 16.—w Josh. 15. 50.—y Chap. 27. 10.—z Judges 1. 16.—m Judges 1. 17.—n Josh. 14. 13; 2 Sam. 2. 1.—a 1 Chron. 10. 1-12.

of Hebron, but Professor F. H. Palmer finds a much more probable identification of it in the extensive ruins, twenty-five miles southwest of Beer-sheba, called Sebaita. The ruins cover an area of about five hundred yards long and from two hundred to three hundred yards wide. See on Judges i, 17. **Chorashan** and **Athach** are now unknown.

**31. Hebron**—See on Josh. x, 3. In these and other places in the same section of country David and his men were accustomed to wander, and received kindness from the elders.

#### CHAPTER XXXI.

DEATH OF SAUL AND HIS SONS, 1-13.

From this chapter on, through the subsequent history of the Kings, we have the parallel, and oftentimes supplementary, compilations of the books of Chronicles. Compare with this chapter 1 Chron. x. This chapter resumes the account of the Philistine war which was commenced at chap. xxviii, 1, and broken off at chap. xxix, 11.

**1. The men of Israel fled**—It was probably whispered among the Israelitish troops that Saul had received a communication from Samuel, and that their defeat and their leader's death had been foretold. This would unnerve their bravest heroes, and spread terror among all. And after his return from that midnight conference with the witch of Endor Saul himself could have had no spirit to fight.

down slain in mount <sup>b</sup>Gilboa. **2** And the Philistines followed hard upon Saul and upon his sons; and the Philistines slew Jonathan, and Abinadab, and Malchishua, Saul's sons. **3** And the battle went sore against Saul, and the archers hit him; and he was sore wounded of the archers. **4** Then said Saul unto his armourbearer, Draw thy sword, and thrust me through there-

1 Or, *wounded*.—<sup>b</sup> Chap. 28. 4.—<sup>c</sup> Chap. 14. 49; 1 Chron. 8. 33.—<sup>d</sup> See 2 Sam. 1. 6, &c.  
—2 Heb. *shooters, men with bows*.—3 Heb. *found him*.

**2. Followed hard upon Saul and upon his sons**—When Saul and his sons saw the people flying they probably placed themselves in the thickest of the battle, and sought, as by the last efforts of despair, to turn the tide of the Philistines' victory. Thus they exposed themselves to death.

**3. Battle went sore**—This verse is rendered better thus: *Then the battle was heavy against Saul, and the archers, men with the bow, discovered him, and he became greatly terrified because of the archers*—After his sons had fallen, Saul was in worse straits than ever, for now the brunt of the battle came on him. **Archers**—*מִקְשָׁרִים*, *shooters*; explained further by the phrase *men with the bow*; that is, men who shot arrows with the bow. *יָמָאָהוּ*, *found him*; *discovered him*; *singled him out*; *not hit him*, as our version. After the fall of his sons, the archers discovered Saul, and began to aim their missiles at him. *יָמָאָהוּ*, imperfect, shortened from *קָמָהוּ*, *to writhe, to quake with pain*. The word nowhere means *to be wounded*, as our version has it here. It is, indeed, probable that some of their arrows struck him, and this caused his alarm. He saw that he was the mark of the Philistine sharpshooters, and he therefore writhed and quaked with terror at the thought of falling by such hands.

**4. His armourbearer would not**—He dared not stretch forth his hand against the Lord's anointed; the very thought of such an act filled him with fear. **Saul took a sword**—Rather, *took the sword*, that is, the sword of the armourbearer just referred to. **Fell**

with; lest these uncircumcised come and thrust me through, and abuse me. But his armourbearer would not; for he was sore afraid. Therefore Saul took a sword, and fell upon it. **5** And when his armourbearer saw that Saul was dead, he fell likewise upon his sword, and died with him. **6** So Saul died, and his three sons, and his armourbearer, and all his men, that same day to-

<sup>e</sup> So Judges 9. 54.—<sup>f</sup> Chap. 14. 6; 17. 26.—<sup>g</sup> Or, *mock me*.—<sup>h</sup> 2 Sam. 1. 14.—<sup>i</sup> 1 Chron. 10. 5.—<sup>k</sup> 1 Chron. 10. 6; Eccles. 9. 1, 2; Hos. 13. 10, 11.

**upon it**—Thrust it through himself by falling over upon it.

This account of Saul's death is every way consistent with itself and with Saul's character, and is to be regarded as the true and authentic record of the sacred historian himself. The story of the Amalekite, who stole the king's crown and bracelet, and brought them to David, (2 Sam. i. 4-10,) is to be treated as a fabrication, feigned with the hope of finding favour with the successor of Saul.

**5. His armourbearer saw that Saul was dead**—He probably drew the sword from the body of the king and hoped to save him, but all too late. **He fell likewise upon his sword**—The same sword by which the Lord's anointed had been slain. Touching and beautiful was this devotion of the faithful armourbearer to his king. It not only evidences the deep attachment of a true and tender heart, but also shows that Saul was not without a strong personal magnetism, which drew others to him, and kept them firmly there. At his public election at Mizpeh there claved to Saul a number of men whose hearts were touched by God, (chap. x. 26,) and at no time during his reign did he want for attendants who were thus tenderly attached to his person and interests.

**6. All his men**—All his household, (compare 1 Chron. x. 6,) who went with him to the war, and on whom his hopes for the future hung. "The end of the unhappy king corresponded to his life ever since the day of his rejection as king. When he had lost the battle, and saw his three sons fall at his side, and

gether. 7 And when the men of Israel **that were** on the other side of the valley, and **they that were** on the other side Jordan, saw that the men of Israel fled, and that Saul and his sons were dead, they forsook the cities, and fled; and the Philistines came and dwelt in them. 8 And it came to pass on the morrow, when the Philistines came to strip the slain, that they found Saul and his three sons fallen in mount Gilboa. 9 And they cut off his head, and stripped off his armour, and sent into the land of the Philistines round about, to publish it

11 Chron. 10. 8; 2 Chron. 20. 25.—m 2 Sam. 1. 20.—n Chapter 21. 9.—o Judges 2. 13.—p 2 Sam. 21. 13.—q Josh. 17. 11; Judges 1. 27.—r Chap. 11. 3, 9, 11.

the archers of the enemy pressing hard upon him, without either repentance or remorse he put an end to his life by suicide, to escape the disgrace of being wounded and abused by the foe."—*Keil*.

7. **The men of Israel that were on the other side of the valley**—The inhabitants on the opposite side of the great Plain of Jezreel; that is, on the western side of the plain, opposite to the mountains of Gilboa. **On the other side Jordan**—The western side of Jordan, opposite to Jabesh-Gilead. Thus the entire northern part of the land of Israel fell under the dominion of the Philistines. **Philistines came and dwelt in them**—This speedy occupation by the Philistines of the conquered and depopulated cities of Israel, shows their strong purpose to hold henceforth in close subjection the country whose people had been to them so irrepressible a foe. But Abner seems to have recovered these cities to the kingdom of Saul, (2 Sam. ii. 8-10,) and subsequently David utterly subdued the Philistines. 2 Sam. viii. 1.

8. **On the morrow**—They did not pause in the heat of battle or in the first flush of victory to gather up their trophies. **They found Saul and his three sons**—They probably knew that he had fallen, or at all events had not escaped with the fugitives of Israel, but until now they had not stopped their pursuit to search for his dead body.

9. **They cut off his head**—His sons seem to have received the same barbarous treatment. See verse 12. This

in the house of their idols, and among the people. 10 "And they put his armour in the house of 'Ashtaroth: and 'they fastened his body to the wall of 'Beth-shan. 11 "And when the inhabitants of Jabesh-gilead heard 'of that which the Philistines had done to Saul, 12 "All the valiant men arose, and went all night, and took the body of Saul and the bodies of his sons from the wall of Beth-shan, and came to Jabesh, and 'burnt them there. 13 And they took their bones, and 'buried them under a tree at Jabesh, 'and fasted seven days.

5 Or. concerning him.—s See chap. 11. 1-11; 2 Sam. 2. 4, 7.—t 2 Chron. 16. 14; Jer. 34. 5; Amos 6. 10.—u 2 Sam. 2. 4, 5; 21. 12-14.—v Gen. 50. 10.

revenge on the lifeless bodies of the slain shows, according to some writers, the low and miserable barbarity of the Philistines; but did not David treat the dead body of Goliath in the same way? (chap. xvii. 54;) and what shall be said of Samuel's hewing of Agag in pieces? Chap. xv. 33. We must not judge the usages of that age by our own. **To publish it**—That the daughters of the uncircumcised might rejoice and triumph. 2 Sam. i. 20.

10. **Ashtaroth**—See on Judg. ii. 13. **Beth-shan**—The modern Beisan, between the mountains of Gilboa and the river Jordan. See on Jer. xvii. 11. **The wall of Beth-shan**, to which the bodies were fastened, appears to have faced some main street of the city. 2 Sam. xxi. 12.

11. **The inhabitants of Jabesh-gilead**—Who ever preserved a tender and grateful remembrance of what they owed to the heroism of Saul. See chap. xi.

12. **Burnt them**—Such disposal of the bodies of the dead was not a custom among the Israelites, but has been accounted for in the present case on the supposition that these bodies were mutilated and already putrid, so that they could not receive honourable burial; and there was danger that the Philistines, finding the bodies stolen from the wall of Beth shan, would hasten to recapture them, and do them some greater dishonour.

13. **Took their bones**—From which it appears that they were not burned to

ashes. **Buried them... at Jabesh**—Where they remained until David had them removed and placed in the sepulchre of Kish at Zelah. 2 Sam. xxi, 14. **Fasted seven days**—Because of their deep humiliation and grief.

Here ends the history of Saul, and at its close we may well pause to record a few additional reflections on his life and reign. We are impressed from the beginning to the end of his career with the conviction, which deepens all the way along, that he was unequal to his times. He was the center of events and persons greater than himself, and was sadly deficient in those mental and religious qualities which mark the highest style of man. He possessed, indeed, some touching and tender traits of character. In his earlier years he was meek and little in his own eyes, (chap. xv, 17,) though in the eyes of all who knew him he was a choice and noble youth. Chap. ix, 2. His emotional soul quickly caught the ecstasy of the prophetic schools, and he prophesied among them; and even in the later days of his insane persecution of David there would come moments of deep humiliation and contrition of soul, when he would melt into tearful tenderness. Chaps. xxiv, 16; xxvi, 21. But he was unequal to the weight of empire. Elevation to power spoiled and finally ruined him, for there was in him a sad mental and religious incapacity for meeting the exigencies of that most trying period of Israelitish history.

"If Samuel is the great example of an ancient saint growing up from childhood to old age without a sudden conversion, Saul is the first direct example of the mixed character often produced by such a conversion, a call coming in the midday of life to rouse the man to higher thoughts than the lost asses of his father's household or than the tumults of war and victory. He became 'another man,' yet not entirely. He was, as is so often the case, half-converted, half-roused. His mind moved unequally and disproportionately in its new sphere. Backwards and forwards, in the names of his children, we see alternately the signs of the old heathen-

ish superstition and of the new purified religion of Jehovah. He caught the prophetic inspiration not continuously, but only in fitful gusts. Then he would be again the slave of his common pursuits. His religion was never blended with his moral nature. It broke out in wild, ungovernable acts of zeal and superstition, and then left him more a prey than ever to his own savage disposition. With the prospects and the position of a David, he remained to the end a Jephthah or a Samson, with this difference, that, having outlived the age of Jephthah and of Samson, he could not be as they; and the struggle, therefore, between what he was and what he might have been, grew fiercer as years went on; and the knowledge of Samuel, and the companionship of David, became to him a curse instead of a blessing."—*Stanley*.

The true theocratic view of Saul's reign is appropriately given in Jehovah's own words. Hos. xiii, 11: "I gave thee a king in mine anger, and took him away in my wrath." We must not understand, then, that Saul was chosen because God saw in him the proper qualifications for a king, but quite the contrary. God wished to punish his people for their loss of the true theocratic spirit, and their blind adherence to the false principles and aims with which they thought to revolutionize their government, and the punishment came by the administration of an incompetent king. The leaders of Israel were in an almost passionate haste for change. The occasion and manner of their asking for a king was like throwing the blame of all their national misfortunes on Jehovah, and was accompanied by a suggestion that a king like one of the heathen monarchs would be better than any other kind of leader; so he gave them a king much after their fancy in order to punish them—a man of lofty stature, of splendid personal appearance, of strong heroic impulses, but sadly defective in those nobler virtues which make a man after God's own heart.

We need not suppose that Saul was so exclusively chosen of God as that the people had no hand and voice in his election. Already, when he first ap-

peared to Samuel, he was designated as the one above all others "on whom was all the desire of Israel." Chap. ix, 20. His noble presence and lofty stature, and the wealth and political influence of his family, had already led many in Israel, as they were talking up a king, to turn their eyes to Saul, the son of Kish. The sacred historian may have purposely passed over the merely human measures that were used to secure Saul's election, and have given us, as is the design of sacred history, the working of God's hand in the matter.

In the introduction to chapter xiii, where the history of Saul's reign properly begins, we have called attention to the fact that the first three chapters of that history (xiii, xiv, and xv) are de-

voted to a detailed account of the three great errors of Saul's life. From these three errors sprang all his after woes. They were the religious crises of his history, and at each point he failed.

But though Saul's reign was a failure, his whole career is sketched with a plaintive tenderness. Not only did Samuel greatly mourn for Saul, (xv, 11, 35; xvi, 1,) but the sacred historian, caught the sad, tender spirit of that saintly judge, and breathed it into his narrative. In the same spirit David pours forth his touching elegy over the fallen beauty and might of Israel. 2 Sam. i, 19-27. In the same spirit let us remember that "pride goeth before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall."

## SECOND BOOK OF SAMUEL.

## CHAPTER I.

**N**OW it came to pass after the death of Saul, when David was returned from <sup>a</sup>the slaughter of the Amalekites, and David had abode two days in Ziklag; **2** It came even to pass on the third day, that, behold, <sup>b</sup>a man came out of the camp from Saul <sup>c</sup>with his clothes rent, and earth upon his head: and so it was, when he came to David, that he fell to the earth, and did obeisance. **3** And David said unto him, From whence comest thou? And he said unto him, <sup>d</sup>Out of the camp of Is-

<sup>a</sup> 1 Sam. 30. 17, 26. — <sup>b</sup> Chap. 4. 10. — <sup>c</sup> 1 Sam. 4. 12. — <sup>d</sup> Job 1. 15, 19. — 1 Heb. *What was, &c.*; 1 Sam. 4. 16.

## SECTION THIRD

## HISTORY OF DAVID.

## II. SAMUEL, CHAPS. I-XXIV.

This Second Book of Samuel is a direct continuation of the preceding history, and needs no separate introduction. It contains the history of David's reign. We have already, in the history of Saul, been introduced to this distinguished warrior, and have followed him in his wanderings, as he fled to and fro from the face of persecution. We shall now see how he attains the throne of Israel, and how successfully he administers the affairs of the kingdom through an eventful period of forty years.

## CHAPTER I.

## DAVID HEARS OF THE DEATH OF SAUL AND OF JONATHAN, 1-16.

As soon as the results of the fearful battle of Gilboa became known, great must have been the excitement through all the land of Israel. Saul's partisans and all his loyal subjects must have felt the spell of mingled alarm and grief, and even the bitterest malcontents must have been ill at ease when they learned that the whole army of Israel

rael am I escaped. **4** And David said unto him, <sup>e</sup>How went the matter? I pray thee, tell me. And he answered, <sup>f</sup>That the people are fled from the battle, and many of the people also are fallen and dead; and Saul and Jonathan his son are dead also. **5** And David said unto the young man that told him, <sup>g</sup>How knowest thou that Saul and Jonathan his son be dead? **6** And the young man that told him said, As I happened by chance upon <sup>h</sup>mount Gilboa, behold, <sup>i</sup>Saul leaned upon his spear; and, lo, the chariots and horse-

<sup>e</sup> 1 Samuel 31. 1, 6; 1 Chronicles 10. 1, 6. — <sup>f</sup> Proverbs 14. 15. — <sup>g</sup> 1 Samuel 31. 1. — <sup>h</sup> See 1 Samuel 31. 2-4.

was demoralized and put to flight by the Philistines. In this chapter we learn with what anguish David's loyal heart received the bitter tidings.

**1. Two days in Ziklag**—The town had not been so utterly destroyed (see 1 Sam. xxx. 1) that it was impracticable still to abide there.

**2. His clothes rent**—See on 1 Sam. iv. 12, and references. **Fell to the earth**—Thus showing David the profoundest reverence. All his object evidently was to ingratiate himself with the person who, he supposed, would succeed Saul in the kingdom. See further in note on verse 6.

**4. The people are fled**—This announcement of the bitter tidings is climacteric, like that of 1 Sam. iv. 17, where see note.

**6. As I happened by chance upon mount Gilboa**—The account of Saul's death here given is largely a fabrication of this Amalekite. The true account is given in the last chapter of the preceding book, and wherein the two accounts differ, that is to be regarded as right and this wrong. This is a much more natural supposition than that the compiler found two contradictory documents, and, not knowing which

men followed hard after him. **7** And when he looked behind him, he saw me, and called unto me. And I answered, *Here am I.* **8** And he said unto me, *Who art thou?* And I answered him, *I am an Amalekite.* **9** He said unto me again, *Stand, I pray thee, upon me, and slay me: for anguish is come upon me, because my life is yet whole in me.* **10** So I stood upon him, and slew him, because I was sure that he could not live after that he was fallen: and I took the crown that *was* upon his head, and the bracelet that *was* on his arm, and have brought them hither unto my lord. **11** Then David took hold on his clothes, and rent them; and likewise all the men that *were* with him: **12** And they mourned, and wept, and fasted until

<sup>2</sup> Heb. *Behold me.*—<sup>3</sup> Or, *my coat of mail, or, my embroidered coat hindereth me, that my, &c.*—<sup>4</sup> Judg. 9. 54.—<sup>5</sup> Chap. 3. 31; 13. 31.—<sup>6</sup> Psa. 35. 13, 14; Prov. 24. 17; Matt. 5. 44.

to prefer, inserted both! The messenger expected that David would be greatly pleased to hear of Saul's death, and to receive the crown and bracelets of his enemy, and that he would honour the man by whose hand that enemy had fallen.

**9. Anguish is come upon me.**—The margin, following the Latin version of Junius and Tremellius, reads: *My coat of mail, or, My embroidered coat hindereth me.* Septuagint: *A fearful darkness has taken hold of me.* Others render שָׁרַץ, a *spasm* or *cramp*. The root שָׁרַץ means *to interweave*, and its derivative, as here applied to Saul's difficulty, most probably means *confusion, perplexity of mind*. Thus the meaning is, *Confusion or bewilderment has seized upon me.*

**10. I took the crown.**—By his disobedience in not smiting the Amalekites Saul forfeited his crown and his kingdom, and now, behold, that crown is taken from his head by the hand of an Amalekite and transmitted to the man he hated and sought to destroy! **Bracelet.**—Or *armlet*, an ornament for the arm or wrist.

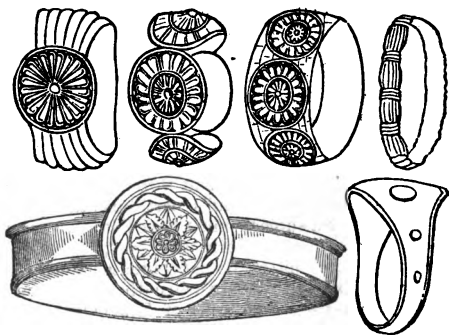
even, for Saul, and for Jonathan his son, and for the people of the Lord, and for the house of Israel; because they were fallen by the sword. **13** And David said unto the young man that told him, *Whence art thou?* And he answered, *I am the son of a stranger, an Amalekite.* **14** And David said unto him, *How wast thou not afraid to stretch forth thine hand to destroy the Lord's anointed?* **15** And David called one of the young men, and said, *Go near, and fall upon him.* And he smote him that he died. **16** And David said unto him, *Thy blood be upon thy head; for thy mouth hath testified against thee, saying, I have slain the Lord's anointed.*

**17** And David lamented with this lamentation over Saul and over Jona-

<sup>m</sup> Num. 12. 8.—<sup>n</sup> 1 Sam. 31. 4.—<sup>o</sup> 1 Sam. 24. 6; 26. 9; Psa. 105. 15.—<sup>p</sup> Chap. 4. 10, 12.—<sup>q</sup> 1 Sam. 26. 9; 1 Kings 2. 32, 33, 37.—<sup>r</sup> Verse 10; Luke 19. 22.

**11. David took hold on his clothes, and rent them.**—The sign of most bitter humiliation and grief. See references. **Likewise all the men.**—David's anguish was contagious, so that all his attendants caught the spirit of his sorrow, and wept with him.

**16. Thy blood be upon thy head.**—Thy infamous deed of slaying the king can be atoned for only by the immediate shedding of thine own blood. **Thy mouth hath testified against thee.**—David regarded an offence against the person of the king as most execrable sacrilege, and therefore, to his mind, a man who gloried in slaying the Lord's anointed deserved death.



ASSYRIAN ARMIETS.

ghan his son: **18** (\*Also he bade them teach the children of Judah *the use of*

*1 Sam. 31. 3.*

# DAVID'S LAMENTATION OVER SAUL AND JONATHAN, 17-27.

**17. This lamentation**, which evidently sprang from deep and sanctified emotions, is an elegy of surpassing tenderness, and one of the most beautiful odes of the Old Testament. The full power and beauty of Israel, as represented by the king and his noble-hearted son, is the poet's theme, and though that king had burned with a deadly fury towards David, chased him like a partridge in the mountains, and sought his life in many ways, not the slightest trace of resentment or cherished passion, not the most distant allusion to the persecutions which he had suffered from him, appear in all this tender song. It is the pure lamentation of a loving heart that has forgiven and forgotten the injuries of the past, and knows no other feeling than that of profoundest sympathy and sorrow for the heroic dead. "It is almost impossible," says Dr. Clarke, "to read the noble original without feeling every word swollen with a sigh or broken with a sob. A heart pregnant with distress, and striving to utter expressions descriptive of its feelings, which are repeatedly interrupted by an excess of grief, is most sensibly painted throughout the whole." We give, as usual in our notes on poetical passages, a new and literal version, in which the order and idiom of the Hebrew original is, as far as possible, exhibited.

**18. Teach the children of Judah the use of the bow**—Because, say some of the older interpreters, the chiefs of Israel had fallen by the arrows of the enemy, therefore David thought it necessary that the warriors of Judah should also become skilled in archery. This interpretation our translators have countenanced by adding the words *the use of*, which are not in the original. But the Israelites were already skilled in the use of the bow, and in verse 22 the poet celebrates the

the bow: behold, *it is* written 'in the book 'of Jasher:)' **19** The beauty of

*1 Josh. 10. 13. — 4 Or. of the upright.*

fearful power of the bow of Jonathan. The word *Bow* is therefore to be regarded as the title of this elegy. The second chapter of the Koran is entitled *THE COW*, because it contains the words, "God commands you to sacrifice a cow." So this dirge is called *THE BOW* from the mention in verse 22 of the bow of Jonathan. This title would tenderly remind David of that affectionate interview with Jonathan when the latter shot from his bow the arrows that were to warn him of his danger. *1 Sam. xx, 20, 36.* Compare, also, the titles to some of the Psalms. (*Psa. xxii; xlv.*) David commanded his own tribe to learn to sing this mournful strain in order to show that they had no hardness and jealousy towards Benjamin, the tribe of Saul. At a later time all the singing men and singing women were required to learn Jeremiah's lamentation over the good Josiah. *2 Chron. xxxv, 25.* **Book of Jasher**—A book of national songs; a Hebrew anthology. It was probably a compilation begun early in the history of Israel, enlarged by additions at later periods. Like several other ancient works quoted by writers of the Old Testament, this book is now lost. See on Josh. x, 13.

"In a fighting age the bard stands in the same relation to civilization as the newspaper of the present day. He was the organ of intelligence, the bearer of news, the representative of the ideas of his times. When men take to reading, the bard becomes a plaything. He may beguile the long hours of a winter evening, or increase the pleasures of a feast, but no more. In early times he was the educator also. His lays, as sung by himself, and repeated from mouth to mouth, formed the minds of his countrymen. The song, the ballad, these were the intellectual food of the people. Of such ballads probably consisted the book of Jasher, and the book of the wars of Jehovah, mentioned in the Bible."—SMITH'S *Bampton Lecture* for 1869.



Israel is slain upon thy high places :  
"how are the mighty fallen!" 20 "Tell  
it not in Gath, publish it not in the  
streets of Ashkelon; lest" the daughters  
of the Philistines rejoice, lest the daugh-  
ters of "the uncircumcised triumph.

19. The gazelle of Israel, upon thy mountains slain!

How have fallen mighty ones!

20. Tell it not in Gath,

Publish it not in the streets of Ashkelon,

Lest rejoice the daughters of the Philistines,

Lest exultingly triumph the daughters of the uncircumcised.

21. Mountains in Gilboa!

No dew nor rain upon you, nor fields of offerings,

For there was vilely cast away the shield of mighty ones,

The shield of Saul not anointed with oil.

21 Ye 'mountains of Gilboa, *let there*  
*be* no dew, neither *let there be* rain, upon  
you, nor fields of offerings: for there the  
shield of the mighty is vilely cast away,  
the shield of Saul, *as though he had not*  
*been* "anointed with oil. 22 From the

u Ver. 27.—v 1 Sam. 31. 9; Mic. 1. 10; Judg. 16. 23.  
w Exod. 15. 20; Judg. 11. 34; 1 Sam. 18. 6.

x 1 Sam. 31. 4.—y 1 Sam. 31. 1.—z Judg. 5. 23;  
Job 3. 8, 4; Jer. 20. 14.—a 1 Sam. 10. 1.

19. **Gazelle**—The word גִּזְלֵי pri-  
marily means *ornament, beauty*, and is  
so rendered by the common version  
and most interpreters. But it also  
signifies in many places a *gazelle*, or  
*antelope*, one of the fleetest and most  
beautiful of eastern animals. We pre-  
fer this rendering here because of its  
appropriateness and beauty. The allu-  
sion is to Jonathan, not to both Saul  
and Jonathan. This is seen in verse  
25, where, instead of *gazelle of Israel*,  
we have the name *Jonathan*. Hence  
the mistake of those who urge that  
*mighty ones* of one member of the  
parallelism must be equivalent to the  
corresponding word of the other. **Thy**  
**mountains**—The mountains of the ga-  
zelle. The image is that of a fleet and  
beautiful animal pierced with arrows,  
and dead upon its own native heights.

20. **Tell it not**—For bitterly humili-  
ating would it be to have the women  
of Philistia celebrate with singing and  
dancing and instrumental music (comp.  
1 Sam. xviii, 6) this victory over Israel.

21. **Mountains in Gilboa**—"Even  
nature is to join in the mourning.  
May God withdraw his blessing from  
the mountains upon which the heroes  
have fallen, that they may not be moist-  
ened by the dew and rain of heaven,  
but, remaining in eternal barrenness,  
be memorials of the horrible occurrence  
that has taken place upon them!"—  
Keil. **Fields of offerings**—Fertile

fields, producing the best and most suit-  
able fruits for offering in sacrifice to God.  
**Vilely cast away the shield**—In-  
gloriously and with abhorrence cast  
away by the mighty heroes themselves  
upon realizing that it no longer defends  
them from the arrows of the enemy.  
**Not anointed with oil**—It is diffi-  
cult to determine whether this re-  
fers to Saul or his shield. The Eng-  
lish version, after the Vulgate, supplies  
the words *as though*, and refers it to  
Saul. It favours this interpretation that  
the word מְשִׁיחַ is always elsewhere ap-  
plied to persons, never to things. The  
Chaldee, Syriac, and Arabic omit the  
negative particle, and read: *The shield*  
*of Saul who was anointed with oil*. But  
these versions evidently aimed to cor-  
rect the Hebrew text. Some have  
thought to read בָּלִי, *instruments*, for בָּלִי,  
*not*, but this is mere conjecture. Others  
refer the epithet to the shield, and un-  
derstand that Saul had not properly  
anointed his shield previous to the  
battle. Compare Isa. xxi, 5. Keil, on  
the other hand, supposes that the shield  
had not after the battle been polished  
with oil, so that the marks of Saul's  
blood still adhered to it. We prefer,  
however, to refer the word *anointed* to  
Saul, and understand David as implying  
that after the shield was vilely cast  
away, and Saul himself was ignobly  
fallen, he could no longer be regarded  
as the anointed of Jehovah. Thus: *The*

blood of the slain, from the fat of the mighty, \*the bow of Jonathan turned not back, and the sword of Saul returned not empty. **23** Saul and Jonathan *were* lovely and \*pleasant in their lives, and in their death they were not divided: they were swifter than eagles, they were \*stronger than lions. **24** Ye daughters of Israel, weep over Saul, who clothed you in scarlet, with *other* delights; \*who

put on ornaments of gold upon your apparel. **25** How are the mighty fallen in the midst of the battle! O Jonathan, *thou wast* slain in thine high places. **26** I am distressed for thee, my brother Jonathan: very pleasant *hast* thou been unto me: \*thy love to me was wonderful, passing the love of women. **27** How are the mighty fallen, and the weapons of war perished!

22. From the blood of the slain,  
From the fat of mighty ones,  
The bow of Jonathan turned not back,  
And the sword of Saul returned not empty.
23. Saul and Jonathan, beloved and pleasant in their lives,  
And in their death they were not divided.  
Than eagles they were swifter,  
Than lions they were mightier.
24. Daughters of Israel! over Saul weep,  
Who clothed you in scarlet with delights,  
Who put an ornament of gold upon your apparel.
25. How have fallen mighty ones in the midst of the battle!  
Jonathan, upon thy mountains slain!
26. Distress is upon me for thy sake, my brother Jonathan!  
Thou wast tender towards me exceedingly;  
More wonderful thy love towards me than the love of women!
27. How have fallen mighty ones,  
And perished the implements of war!

b 1 Sam. 18. 4.—5 Or. *sweet*.—c Judg. 14. 18.  
d Judges 2. 32.

*shield of Saul*, (who, after his inglorious fall, is) *not* (now) *the anointed with oil*. Comp. Isa. li, 21. "Thou afflicted, and drunken, but not with wine."

**22. Turned not back**—This verse celebrates the heroism and unusual success of the mighty dead as warriors.

**23. Beloved and pleasant in their lives**—Jonathan was eminently so, and though Saul in his madness had even threatened his son's life, (1 Sam. xx, 33), and sought for successive years to destroy David, yet David's tender heart seems to forget all the injuries of the past, and celebrates only the virtues of his fallen enemy. Saul's love for his son Jonathan was exceedingly strong, as may be seen from such passages as 1 Sam. xiv, 39; xix, 6; xx, 2; and while Jonathan's love for David was wonderful, it was so much stronger for his father that he cast in his lot with the sinking fortunes of the latter, rather than with the growing greatness of his friend David. **Swifter**

e 1 Sam. 18. 1, 3; 19. 2; 20. 17, 41; 23. 16.  
f Verse 19.

**than eagles**—Fleetness of foot was an admired qualification of a warrior Chap. ii, 8. The mightiest hero of Greece was the "swift-footed Achilles."

**24. Daughters... who clothed you in scarlet**—"The idea is, that under Saul the land had attained to such a degree of wealth that elegance and splendour of dress were within the reach of all. *Scarlet* was the favourite colour of the wealthy and noble. Prov. xxxi, 21; Lam. iv, 5; Dan. v, 7, 16, 29. This appeal to the instinctive taste of the sex well comports with the general character of oriental females; Compare Judges v, 28-30."—*Robinson*. **With delights**—With other delightful things of a similar nature to scarlet-coloured clothing.

**26. Distress is upon me**—Filled with heart-rending grief. **Thy love to me was wonderful**—See note on 1 Sam. xx, 13.

**27. Implements of war**—The shields and other implements that were vilely

## CHAPTER II.

**A**ND it came to pass after this, that David <sup>a</sup>inquired of the Lord, saying, Shall I go up into any of the cities of Judah? And the Lord said unto him, Go up. And David said, Whither shall I go up? And he said, Unto <sup>b</sup>Hebron. **2** So David went up thither, and his <sup>c</sup>two wives also, Ahinoam the Jezreelitess, and Abigail Nabal's wife the Car-

<sup>a</sup> Judges 1. 1; 1 Samuel 23. 2, 4, 9; 30. 7, 8.—  
<sup>b</sup> 1 Samuel 30. 31; verse 11; chapter 5. 1, 3; 1 Kings 2. 11.

cast away. Verse 21. Some understand here, not the weapons of war but the heroes, considered figuratively as the instruments by whom the war was carried on, and Isa. xiii, 5, is referred to as a parallel. But though persons are sometimes in this sense termed *instruments*, we nowhere find them called *instruments of war*; and as this elegy makes mention of military weapons as cast away with abhorrence, we feel obliged to adhere to the most obvious signification of the word.

## CHAPTER II.

DAVID KING IN HEBRON, AND ISH-BOSHETH KING IN MAHANAIM, 1-11.

**1. After this**—After his lamentation over the death of Saul and Jonathan. **Inquired of the Lord**—By the urim of the priest Abiathar. Compare 1 Sam. xxiii, 9-12. **Shall I go up**—David knew that he was to be king, but how to attain the throne he knew not. He had no unholy ambition, and in matters of so great responsibility he wished Jehovah to guide him. **Hebron**—The ancient city of the patriarchs. See on Gen. xiii, 18, and Josh. x, 3. It was inexpedient for David longer to abide in the land of the Philistines, and Hebron, because of its peculiarly sacred associations and its central position in the tribe of Judah, was a most appropriate place for David to begin his reign. But it should be observed that, though he received divine counsel to go up to Hebron, he was not divinely advised to receive the kingdom from a single tribe. See note on verse 4.

**3. Cities of Hebron**—Cities situated round about Hebron; dependent towns.

**melite.** **3** And <sup>d</sup>his men that were with him did David bring up, every man with his household: and they dwelt in the cities of Hebron. **4** And the men of Judah came, and there they anointed David king over the house of Judah. And they told David, saying, *That* <sup>e</sup>the men of Jabesh-gilead were they that buried Saul. **5** And David sent messengers unto the men of Jabesh-gilead,

<sup>c</sup> 1 Samuel 30. 5.—<sup>d</sup> 1 Samuel 27. 2, 3; 30. 1; 1 Chronicles 12. 1.—<sup>e</sup> Verse 11; chap. 5. 5.—  
<sup>f</sup> 1 Sam. 31. 11, 13.

He took care, says Patrick, to provide for his followers and their families, according to every one's merit.

**4. The men of Judah came**—The elders of Judah, the official representatives of that tribe. **And there they anointed David king over the house of Judah**—By what particular ceremony and by whom the anointing was done we are not told. He had already been anointed by Samuel, (1 Samuel xvi, 13,) but that was done privately in his father's house. We shall see in the sequel that when he became king of all Israel he was again anointed. Chap. v, 3. It was an ill-advised course and a dangerous policy for David to accept the kingdom of a single tribe. It was a sanction to a usurpation of power which no single tribe had a right to exercise, and it intensified that rivalry and hostility between Judah and the other tribes which at the death of Solomon resulted in the division of the kingdom. Had it not been that David had so strong a hold upon the nation's heart, the rupture between the tribes might have occurred long before it did.

**4-7.** This message to the men of Jabesh-gilead was well-timed and skilfully presented. It showed David's tenderness and respect for Saul, and in a measure served to remove from his advancement to royalty the appearance of usurpation and rebellion. But the proclamation that he had been anointed king over the house of Judah was an indirect announcement that it would be to the interest of the men of Jabesh to acknowledge him as Saul's successor. This part of his message was, therefore, open to criticism, since it was a sort of political bid for their obedience and influence.

and said unto them, 'Blessed be ye of the LORD, that ye have showed this kindness unto your lord, *even* unto Saul, and have buried him. 6 And now <sup>2</sup>the LORD show kindness and truth unto you: and I also will requite you this kindness, because ye have done this thing. 7 Therefore now let your hands be strengthened, and <sup>1</sup>be ye valiant: for your master Saul is dead, and also the house of Judah have anointed me king

<sup>2</sup>Ruth 2. 20; 3. 10; Psa. 115. 15.—<sup>1</sup>2 Tim. 1. 16, 18.—<sup>1</sup>Heb. *be ye the sons of valour*.

6. **Kindness and truth**—Prominent marks of the divine government. Compare Exod. xxxiv. 6. Kind to his people by being true to his promises. **I will also requite you this kindness**—Rather, *I also do you this kindness*, namely, the attention and honour shown in the blessings I give you through these messengers. Some have thought that David here promises them future favours, but in that case the words *this kindness* would refer to their act towards Saul, and make the following *because ye have done this thing*, redundant.

7. **Your master Saul is dead**—And therefore ye are without a king unless ye acknowledge me, as the house of Judah have done. Surely they could not misunderstand his wishes, but the presence of the Israelitish army under Abner in Gilead made it imprudent and hazardous for the single town of Jabesh to declare for David.

8. **Captain of Saul's host**—Abner's position and influence in the army rendered it meet for him, at the present emergency, to look after the interests of the family of his fallen king. His action in making Ishbosheth king may have been hastened by this message of David to the men of Jabesh-gilead. **Ishbosheth**—Called also *Eshbaal*. 1 Chron. viii. 33. He was the fourth and only surviving son of Saul. **Mahanaim**—A place of importance on the east side of the Jordan, probably at the modern Mahneh, but its site has not been satisfactorily determined. See on Gen. xxxii. 2, and Josh. xiii. 26. The reason of Abner's anointing Ishbosheth king in one of the cities east of the Jordan was, because the chief cities of the west were now in the hands of Phil-

over them. 8 But <sup>1</sup>Abner the son of Ner, captain of <sup>2</sup>Saul's host, took <sup>3</sup>Ishbosheth the son of Saul, and brought him over to Mahanaim; 9 And made him king over Gilead, and over the Ashurites, and over Jezreel, and over Ephraim, and over Benjamin, and over all Israel. 10 Ishbosheth Saul's son was forty years old when he began to reign over Israel, and reigned two years. But the house of Judah followed David.

<sup>1</sup>1 Sam. 14. 50.—<sup>2</sup>Heb. *the host which was Saul's*.—<sup>3</sup>Or, *Esh-baal*, 1 Chron. 8. 33; 9. 39.

istines, and Mahanaim was especially appropriate from its sacred associations.

9. **Gilead**—The mountainous region east of the Jordan. See map, page 234. **The Ashurites**—Who these were it is impossible to determine. They could not have been the people of Asshur, (Assyria), nor the Asshurim of Gen. xxv. 3. Better is the reading of the Chaldee, *the house of Asher*, by which is meant the territory of the tribe of Asher in the north of Palestine, and the adjacent country north of the plain of Jezreel. The Vulgate, Syriac, and Arabic read, *the Geshurites*. But these could not have been the Geshurites of 1 Sam. xxvii. 8, nor is it likely that Ishbosheth reigned over the kingdom of Talmi, whose daughter David had taken to wife. Chap. iii. 3. **Jezreel**—The city and great plain of this name. See on Josh. xv. 56; xvii. 16. This great plain was mainly occupied by the tribes of Issachar and Zebulun. **Over all Israel**—With the exception, of course, of Judah, over which David had been anointed king. The recovering of all the territory specified in this verse, and the subjecting of it to Ishbosheth, probably occupied Abner and his army some time. See on verse 10.

10. **Ishbosheth. . . reigned two years**—The next verse informs us that David reigned in Hebron over Judah seven years and six months, and therefore we must naturally conclude that for five years and six months the other tribes of Israel were without an acknowledged king. It is altogether gratuitous to assume, as some critics have done, that Ishbosheth reigned all the time that David reigned in Hebron. It is probable, however, that David was

O. T.

**11** And <sup>the</sup> time that David was king in Hebron over the house of Judah was seven years and six months.

**12** And Abner the son of Ner, and the servants of Ishbosheth the son of Saul, went out from Mahanaim to Gibeon. **13** And Joab the son of Zeruiah, and the servants of David, went out, and met <sup>together</sup> by <sup>the</sup> pool of Gibeon: and they sat down, the one on the one side of the pool, and the other on the other side of the pool. **14** And Abner

*k* Chap. 5. 5; 1 Kings 2. 11. — *4* Heb. *number of days*. — *l* Josh. 18. 25. — *5* Heb. *them together*.

king in Hebron some time before Ishbosheth began to reign. David seems to have been anointed very soon after Saul's death, but it must have taken Abner some time to gather up the scattered army and recover from the defeat and losses of Gilboa sufficiently to attend to the inauguration of Ishbosheth. So it is likely that David reigned in Hebron a year or more before the son of Saul was anointed at Mahanaim. Then followed two years of strife and bickering between the two governments, which was of sufficient length to be called "long war." Chap. iii. 1. And after both Abner and Ishbosheth had been vilely assassinated, it is but natural to suppose that the northern tribes would wait some years to observe the manner of David's government before they all came together to acknowledge and anoint him king. See on chap. v. 1.

#### THE BATTLE OF GIBEON, 12-32.

**12. Went out from Mahanaim**—That is, marched out from the capital of the kingdom of Ishbosheth. Having been successful in bringing all the northern and eastern tribes to acknowledge Ishbosheth as king, Abner seems to have thought to bring over the tribe of Judah also. He at least began the fight. **Gibeon**—The modern el-Jib, a few miles northwest of Jerusalem. See on Josh. ix. 3.

**13. Joab**—Who here appears as leader of David's men, but was not made captain of his hosts till after the capture of the Jebusites. Chap. v. 8, and 1 Chron. xi. 6. **The pool of Gibeon**—The same as the *great waters* of Gibeon mentioned Jer. xli. 12. It is

said to Joab, Let the young men now arise, and <sup>play</sup> before us. And Joab said, Let them arise. **15** Then there arose and went over by number twelve of Benjamin, which *pertained* to Ishbosheth the son of Saul, and twelve of the servants of David. **16** And they caught every one his fellow by the head, and *thrust* his sword in his fellow's side; so they fell down together: wherefore that place was called <sup>Helkath-hazzurim</sup>, which *is* in Gibeon. **17** And there was

*m* Jer. 41. 12. — *n* Prov. 10. 23; 17. 14; 25. 8; 26. 18, 19. — *o* That is, *The field of strong men*.

probably identical with the great reservoir still seen just northeast of the city, and supplied with water from a fine fountain in the rocks just above it. The fountain "is in a cave excavated in and under the high rock, so as to form a large subterranean reservoir. Not far below it, among the olive trees, are the remains of another open reservoir, about the size of that at Hebron, perhaps one hundred and twenty feet in length by one hundred feet in breadth. It was doubtless anciently intended to receive the superfluous waters of the cavern." — *Robinson*.

**14. Let the young men now arise, and play before us**—Implying that the contest between the house of Saul and the house of David should be decided by this action of the young warriors. This would save a needless effusion of blood, and Joab accepted the challenge. *קָרָעוּ*, *to play*, would thus mean the war play of single combat, and the bloody consequences showed that this was the understanding of the contending parties.

**16. By the head**—By the hair of the head or by the beard. Alexander, before entering into battle, ordered his men to shave their beards, because, said he, "in battle there is no better hold for the enemy than a beard." **They fell down together**—The whole twenty-four of them. "The left-handed Benjamites, and the right-handed men of Judah—their sword hands thus coming together—seized each his adversary by the head, and the whole number fell by the mutual wounds they received." — *Stanley*. **Helkath-hazzurim**—Hebrew, *smoothness of the rocks*; apparently in reference to a smooth, rocky sur-

a very sore battle that day; and Abner was beaten, and the men of Israel, before the servants of David. **18** And there were <sup>o</sup>three sons of Zeruiah there, Joab, and Abishai, and Asahel: and Asahel was <sup>p</sup>as light <sup>q</sup>of foot <sup>r</sup>as a wild roe. **19** And Asahel pursued after Abner; and in going he turned not to the right hand nor to the left <sup>s</sup>from following Abner. **20** Then Abner looked behind him, and said, *Art thou Asahel?* And he answered, *I am.* **21** And Abner said to him, Turn thee aside to thy right hand or to thy left, and lay thee hold on one of the young men, and take thee his <sup>t</sup>armour. But Asahel would not turn aside from following of him. **22** And Abner said again to Asahel, Turn thee aside from following me: wherefore should I smite thee to the ground? how

<sup>o</sup> 1 Chron. 2. 16.—<sup>p</sup> 1 Chron. 12. 8.—<sup>q</sup> 7 Heb. *of his feet*.—<sup>r</sup> 8 Heb. *as one of the roes that is in the field*.—<sup>s</sup> Psa. 18. 33; Cant. 2. 17; 8. 14.

face on which the combatants fought. Other explanations of the name have been given, as, *the field of the plotters*; *field of strong men*; *field of swords*; *field of sharp edges*; but none of them are sufficiently careful of the meaning of the Hebrew words.

**17. There was a very sore battle**—The bloody combat just described brought on a general engagement between the two armies, in which David and his men were victorious.

**18. Three sons of Zeruiah**—Zeruiah was their mother, and a sister of David. "Their father is unknown, but seems to have resided at Beth-lehem, and to have died before his sons, as we find mention of his sepulchre at that place. Verse 32. They all exhibit the activity and courage of David's constitutional character. But they never rise beyond this to the nobler qualities which lift him above the wild soldiers and chieftains of the time. Asahel, who was cut off in his youth, and seems to have been the darling of the family, is only known to us from his gazelle-like agility. Abishai and Joab are alike in their implacable revenge. Joab, however, combines with these ruder qualities something of a more statesmanlike character, which brings him more nearly to a level with his youthful uncle, and unquestionably gives him the second

then should I hold up my face to Joab thy brother? **23** Howbeit he refused to turn aside: wherefore Abner with the hinder end of the spear smote him <sup>t</sup>under the fifth rib, that the spear came out behind him; and he fell down there, and died in the same place: and it came to pass, *that* as many as came to the place where Asahel fell down and died <sup>u</sup>stood still. **24** Joab also and Abishai pursued after Abner: and the sun went down when they were come to the hill of Ammah, that *lieth* before Giah by the way of the wilderness of Gibeon. **25** And the children of Benjamin gathered themselves together after Abner, and became one troop, and stood on the top of a hill. **26** Then Abner called to Joab, and said, 'Shall the sword devour for ever? knowest thou not that it will

<sup>u</sup> 9 Heb. *from after Abner*.—<sup>t</sup> 10 Or, *spoil*, Judg. 14. 19.—<sup>r</sup> Chap. 3. 27; 4. 6; 20. 10.—<sup>s</sup> Chap. 20. 12.—<sup>t</sup> Isa. 1. 20; Jer. 12. 12; Hos. 11. 6.

place in the whole history of David's reign."—*Stanley*.

**21. Lay thee hold on one of the young men**—One of the common soldiers. **Take thee his armour**—Asahel's object was to slay Abner and take his armour as a trophy.

**22. Wherefore should I smite thee to the ground**—Abner knew that his youthful pursuer was no match for him in strategy or war, and he did not wish to kill him because of the personal enmity that would thus arise between himself and Joab. See note on chap. iii, 39.

**23. He refused to turn aside**—He believed that he could conquer Abner, and he was unwilling to lose the opportunity of gaining that honour. **The hinder end of the spear**—Which was sharpened, so as to stick in the ground when not in use. 1 Sam. xxvi, 7. **Under the fifth rib**—Rather, in the abdomen. The Hebrew word comes from the root *עצר*, *to be fat*. **Stood still**—Horror stricken at the bloody sight.

**24. Ammah... Giah**—Places now unknown. Such incidental allusions to places long since forgotten furnish evidence of the genuineness and credibility of the history.

**26. Shall the sword devour for ever**—Shall there be no cessation of the conflict already so disastrous to us

be bitterness in the latter end? how long shall it be then, ere thou bid the people return from following their brethren? **27** And Joab said, *As God liveth, unless thou hadst spoken, surely then* <sup>11</sup> in the morning the people had <sup>12</sup> gone up every one from following his brother. **28** So Joab blew a trumpet, and all the people stood still, and pursued after Israel no more, neither fought they any more. **29** And Abner and his men walked all that night through the plain, and passed over Jordan, and went through all Bithron, and they came to Mahanaim. **30** And Joab returned from following Abner: and when he had gathered all the people together, there lacked of David's servants nineteen men and Asahel. **31** But the servants of David had smitten of Benjamin, and of Abner's men, *so that* <sup>13</sup> three hundred and threescore men died. **32** And they took

<sup>a</sup> Verse 14; Prov. 17. 14.—<sup>11</sup> Heb. *from the morning*.—<sup>12</sup> Or, *gone away*.—<sup>c</sup> Chap. 3. 1; 1 Kings 20. 11.—<sup>w</sup> 1 Sam. 17. 58; 1 Chron. 2.

all? **It will be bitterness in the latter end**—Bitter because of the losses on either side, and still more bitter from the fact that it might have been avoided.

**27. Unless thou hadst spoken**—As thou didst this morning, saying, "Let the young men arise and play." Verse 14. That challenge provoked the war. Had it not been uttered the two armies would have separated without fight or bloodshed.

**29. Through the plain**—The valley of the Jordan. **Bithron**—Literally, *the broken or divided place*. As no locality bearing this name is ever afterwards mentioned, and the Hebrew word has the article—*all the Bithron*—it probably designates not a single place, but the broken and intersected region beyond the Jordan through which one must pass in order to go from the river to Mahanaim.

**30. Nineteen men and Asahel**—Whilst Abner lost three hundred and sixty men. But Abner's army had been weakened and disheartened by the defeat at Gilboa, and perhaps by other subsequent struggles with the Philistines, whilst Joab's men were probably all picked warriors, who had for years followed David, and taken lessons from his consummate military skill.

**32. Came to Hebron at break of**

up Asahel, and <sup>14</sup> buried him in the sepulchre of his father, which *was in* Bethlehem. **And** Joab and his men went all night, and <sup>15</sup> they came to Hebron at break of day.

### CHAPTER III.

**N**OW there was long war between the house of Saul and the house of David: but David waxed stronger and stronger, and the house of Saul waxed weaker and weaker. **2** And <sup>1</sup> unto David were sons born in Hebron: and his firstborn was Amnon, <sup>2</sup> of Ahinoam the Jezreelitess; **3** And his second, <sup>3</sup> Chileab, of Abigail the wife of Nabal the Carmelite; and the third, Absalom the son of Maacah the daughter of Talmi king <sup>4</sup> of Geshur; **4** And the fourth, <sup>5</sup> Adonijah the son of Haggith; and the fifth, Shephatiah the son of Abital; **5** And the sixth, Ithream, by Egla David's wife. These were born to

13. 16; 2 Chron. 16. 11.—<sup>a</sup> 1 Chron. 3. 1-4.—<sup>b</sup> 1 Sam. 25. 43.—<sup>1</sup> Or, *Daniel*, 1 Chron. 3. 1.—<sup>c</sup> 1 Sam. 27. 8; chap. 13. 37.—<sup>d</sup> 1 Kings 1. 5.

**day**—Literally, *it became light to them in Hebron*. Perhaps the day after the burial of Asahel is meant, as it was sunset when the pursuit ceased. Verse 24. But it was not impossible for David's men to have taken Asahel from the wilderness of Gibeon to Bethlehem, a distance of twelve or fifteen miles, buried him, and gone on to Hebron, fourteen miles further, in the course of a single night. Joab and his hardy companions were used to long marches and rapid movements.

### CHAPTER III.

CONTINUED WAR BETWEEN THE HOUSE OF SAUL AND THAT OF DAVID, 1-6.

**1. Long war**—A struggle and bitter hostility continued for two years or more. See note on chap ii, 10.

**2. Unto David were sons born**—This was one important way in which the house of David was made stronger, and to show this is manifestly the purpose of the writer in introducing here this list of David's sons. Compare the list in 1 Chron. iii, 1-4.

**3. Daughter of Talmi**—When and how David came to meet Talmi, and to form this alliance with the **king of Geshur**, history nowhere informs us, and speculation about it is useless.

David in Hebron. **6** And it came to pass, while there was war between the house of Saul and the house of David, that Abner made himself strong for the house of Saul.

**7** And Saul had a concubine, whose name was Rizpah, the daughter of Aiah: and Ishbosheth said to Abner, Wherefore hast thou gone in unto my father's concubine? **8** Then was Abner very wroth for the words of Ishbosheth, and said, Am I a dog's head, which against Judah do show kindness this day unto the house of Saul thy father, to his brethren, and to his friends, and have not delivered thee into the hand of David, that thou chargest me to day with a fault concerning this woman? **9** So

*e* 2 Kings 10. 2, 3; 2 Chron. 25. 8; Psa. 21. 30. — *f* Chap. 21. 8, 10. — *g* Chap. 16. 21. — *h* Deut. 23. 18; 1 Sam. 24. 14; chap. 9. 8; 16. 9. — *i* Ruth 1. 17; 1 Kings 19. 2.

**6. Abner made himself strong for the house of Saul**—Rather, in the house of Saul. He used his high official position in Saul's court for purposes of self-aggrandizement and power. He seems to have regarded Ishbosheth as an incompetent ruler, and actually reigned in his name. By thus strengthening himself in the kingdom he was, perhaps designedly, paving his own way to the throne.

#### ABNER'S REVOLT, 7-21.

**7. Wherefore hast thou...my father's concubine**—Whether or not Abner was guilty of this charge is not clear, but at least King Ishbosheth's suspicion was aroused, and he made the charge. Such an act, according to eastern notions, would have been one of shameless disrespect to the memory of Saul, and indicate a design to gain the crown. Compare chap. xvi, 21, 22; 1 Kings ii, 19-25.

**8. A dog's head**—A thing utterly contemptible, to be despised and cast aside as vile and mean. He shows the king that he must not lightly treat the man to whom he owes the kingdom.

**9. As the Lord hath sworn to David**—It seems to have been generally understood in Israel, even before the death of Saul, that David was divinely destined to be king, (1 Sam. xxiii, 17; xxiv, 20,) and this confession of Abner convicts him of knowingly opposing the

do God to Abner, and more also, except, as the Lord hath sworn to David, ever, so I do to him; **10** To translate the kingdom from the house of Saul, and to set up the throne of David over Israel and over Judah, from Dan even to Bersheba. **11** And he could not answer Abner a word again, because he feared him. **12** And Abner sent messengers to David on his behalf, saying, Whose is the land? saying also, Make thy league with me, and, behold, my hand shall be with thee, to bring about all Israel unto thee. **13** And he said, Well; I will make a league with thee: but one thing I require of thee, that is, Thou shalt not see my face, except thou first bring Michal Saul's daughter, when

*k* 1 Sam. 15. 28; 16. 1, 12; 28. 17; 1 Chron. 12. 23. — *l* Judges 20. 1; chap. 17, 11; 1 Kings 4. 25. — *2* Heb. saying. — *m* So Gen. 43. 3. — *n* 1 Sam. 18. 20.

will of God. By strengthening himself in the house of Saul he knew that he was acting against the will of the God of Israel. See on verse 18.

**11. He could not answer Abner**—"Miserable," says Clarke, "is the lot of the king who is governed by the general of his army." Ishbosheth was silenced and terrified at the fierce wrath of Abner, and his solemn oath to revolt and go over to David.

**12. Whose is the land**—Who has dominion over the land of Israel? No one, properly, for the nation is divided, a part adhering to the house of Saul, and a part to David. Let us therefore make a covenant and unite the kingdom under one head. Abner doubtless expected a high position and honours in the new kingdom.

**13. First bring Michal**—She was his own proper wife, and he had a right to demand her. With her restored to him he would stand before the nation as the son in law of Saul. "No doubt it was of great importance to David, on every account, to maintain this matrimonial connexion with the house of Saul as long as possible, in order to preserve the sort of claim to the succession which his alliance gave him; but an additional motive, which urged him to demand her restoration, was the prudential desire of possessing in her a pledge against possible treachery on Abner's side."—Ewald.



thou comest to see my face. **14** And David sent messengers to Ishbosheth Saul's son, saying, Deliver *me* my wife Michal, which I espoused to me <sup>o</sup> for a hundred foreskins of the Philistines. **15** And Ishbosheth sent, and took her from *her* husband, *even* from <sup>p</sup> Phaltiel the son of Laish. **16** And her husband went with her <sup>a</sup> along weeping behind her to <sup>a</sup> Bahurim. Then said Abner unto him, Go, return. And he returned. **17** And Abner had communication with the elders of Israel, saying, Ye sought for David <sup>a</sup> in times past to be king over you: **18** Now then do *it*: <sup>a</sup> for the Lord hath spoken of David, saying, By

<sup>o</sup> 1 Sam. 18. 25, 27. — <sup>p</sup> 1 Sam. 25. 44, *Phalti*. — <sup>a</sup> 8 Heb. *going and weeping*. — <sup>q</sup> Chap. 19. 16.

**14. David sent... to Ishbosheth** — For the settlement of this matter properly belonged to him who assumed to be Saul's successor. By giving her to Phaltiel Saul had wronged David, and now it is Ishbosheth's place to rectify that wrong.

**16. Weeping behind her** — "There has been much idle talk about the cruelty of taking her away from a man with whom she had lived some years, and who, for all that appears, was a good husband, seeing that he followed her weeping and lamenting, until he was compelled to desist by those who bore her from him. But this was the fruit of his own wrong, which a man always reaps in the long run. He had coveted another man's wife, and had wrongfully possessed himself of her, knowing well that she belonged to another; and Phaltiel was not the first man, nor the last, who has lamented to be deprived of that which did not belong to him." — *Kitto*. **Bahurim** — A place a little east or northeast of Jerusalem, beyond the mount of Olives, (compare chap. xvi, 1-5,) but its site has not been determined.

**17. Ye sought for David in times past** — As was shown by the multitudes from all the tribes that revolted from Saul and went over to David while yet at Ziklag. See 1 Chron. xii.

**18. The Lord hath spoken of David** — From the many intimations we have that it was generally understood in Israel that David was destined to be king, (verse 9; 1 Samuel xxiii, 17;

the hand of my servant David I will save my people Israel out of the hand of the Philistines, and out of the hand of all their enemies. **19** And Abner also spake in the ears of <sup>a</sup> Benjamin: and Abner went also to speak in the ears of David in Hebron all that seemed good to Israel, and that seemed good to the whole house of Benjamin. **20** So Abner came to <sup>a</sup> David to Hebron, and twenty men with him. And David made Abner and the men that *were* with him a feast. **21** And Abner said unto David, I will arise and go, and <sup>a</sup> will gather all Israel unto my lord the king, that they may make a league with thee,

<sup>a</sup> 4 Heb. *both yesterday and the third day*. — <sup>r</sup> Verse 9. — <sup>s</sup> 1 Chron. 12. 29. — <sup>t</sup> Verses 10, 12.

xxiv, 9,) we can hardly be wrong in affirming that Samuel, or some member of his school of prophets, had uttered open oracles to this effect, though the prophecy recorded in this verse is nowhere else referred to.

**19. Spake in the ears of Benjamin** — He took special care to secure this tribe to his purposes, for he had reason to fear that they would be tenacious in their adherence to the house of Saul.

**20. Twenty men with him** — To guard his person and confirm his words. What was the basis of the league between them, and what it all comprehended and provided for, we are not told.

ASSASSINATION OF ABNER BY JOAB, AND DAVID'S GRIEF, 22-39.

"When David had sent Abner away, Joab, the general of his army, came immediately to Hebron; and when he had understood that Abner had been with David, and had parted with him a little before under leagues and agreements that the government should be delivered up to David, he feared lest David should place Abner, who had assisted him to gain the kingdom, in the first rank of dignity, especially since he was a shrewd man in other respects, in understanding affairs, and in managing them artfully, as proper seasons should require; and that he himself should be put lower, and deprived of the command of the army; so he took a knavish and wicked course." — *Josephus*.

and that thou mayest "reign over all that thine heart desireth. And David sent Abner away; and he went in peace.

**22** And, behold, the servants of David and Joab came from *pursuing* a troop, and brought in a great spoil with them: but Abner *was* not with David in Hebron; for he had sent him away, and he was gone in peace. **23** When Joab and all the host that *was* with him were come, they told Joab, saying, Abner the son of Ner came to the king, and he hath sent him away, and he is gone in peace. **24** Then Joab came to the king, and said, "What hast thou done? behold, Abner came unto thee; why *is* it *that* thou hast sent him away, and he is quite gone? **25** Thou knowest Abner the son of Ner, that he came to deceive thee, and to know "thy going out, and thy coming in, and to know all that thou doest. **26** And when Joab was come out from David, he sent messengers after Abner, which brought him again from the well of Sirah: but David knew *it* not. **27** And when Abner was returned to Hebron, Joab *took* him

*u* 1 Kings 11. 37. — *v* Num. 23. 11. — *so* 1 Sam. 29. 6; Isa. 37. 28. — *a* 1 Kings 2. 5; so chap. 20. 9, 10. — *5* Or, *peaceably*. — *y* Chap. 4. 6. — *z* Chap. 2. 23.

**22. From pursuing a troop**—Literally, *from the troop*; that is, a troop or band of select warriors that had been out fighting with hostile tribes of the desert. From one of those marauding expeditions in which David and his men in time past had been wont to engage. 1 Sam. xxvii. 8.

**24. What hast thou done**—Words of a-tonishment and rebuke that David should have lost from his grasp the man who had done so much against him.

**25. He came to deceive thee**—Joab could not believe that the mighty captain of Saul's hosts meant thus easily to y-i-l-d before David. He suspected treachery. David seems not to have answered a word.

**26. Well of Sirah**—Evidently a place well known at the time of the writer, and apparently on the northern road from Hebron. There is said to be a spring and reservoir called *Ain Sara* on this road about a mile north of Hebron, and this would seem still to mark the ancient spot.—GROVE, in *Smith's Dictionary*.

**27. For the blood of Asahel**—This

aside in the gate to speak with him "quietly, and smote him there "under the fifth *rib*, that he died, for the blood of "Asahel his brother. **28** And afterward when David heard *it*, he said, I and my kingdom *are* guiltless before the Lord for ever from the "blood of Abner the son of Ner: **29** "Let it rest on the head of Joab, and on all his father's house; and let there not "fail from the house of Joab one "that hath an issue, or that is a leper, or that leaneth on a staff, or that falleth on the sword, or that lacketh bread. **30** So Joab and Abishai his brother slew Abner, because he had slain their brother "Asahel at Gibeon in the battle. **31** And David said to Joab, and to all the people that *were* with him, "Rend your clothes, and "gird you with sackcloth, and mourn before Abner. And king David *himself* followed the "bier. **32** And they buried Abner in Hebron: and the king lifted up his voice, and wept at the grave of Abner; and all the people wept. **33** And the king lamented over Abner, and said, Died Abner as a "fool dieth?

*6* Heb. *bloods*. — *a* 1 Kings 2. 32, 33. — *7* Heb. *be cut off*. — *b* Lev. 15. 2. — *c* Chap. 2. 23. — *d* Josh. 7. 6; chap. 1. 2, 11. — *e* Gen. 37. 34. — *8* Heb. *bed*. — *f* Chap. 13. 12, 13.

ostensibly, but doubtless another reason was a jealous fear lest Abner should supersede him in office and power with David.

**29. Let there not fail from the house of Joab**—Let that house always be afflicted by having constantly among its members those distressed with an *issue*, that is, gonorrhea, (Lev. xv. 2.) or leprosy, or lameness, or poverty, or those that suffer assassination or some similarly violent death.

**30. Joab and Abishai**—Joab's sword and Abishai's ready consent and counsel accomplished Abner's fall.

**32. The people wept**—The grief of David and the people produced a profound impression, and convinced the entire nation that the king had no hand in the death of Abner.

**33. The king lamented**—A beautiful and touching dirge, which should be rendered thus:

As dies a fool should Abner die?

Thy hands not bound,

And thy feet unto double fetters were not brought nigh.

As one falls before the sons of wickedness thou hast fallen.

**34** Thy hands *were* not bound, nor thy feet put into fetters: as a man falleth before *wicked* men, *so* fellest thou. And all the people wept again over him.

**35** And when all the people came *to* cause David to eat meat while it was yet day, David sware, saying, *So* do God to me, and more also, if I taste bread, or aught else, *till* the sun be down. **36** And all the people took notice *of it*, and it *pleased* them: as whatsoever the king did pleased all the people. **37** For all the people and all Israel understood that day that it was not of the king to slay Abner the son of Ner. **38** And the king said unto his servants, Know ye not that there is a prince and a great man fallen this day in Israel? **39** And

<sup>9</sup> Heb. *children of iniquity*.—<sup>c</sup> Chap. 12. 17; Jer. 16. 7.—<sup>a</sup> Ruth 1. 17.—<sup>d</sup> Chap. 1. 12.  
<sup>10</sup> Heb. *was good in their eyes*.—<sup>11</sup> Heb. *tender*.—<sup>k</sup> Chap. 19. 7.

**As a fool**—In Scripture the impious, dissolute, and profane are called fools. Compare chap. xiii, 12, 13; Psa. xiv, 1. Such a one might perish in any foul way whatever, and no one would care.

**34. Thy hands...not bound**—Thou wast not delivered up to death bound hand and foot, like a convicted malefactor, for thou wast guilty of no crime that called for such penalty. Some think that here is an allusion to a custom of delivering up, bound hand and foot, to the avenger of blood, the person who had fled for safety to one of the cities of refuge. Num. xxxv, 6. **As a man falleth before wicked men**—The victim of jealous and desperate passions.

**39. Weak, though anointed king**—I needed the coöperation and influence of Abner to strengthen me in the kingdom. **Too hard for me**—Rather, *too strong for me*; that is, too strong in authority and too well defended by the ancient law of blood-revenge. The murder of Asahel in battle, after repeated warnings, (chap. ii, 22,) was not a crime sufficient to justify Joab's deliberate and dastardly revenge; but Abner's words, "How then should I hold up my face to Joab?" show that he felt that the murder of Asahel would expose him to a bloody feud with his brother. Had the congregation judged between Abner and Joab according to

I *am* this day *weak*, though anointed king; and these men the sons of Zerui-ah *be* too hard for me: *the Lord* shall reward the doer of evil according to his wickedness.

## CHAPTER IV.

**A**ND when Saul's son heard that Abner was dead in Hebron, *his* hands were feeble, and all the Israelites were *troubled*. **2** And Saul's son had two men *that were* captains of bands: the name of the one *was* Baanah, and the name of the *other* Rechab, the sons of Rimmon a Beerothite, of the children of Benjamin: for *Beeroth* also was reckoned to Benjamin. **3** And the Beerothites fled to *Gittaim*, and were so-

<sup>1</sup> See chap. 19. 13; 1 Kings 2. 5, 6, 33, 34; Psa. 38. 4; 62. 12; 2 Tim. 4. 14.—<sup>a</sup> Ezra 4. 4; Isa. 13. 7.—<sup>b</sup> Matt. 23.—<sup>1</sup> Heb. *second*.—<sup>c</sup> Josh. 18. 25.—<sup>d</sup> Neh. 11. 33.

the Israelitish laws on murder, (Num. xxxv, 24,) they would doubtless have decided that Joab had not sufficient ground to take blood revenge on Abner. But the deed having been done without the gate of the city, and the sons of Zeruiah acknowledging it as their act of revenge for Asahel, David saw and felt his impotence to punish the assassins, and left the matter for a future judgment. 1 Kings ii, 5.

## CHAPTER IV.

ASSASSINATION OF ISHBOSHETH, 1-12.

**1. His hands were feeble**—He lost all vigorous hold upon the government, for Abner had been his strength. **Troubled**—Confounded and alarmed. They knew not what might be the end of these things. They had no confidence in Ishbosheth, and they were not disposed at once to accept the son of Jesse.

**2. Captains of bands**—Leaders of military companies. Compare Acts x, 1. **Of Benjamin**—The unhappy king falls by the hands of men of his own tribe. **Beeroth**—The modern Bireh, eight miles north of Jerusalem. See on Josh. ix, 17; xviii, 25.

**3. The Beerothites fled to Gittaim**—We are nowhere told the cause of this flight, but it has been plausibly conjectured that it arose from Saul's

journalers there until this day. **4** And Jonathan, Saul's son, had a son *that was lame of his feet*. He was five years old when the tidings came of Saul and Jonathan 'out of Jezreel, and his nurse took him up, and fled: and it came to pass, as she made haste to flee, that he fell, and became lame. And his name *was* <sup>2</sup>Mephibosheth. **5** And the sons of Rimmon the Beerothite, Rechab and Baanah, went, and came about the heat of the day to the house of Ishbosheth, who lay on a bed at noon. **6** And they came thither into the midst of the house, *as though* they would have fetched wheat; and they smote him <sup>4</sup>under the fifth *rib*: and Rechab and Baanah his brother escaped. **7** For when they came into the house, he lay on his bed in his bed-chamber, and they smote him, and slew him, and beheaded him, and <sup>3</sup>took his

<sup>a</sup> Chap. 9. 3. — <sup>f</sup> 1 Sam. 29. 1, 11. — <sup>2</sup> Or, *Mephibosheth*. 1 Chron. 8. 34; 9. 40. — <sup>g</sup> Chap. 2. 33. <sup>h</sup> 1 Sam. 17. 54; 31. 9; 2 Kings 10. 6, 7; Matt. 14. 11; Mark 6. 28, 29. — <sup>i</sup> 1 Samuel 19. 2, 10, 11; 28. 15; 25. 29.

persecution of the Gibeonites, (chap. xxi, 1, 2,) for Beeroth was one of their cities. Josh. ix, 17. Perhaps Rimmon or his sons had suffered by that persecution, and this may have been one reason for this bloody deed of the sons. They wreaked vengeance on the son of Saul for the wrongs committed by his father, as well as sought by the same deed to secure the favour of David. *Gittaim* was apparently not far from Beeroth, and was inhabited by Benjamites after the captivity, (Neh. xi, 33,) but its site is now unknown.

**4. Mephibosheth**—Called also Mephibosheth. 1 Chron. viii, 34. We shall see in a future period how David cared for him. The object of the historian in introducing here this notice of Mephibosheth was to show that at the death of Ishbosheth there was no other member of Saul's family that was capable of taking charge of the kingdom of Israel. This son of Jonathan was the heir apparent, and he was physically disabled.

**5. Lay on a bed at noon**—A common custom in the East. "In Arabia it is so hot in July and in August, that, except in a case of pressing necessity, nobody goes out from eleven in the morning till three in the afternoon. The Arabs seldom work during this time; they employ it commonly in

head, and gat them away through the plain all night. **8** And they brought the head of Ishbosheth unto David to Hebron, and said to the king, Behold the head of Ishbosheth the son of Saul thine enemy, 'which sought thy life; and the Lord hath avenged my lord the king this day of Saul, and of his seed. **9** And David answered Rechab and Baanah his brother, the sons of Rimmon the Beerothite, and said unto them, *As the Lord liveth, 'who hath redeemed my soul out of all adversity,* **10** When 'one told me, saying, Behold, Saul is dead, 'thinking to have brought good tidings, I took hold of him, and slew him in Ziklag, 'who *thought* that I would have given him a reward for his tidings: **11** How much more, when wicked men have slain a righteous person in his own house upon his bed? shall I not there-

<sup>k</sup> Genesis 48. 16; 1 Kings 1. 29; Psalm 31. 7. — <sup>l</sup> Chapter 1. 2, 4, 15. — <sup>3</sup> Hebrew, *he was in his own eyes as a bringer*, &c. — <sup>4</sup> Or, *which was the reward I gave him for his tidings*.

sleeping in a vault into which the air is let from above."—*Harmer's Observations*.

**6. The house**—Some extensive structure at Mahanaim used for the royal palace, and the treasure-house of the royal stores. **As though they would have fetched wheat**—From the royal granary. Being royal officers, they were probably accustomed to go to the king's storehouse for grain. The Septuagint here has the following: "And behold the doorkeeper of the house was winnowing wheat, and he nodded and slept." **The fifth rib**—See note on chap. ii, 23.

**7. Took his head**—They probably carried it in a sack, in which they pretended to fetch wheat. They could not otherwise have well escaped at midday. **Through the plain**—The Jordan valley. See on chap. ii, 29.

**8. The Lord hath avenged my lord the king**—By these words the assassins thought to gain the favour of David; but, like the Amalekite at Ziklag, they little understood how his soul abhorred their bloody deed.

**11. A righteous person**—Ishbosheth was guilty of no crime. It is doubtful if he would have assumed the regal power without the instance of Abner.

fore now "require his blood of your hand, and take you away from the earth? **12** And David "commanded his young men, and they slew them, and cut off their hands and their feet, and hanged *them* up over the pool in Hebron. But they took the head of Ishbosheth, and buried *it* in the "sepulchre of Abner in Hebron.

## CHAPTER V.

**T**HEN "came all the tribes of Israel to David unto Hebron, and spake, saying, Behold, "we *are* thy bone and *thy* flesh. **2** Also in time past, when Saul was king over us, "thou wast he

*m* Gen. 9, 5, 6. — *n* Chap. 1, 15. — *o* Chap. 3, 32. — *a* 1 Chron. 11, 1; 12, 23. — *b* Gen. 29, 14. — *c* 1 Sam. 18, 13. — *d* 1 Sam. 16, 1, 12; Psa. 78, 71; see chap. 7, 7.

**12. Cut off their hands and their feet**—The hands that wrought the bloody deed, and the feet that brought the horrid tidings. This punishment was executed in the spirit, but not in the letter, of the Mosaic law of retaliation—hand for hand, foot for foot. Exod. xxi, 24. **The pool**—Probably one of the large reservoirs still seen at Hebron.

## CHAPTER V.

DAVID MADE KING OVER ALL ISRAEL,  
— 1-5.

**1. Then came all the tribes**—The elders, as representatives of all the tribes. Verse 3. In accordance with the note on chap. ii, 10, we hold that David was not recognised as king by all Israel immediately after the death of Ishbosheth. The connective (*i*, *then*), with which this chapter begins, does not always imply immediate sequence, (Exod. ii, 2,) but may pass over an interval of years whose history it was not the purpose of the writer to record. If all the Israelites were confounded at the assassination of Abner, (iv, 1,) the alarm and astonishment were not likely to grow less with the similar death of Saul's son, and it is every way probable that several years were allowed to pass before all the tribes agreed to submit to David. **Thy bone and thy flesh**—Thy blood relations, for we are all descended from Jacob, our common father.

**2. Thou...leddest**—As general of Saul's forces. See 1 Sam. xviii, 5. **Thou**

that leddest out and broughtest in Israel: and the Lord said to thee, "Thou shalt feed my people Israel, and thou shalt be a captain over Israel. **3** "So all the elders of Israel came to the king to Hebron; "and king David made a league with them in Hebron "before the Lord: and they anointed David king over Israel. **4** David *was* thirty years old when he began to reign, "and he reigned forty years. **5** In Hebron he reigned over Judah "seven years and six months: and in Jerusalem he reigned thirty and three years over all Israel and Judah.

*e* 1 Chronicles 11, 3. — *f* 2 Kings 11, 17. — *g* Judges 11, 11; 1 Samuel 23, 18. — *h* 1 Chronicles 26, 31; 29, 27. — *i* Chapter 2, 11; 1 Chronicles 3, 4.

**shalt feed my people**—This prophecy, like that of chap. iii, 18, is nowhere else recorded, but had probably been uttered by one of the prophets of that age. A keeper of sheep is made the shepherd of the nation, as the fishermen of Galilee were made fishers of men.

**3. A league**—Consisting of solemn stipulations on both sides. **Before the Lord**—This phrase is to be understood here as at Judges xi, 11, where see note. **Anointed David king over Israel**—On the anointing of kings see note on 1 Sam. x, 1. This was the third time that David was anointed. Chap. ii, 4; 1 Sam. xvi, 13.

**4. Thirty years**—Age of full maturity, at which priests were consecrated. Num. iv, 3; Luke iii, 23.

## CAPTURE OF ZION, 6-10.

This account of the capture of Zion (see parallel history in 1 Chron. xi, 4-9) is brief but very important. In the days of Joshua cities of refuge had been appointed on both sides of the Jordan, (Josh. xx,) and, until the death of Eli, Shiloh had been the seat of the sanctuary. Beth-el, Gilgal, Mizpeh, Ramah, and other places, had their particular celebrity, but as yet the nation had no metropolis. The first great enterprise of David, after becoming king of all the land, was to gain full possession of this strong city of the hills, and make it the capital of his kingdom. The lower portion of the city had, in the time of the Judges, been besieged and burned,

**6** And the king and his men went <sup>1</sup>to Jerusalem unto <sup>1</sup>the Jebusites, the inhabitants of the land: which spake unto David, saying, Except thou take away the blind and the lame, thou shalt not come in hither: <sup>1</sup>thinking, David cannot come in hither. **7** Nevertheless, David took the strong hold of Zion:

<sup>1</sup> Judges 1. 21. — <sup>2</sup> Josh. 15. 63; Judges 1. 8; 19. 11, 12. — <sup>1</sup> Or. *saying David shall not, &c.* — <sup>1</sup> Verse 9: 1 Kings 2. 10; 8. 1.

(Judges i, 8,) but the fortress on Zion had remained impregnable, and the neighbouring tribes of Judah and Benjamin had been obliged to tolerate the Jebusites among them. Josh. xv, 63; Judges i, 21. According to an uncontradicted tradition of centuries past, the stronghold of Zion occupied the south-western hill of the modern city, which overhangs the deep valley of Hinnom. This valley guarded it on the west and south, while its northern and eastern defence was the Tyropæon valley.

**6. The Jebusites**—An ancient tribe descended from Canaan, son of Ham, (Gen. x, 16,) who from the days of Abraham had been well known **inhabitants of the land**. They were a most hardy and warlike tribe, as is shown from their ability to maintain their ancient position in Central Palestine so long. **Except thou take away**—Literally, and after the order of the Hebrew, the passage reads thus: *Thou shalt not come hither, for to drive thee away, the blind and the lame saying. Let not David come hither, (will suffice.)* Or we may regard **הַכִּירָה** as the pre-

erit of the verb **כִּירָה**, and explain the use of the singular from the fact that the verb precedes its subjects. We then translate: *For the blind and the lame have driven thee away*. In either case the meaning is the same. The Jebusites ridiculed and derided David's attempts to subdue them, and, relying upon their strong fortifications, tauntingly said that a few blind and lame men would be sufficient to turn away all the assaults he could make against them. By the blind and the lame some, without sufficient reason, have understood the idols of the Jebusites, which the Israelites called in derision blind and lame, because, having eyes they did

the same **is** the city of David. **8** And David said on that day, Whosoever getteth up to the gutter, and smiteth the Jebusites, and the lame and the blind, *that are hated of David's soul, he shall be chief and captain*. <sup>1</sup> Wherefore they said, The blind and the lame shall not come into the house. **9** So David dwelt

<sup>1</sup> 1 Chron. 11. 6-9. — <sup>2</sup> Or. *Because they had said, even the blind and the lame, He shall not come into the house.*

not see, and having feet they did not walk. Psa. cxv, 5, 7.

**8. Getteth up to the gutter**—This the Septuagint renders, *Let him put to the sword*. Similarly the Syriac and Arabic. The whole verse is obscure, and appears to be an abridged and broken transcription from a fuller document. Our translators have attempted to emend the passage by comparison with its parallel in 1 Chron. xi, 6. The word **צִנּוֹר**, here rendered *gutter*, is ren-

dered *water-spout* in Psa. xlii, 7. Gesenius and Keil render it *cataract*. According to Fürst, it means *a hollow passage, a water-conduit*. Adopting the last signification, we refer it to the deep hollow beneath the citadel and translate thus: *Every one smiting a Jebusite, let him thrust (him) into the gulf, (beneath,) both the lame and the blind, (who) hated the soul of David*. The Masoretic pointing is of insufficient authority to lead us to adopt the *keri* **שָׁנֵא**; the *kethib* should be pointed and read **שָׁנֵא**—the *kal preterit*. Ewald translates the passage metrically, thus:

Whoso shall conquer the Jebusite,  
Let him hurl down from the cliff  
The lame and the blind together,  
Hated of David's soul.

To this order David also added the offer recorded in 1 Chron. xi, 6: *Whosoever smiteth the Jebusites first shall be chief and captain*; and other things he doubtless said on that day which have not been recorded. **Wherefore they said**—Therefore, that is, from this circumstance the following proverb arose. **The blind and the lame shall not come into the house**—The spirit and meaning of the proverb is, Those who are repulsive and hateful to us we shall not allow to enter our dwellings; a

in the fort, and called it "the city of David." And David built round about from Millo and inward. **10** And David "went on, and grew great, and the Lord God of hosts *was* with him.

**11** And "Hiram king of Tyre sent messengers to David, and cedar trees, and carpenters, and "masons: and they

*o* Verse 7.—3 Heb. *went going and growing*.—*p* 1 Kings 5. 2; 1 Chron. 14. 1.

proverb characteristic of Jewish antipathy and intolerance towards persons of another nation and another religion.

**9. Built round about from Millo and inward**—Millo was a fortress or rampart of ancient Zion, apparently so called from having been *filled in* (מִלּוֹ) with earth and stones. The article connected with the Hebrew word serves to designate it as some well known fortress, and it was evidently a noted stronghold before the city was occupied by David. It was afterwards built up again and strengthened by Solomon, (1 Kings ix, 15, 24; xi, 27,) and later still by Hezekiah. 2 Chron. xxxii, 5. It seems to have been situated on the northern side of Zion, where the natural defences were less strong than on the other sides; and from it, as a bulwark, David built all round the northern side a strong wall, and fortified it inward towards the south, so as to make it more secure against assault than it had ever been before.

**DAVID'S INTERCOURSE WITH HIRAM—HIS TEMPORAL PROSPERITY, 11–16.**

**11. And Hiram**—Called *Huram* in 2 Chron. ii, 3, 11; viii, 2; ix, 10. On the question of the identity of this Hiram with the one who assisted Solomon in building the temple, see on 1 Kings v, 1. **Tyre**—On the locality of this great city see Josh. xix, 29. From this verse we learn that it was under a monarchical form of government, and in the mechanical arts had been carried to a noteworthy state of perfection. In Isa. xxiii, 8, it is called "the crowning city, whose merchants are princes, whose traffickers are the honourable of the earth." Its power and glory are more fully delineated in Ezek. xxvi–xxviii. **Sent messengers to David**—Probably for the purpose of forming an alli-

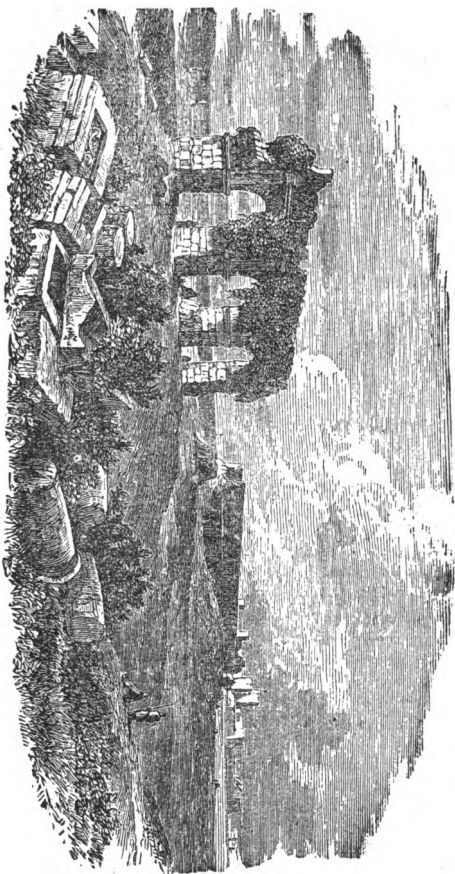
built David a house. **12** And David perceived that the Lord had established him king over Israel, and that he had exalted his kingdom for his people Israel's sake. **13** And "David took *him* more concubines and wives out of Jerusalem, after he was come from Hebron: and there were yet sons and daughters

*4* Heb. *hewers of the stone of the wall*.—*q* Deut. 17. 17; 1 Chron. 3. 9; 14. 3.

ance with him. David seems to have availed himself of the opportunity thus offered to secure from Hiram the service of carpenters and masons—workers in wood and stone—and also the gift of cedar wood from Lebanon. **They built David a house**—A royal palace on Zion. This verse is evidently the mere outline of many interesting facts in the history of David which the sacred writer has not seen proper to record. This mention of David's intercourse with the king of Tyre, as well as what follows about the growth of his family, is appended to the notice of the capture of Zion, (verses 6–10,) not because these events followed in chronological order immediately after its capture, but in order to show how David grew great and prospered.

**12. David perceived**—He was convinced by the signal providences attending his own personal history, and the strength and honour of his kingdom, that his prosperity was of the Lord. How strong is he whose growing greatness is enhanced by the consciousness of Jehovah's favour! **For his people Israel's sake**—David's ways were not always right, yet for *Israel's sake*, and for his own great Name's sake, Jehovah blessed him. Marvellous was God's favour and regard for his chosen people.

**13. More concubines and wives**—"He had, in all conscience, enough before; he had, in the whole, eight wives and ten concubines. True, that dispensation permitted polygamy, but from the beginning it was not so; and as upon an average there are about fourteen males born to thirteen females, polygamy is unnatural, and could never have entered into the original design of God."—*Clarke*. **Out of Jerusalem**—That is, in or at Jerusalem, as appears from 1 Chron. xiv, 3.



RUINS OF TYRE.



born to David. 14 And 'these be the names of those that were born unto him in Jerusalem; 'Shammuah, and Shobab, and Nathan, and Solomon, 15 Ibar also, and 'Elishua, and Nepheg, and Japhia, 16 And Elishama, and 'Elia-da, and Eliphalet.

17 \*But when the Philistines heard that they had anointed David king over Israel, all the Philistines came up to seek David; and David heard of it, and went down to the hold. 18 The Philistines also came and spread themselves in 'the valley of Rephaim. 19 And Da-

\* 1 Chron. 3. 5; 14. 4.—5 Or, *Shimeon*, 1 Chron. 3. 5.—6 Or, *Elishama*, 1 Chron. 3. 6.—7 Or, *Beelinda*, 1 Chron. 14. 7.—8 1 Chron. 11. 16; 14. 8.—9 Chap. 23. 14.—10 Josh. 15. 8; Isa. 17. 6.

14. **The names**—A comparison of these names with the lists in Chronicles will show some discrepancies, for which at this day we are unable to account. Some of them are, perhaps, errors of copyists, but this must not always be supposed. Children who died in infancy were registered in some tables, and in others not.

#### WARS WITH THE PHILISTINES, 17-25.

While David reigned at Hebron, the Philistines, with whom he had so recently been in league, saw no occasion to molest him. They probably considered him as an enemy to the mass of the Israelites, and took no trouble to watch his movements; but when all Israel accepted him as king, and the ancient stronghold of the Jebusites fell into his power, they became alarmed, and gathered their forces for a most determined war against him. Then, doubtless, they deplored that they had not destroyed him when he was in their power.

17. **When the Philistines heard... all the Philistines came up**—Whether these wars with the Philistines occurred before or after the capture of Zion is somewhat uncertain, but from the course of this history we most naturally suppose that they occurred while David was fortifying Zion, and building, or taking measures to build, his royal palace. **To seek David**—For hitherto they had known him as a lawless wanderer, having no certain abode; and, though now anointed king, he had not

yet inquired of the Lord, saying, Shall I go up to the Philistines? wilt thou deliver them into mine hand? And the Lord said unto David, Go up: for I will doubtless deliver the Philistines into thine hand. 20 And David came to \*Baal-perazim, and David smote them there, and said, The Lord hath broken forth upon mine enemies before me, as the breach of waters. Therefore he called the name of that place \*Baal-perazim. 21 And there they left their images, and David and his men \*burned them. 22 \*And the Philistines came

\* Chap. 2. 1; 1 Sam. 23. 2, 4; 20. 8.—10 Isa. 28. 21.—8 That is, *The plain of breaches*.—9 Deut. 7. 5, 25; 1 Chron. 14. 12.—9 Or, *took them away*.—11 1 Chron. 14. 13.

yet a settled, permanent home. **David... went down to the hold**—Not to the citadel on Zion, for its situation, as we have already seen, was so lofty that it would be manifestly improper to speak of *going down* to it; but to the cave of Adullam, as we may infer from chap. xxiii, 13, 14, where we have the record of an incident which took place at this time.

18. **Valley of Rephaim**—An upland plain a little southwest of Jerusalem, hemmed in on all sides by low hills, so that it is properly called a *valley*. See on Josh. xv, 8, where it is translated "valley of the giants."

20. **Baal-perazim**—Fürst renders, *Baal of Perazim mount*, and understands it as the name of a mountain city in the immediate vicinity of the place where the battle was fought. The word *perazim* means *breakings forth*, or *breaches*. Not only does David undertake the battle by the counsel of Jehovah, but he gives to the place of his triumph a name forever suggestive of Jehovah's assistance in battle.

21. **Their images**—Their idol-gods, (1 Chron. xiv, 13,) which they carried with them into battle, as Israel once did the ark, (1 Sam. iv, 3,) expecting they would therefore be led to certain victory. The capture of them by the Israelites was a striking counterpart to the capture of the ark by the Philistines. **Burned them**—As the law required. Deut. vii, 5, 25. The Hebrew text reads, *took them away*. "Burned" has been supplied from Chronicles.

up yet again, and spread themselves in the valley of Rephaim. **23** And when

David inquired of the Lord, he said, Thou shalt not go up; but fetch a compass behind them, and come upon them over against the mulberry trees. **24** And let it be, when thou hearest the sound of a going in the tops of the mulberry trees, that then thou shalt bestir thyself:

\* Verse 19.—a So 2 Kings 7. 6.—b Judges 4. 14.

**22. Came up yet again**—Probably soon after the defeat just recorded. They were chagrined at the loss of their gods, and probably David had not followed up his victory. **Thou shalt not go up**—So as to meet and attack them face to face as before.

**23. Mulberry trees**—The word thus rendered occurs only here and in the parallel passage in 1 Chron. xiv. 14. The Vulgate translates by *pear trees*, and so the Septuagint in Chronicles, but here by *grove of weeping*. Only the Jewish rabbins and some modern versions understand the mulberry tree. The most probable opinion is that adopted by Fürst, that *becaim* (בְּעַיִם) is "the name of a tree like the balsam shrub, now growing about Mecca, and called *bacha* from the dropping of a resin when the leaves are cut."

**24. The sound of a going**—Like the noise of a moving army. It was the sound of Jehovah's host moving before the army of Israel and leading David on to victory; and though, like Elisha's servant, his eyes were holden that he could not behold the horses and chariots around him, (2 Kings vi. 17,) yet he was permitted to hear the noise of their movements. This is one of the Old Testament texts which point to an unseen world of spiritual agencies around us which are sent forth to minister to the saints of God. Some of the saints have had their spiritual eyes unvaild to see the angelic hosts of God, but the cold rationalism of our day would fain rob us of all belief in a supernatural world of principalities and powers beyond us. Compare notes on 2 Kings ii. 11, 12, and vi. 17.

**25. From Geba**—Rather, from *Gibeon*, as in 1 Chron. xiv. 16, for Geba

for then shall the Lord go out before thee, to smite the host of the Philistines. **25** And David did so, as the Lord had commanded him; and smote the Philistines from Geba until thou come to Gazer.

### CHAPTER VI.

**A** GAIN, David gathered together all the chosen men of Israel, thirty

c 1 Chronicles 14. 16. *Gibeon*.—d Joshua 16. 10.

(see note on 1 Sam. xiii. 3) lay to the northeast of Jerusalem, and it is not supposable that the Philistines would have passed near it in their flight. For the site of Gibeon see on Josh. ix. 3. **Gazer**—The same as *Gezer*, whose exact site has not been identified with any modern town, but must be sought somewhere between the Lower Beth-horon and the Sea. See on Josh. x. 33.

### CHAPTER VI.

REMOVAL OF THE ARK TO ZION, 1-19.

Having smitten his enemies and fortified Mount Zion, and having for a time rest from war, David most judiciously took measures to make the capital of his kingdom the central place of worship for all the tribes. He doubtless knew Jehovah's promise to choose out of all the tribes a place to put his name, (Deut. xii. 5, 11,) and the signal providences that had given him possession of Zion convinced him that this was the chosen city. It was manifestly important, therefore, that the ark of the covenant, the most sacred of all the shrines of the sanctuary, be brought with appropriate ceremonies from its obscurity in Kirjath-jearim, and placed in the city of the king. The parallel account of this event in 1 Chron. xiii. xv. and xvi. is more elaborately drawn. For this grand occasion David probably composed Psalm xxiv.

**1. All the chosen men of Israel**—According to 1 Chron. xiii. 1-5, David took counsel in this matter with all the chief men, and then "gathered all Israel together from Shihor of Egypt even unto the entering of Hemath." The expression *all Israel* often stands for the representatives or chosen men from all the tribes, who in the present instance numbered thirty thousand.

thousand. **2** And <sup>a</sup>David arose, and went with all the people that *were* with him from <sup>b</sup>Baale of Judah, to bring up from thence the ark of God, <sup>c</sup>whose name is called by the name of the Lord of hosts <sup>d</sup>that dwelleth *between* the cherubim. **3** And they <sup>e</sup>set the ark of God upon a new cart, and brought it out of the house of Abinadab that *was* in <sup>f</sup>Gibeah: and Uzzah and Ahio, the sons of

<sup>a</sup> 1 Chron. 13. 5, 6.—1 Or, *Baalah*, that is, *Kirjath-jearim*, Josh. 15. 9, 60.—2 Or, *at which the name*, even the name of the LORD of hosts *was called upon*.

**2. From Baale of Judah**—Another name for Kirjath-jearim. See on Josh. xv, 9. The preposition *from* (מִן) is probably the error of some ancient copyist. In Chronicles it is *went up to Baalah*. **Whose name is called by the name of the Lord**—Rather, as De Wette, Keil, and others translate, *Over which is called the name, the name of Jehovah of hosts*. The repetition of the word *name* intensifies the thought of the personal Presence of Jehovah over the mercy-seat. "There I will meet with thee, and I will commune with thee from above the mercy-seat, from between the two cherubim which are upon the ark of the testimony." Exod. xxv, 22.

**3. A new cart**—Like that which the Philistine diviners ordered for the removal of this same ark from their coasts. 1 Sam. vi, 7. Strange carelessness on the part of the Israelites, amounting to sacrilege. The only lawful way to bear this holy shrine was by means of the staves extending through the rings on its sides. Exod. xxv, 14. **That was in Gibeah**—Rather, *that was in the hill*, as the margin and 1 Sam. vii, 1. Here the ark had stood in obscurity and neglect for more than sixty years. **Sons of Abinadab**—Born, doubtless, many years after the ark had been given in charge of their father.

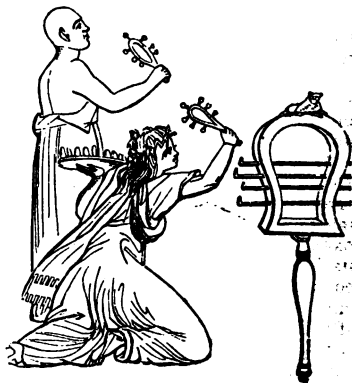
**4. And they brought**—The first part of this verse, as far as the word *Gibeah*, is a repetition from the preceding verse, and is probably a mistake of the copyist, who seems to have twice transcribed the same line. **Accompanying the ark**—Rather, *with the ark*, the preposition *with* connecting *cart* of the preceding verse and *the ark*. The sons of Abinadab drove the new cart

Abinadab, drove the new cart. **4** And they brought it out of <sup>a</sup>the house of Abinadab which *was* at Gibeah, <sup>b</sup>accompanying the ark of God: and Ahio went before the ark. **5** And David and all the house of Israel played before the Lord on all manner of <sup>c</sup>instruments made of fir wood, even on harps, and on psalteries, and on timbrels, and on cornets, and on cymbals. **6** And when they

<sup>b</sup> 1 Samuel 4. 4; Psa. 90. 1.—3 Hebrew, *made to ride*.—<sup>c</sup> See Numbers 7. 9; 1 Samuel 6. 7.—4 Or, *The hill*.—<sup>d</sup> 1 Samuel 7. 1.—5 Hebrew, *with*.

with the ark of God, that is, the new cart that bore the ark. **Ahio went before the ark**—To guide the oxen, while Uzzah, as appears afterwards, walked behind, keeping his eyes upon the movements of the ark. These sons of Abinadab evidently lacked a becoming reverence for the ark. From childhood they had seen it in their home, and had become so familiar with the sight as to lose from their minds the sacred associations of its former history.

**5. Played before the Lord**—Danced, and sang, and played on the musical instruments here mentioned. **All manner of instruments... of fir wood**—This is properly regarded by most commentators as a corruption of the more correct reading of 1 Chron. xiii, 8: *with all their might and with songs*. **Harps... psalteries... timbrels**—See note on 1 Sam. x, 5. **Cornets**—Rather, *sistra*; for the original Hebrew word



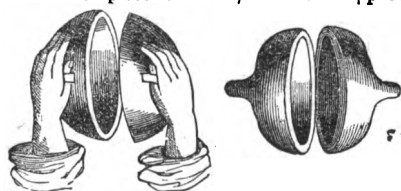
ANCIENT SISTRUM.

came to \*Nachon's threshing-floor, Uzzah 'put forth *his hand* to the ark of God, and took hold of it; for the oxen \*shook it. 7 And the anger of the LORD was kindled against Uzzah, and \*God smote him there for *his error*; and there he died by the ark of God. 8 And David was displeased, because the LORD had \*made a breach upon Uzzah: and he called the name of the place \*Perez-uzzah to this day. 9 And \*David was

<sup>e1</sup> 1 Chron. 13. 9, *Chidon*.—<sup>f</sup> See Num. 4. 15. —<sup>g</sup> Or, *stumbled*.—<sup>h</sup> 1 Sam. 6. 19.—<sup>i</sup> Or, *rushness*.—<sup>j</sup> Heb. *broken*.

occurs here only, and seems clearly to mean *the sistrum*, an instrument of Egyptian origin, which was used by taking it in the right hand and shaking it. The cornet was a sort of horn.

**Cymbals**—Instruments consisting of two convex pieces of metal, which when



CYMBALS.

struck together made a loud clanging sound.

6. **Nachon's threshing-floor**—The familiar mention of such places, now utterly unknown, is evidence of the antiquity, genuineness, and credibility of these sacred writings. **Put forth his hand to the ark**—This was sacrilegious transgression of the law: "The sons of Kohath shall come to bear it; but they shall not touch any holy thing, lest they die." Num. iv, 15.

7. **For his error**—More literally, *On account of the error*. There were two errors of which he was guilty, attempting to transport the ark with cart and oxen, and presuming to touch the ark itself. "When we reflect what an encouragement the impunity of this offence might have been for the introduction of other innovations, it is not to be wondered at that the Lord should manifest his displeasure at this offence by inflicting the punishment he had denounced against it, thus discouraging

afraid of the LORD that day, and said, How shall the ark of the LORD come to me? 10 So David would not remove the ark of the LORD unto him into the city of David; but David carried it aside into the house of Obed-edom 'the Gittite. 11 \*And the ark of the LORD continued in the house of Obed-edom the Gittite three months: and the LORD 'blessed Obed-edom, and all his household. 12 And it was told king David,

<sup>9</sup> That is, *The breach of Uzzah*.—<sup>h</sup> Psa. 119. 120: See Luke 5. 8, 9.—<sup>i</sup> 1 Chron. 13. 13. —<sup>k</sup> 1 Chron. 13. 14.—<sup>l</sup> Gen. 30. 27; 39. 5.

any future attempts to make alterations in the theocratical institutions which he had established."—*Kittó*.

8. **David was displeased**—Mortified and chagrined at the sudden and unhappy interruption of the triumphal procession. Various passions for the moment revelled in his soul. He was angry with himself for neglect and carelessness in allowing the ark to be removed in this way, and afterwards, according to 1 Chron. xv, 2, 13, he said: "None ought to carry the ark of God but the Levites. For because ye did it not at the first, the Lord our God made

a breach upon us." **Because the Lord had made a breach upon Uzzah**—

Because of the neglect and carelessness which occasioned the demand for such a judgment from the Lord. David was not angry against God, for the next verse tells us that he was afraid of him. **Made a breach**—Violently interposed in a sudden stroke of Divine judgment.

9. **Afraid**—Thrilled with fear and trembling lest the judgments of the Lord were not yet at an end, and all attempts to remove the ark into the city would now prove abortive.

10. **Obed-edom**—A Levite descended from Kohath, (see 1 Chron. xxvi, 8,) and afterwards honoured as one of the "doorkeepers for the ark." 1 Chron. xv, 24. His family long continued in the sanctuary service as keepers of the sacred vessels. 2 Chron. xxv, 24. **The Gittite**—So called from the name of his birthplace, the Levitical city of Gath-rimmon in the tribe of Dan. Josh. xix, 45; xxi, 24.

11. **Blessed Obed-edom**—The con-

saying, The Lord hath blessed the house of Obed-edom, and all that *pertaineth* unto him, because of the ark of God. <sup>m</sup> So David went and brought up the ark of God from the house of Obed-edom into the city of David with gladness. **13** And it was *so*, that when <sup>n</sup> they that bare the ark of the Lord had gone six paces, he sacrificed <sup>o</sup> oxen and fatlings. **14** And David <sup>p</sup> danced before the Lord with all *his* might; and David *was* girded <sup>q</sup> with a linen ephod. **15** <sup>r</sup> So David and all the house of Israel brought up the ark of the Lord with shouting, and with the sound of the trumpet.

<sup>m</sup> 1 Chron. 15. 25. — <sup>n</sup> Num. 4. 15; Josh. 3. 3; 1 Chron. 15. 2, 15. — <sup>o</sup> See 1 Kings 8. 5; 1 Chron. 15. 26. — <sup>p</sup> See Exodus 15. 20; Psalm 30. 11. — <sup>q</sup> 1 Samuel 2. 18; 1 Chron. 15. 27. — <sup>r</sup> 1 Chronicles 15. 28.

sacred house, where the presence of God abides and is revered, will not be wanting in divine blessings.

**12. David went and brought up the ark**—This time having all things done according to the instructions of the law, as the account in 1 Chron. xv more fully shows.

**13. When they... had gone six paces, he sacrificed**—Some think such sacrifices were offered all along the way, at the distance of six paces apart, from the house of Obed-edom to Zion. But this is improbable, and the text only affirms that the sacrifice was offered after the bearers of the ark had gone the first six steps. Verse 17 and 1 Chron. xvi, 1, however, inform us that other offerings were made after the ark arrived at Zion.

**14. Danced before the Lord**—From the most ancient times, both among the Jews and other nations, dancing formed a part of the ceremonies of religious processions and festivals, but the performers were usually a band of females. Exod. xv, 20; Judges xi, 34; xxi, 21; 1 Sam. xviii, 6. When persons of different sexes engaged, they seem always to have kept in separate companies, and never to have danced promiscuously. **Girded with a linen ephod**—See on 1 Sam. ii, 18. The ephod was worn by David on this occasion, probably, for the purpose of showing special respect and reverence for the ark of God.

**15. With shouting**—Crying, as they

**16** And <sup>a</sup> as the ark of the Lord came into the city of David, Michal Saul's daughter looked through a window, and saw king David leaping and dancing before the Lord; and she despised him in her heart. **17** And <sup>b</sup> they brought in the ark of the Lord, and set it in <sup>c</sup> his place, in the midst of the tabernacle that David had <sup>d</sup> pitched for it; and David <sup>e</sup> offered burnt offerings and peace offerings before the Lord. **18** And as soon as David had made an end of offering burnt offerings and peace offerings, <sup>f</sup> he blessed the people in the name of the Lord of hosts. **19** <sup>g</sup> And he dealt among

<sup>a</sup> 1 Chronicles 15. 29. — <sup>b</sup> 1 Chronicles 16. 1. — <sup>c</sup> 1 Chron. 15. 1; Psa. 132. 8. — <sup>d</sup> 10 Heb. *stretched*. — <sup>e</sup> 1 Kings 8. 5, 62, 63. — <sup>f</sup> 1 Kings 8. 55; 1 Chron. 16. 2. — <sup>g</sup> 1 Chron. 16. 3; 2 Chron. 30. 24; Neh. 8. 10; Ezek. 45. 17.

approached the gates of Zion, "Lift up your heads, O ye gates!"

**16. She despised him in her heart**—She was the daughter of a king, and held artificial notions of royalty; and she thought he dishonoured his royal dignity by mingling in the dance. See note on verse 20.

**17. The tabernacle that David had pitched for it**—But why did David make a new tabernacle for the ark, and not bring to his city the old one, which seems to have remained at Gibeon? Several reasons may be given. Since the desecration of Shiloh the old tabernacle was removed from one place to another, and had probably been so often remodelled and repaired that it had lost its sacredness in the eyes of the nation, and David deemed it far better to build an entirely new tabernacle. A weightier reason was, that there were now two high priests, Abiathar, who had long been attached to David, and Zadok, whom Saul had anointed in the room of the slain Abimelech, and who was now at Gibeon. 1 Chron. xvi, 39. It would have been imprudent for David to depose either of these, and therefore he wisely kept up the service of the tabernacle at Gibeon to afford Zadok the opportunity of exercising his office without interfering with Abiathar. He doubtless built this new tabernacle after the pattern of the old one, and **his place in the midst**, in which the ark was set, was the **holy of holies**.

all the people, *even* among the whole multitude of Israel, as well to the women as men, to every one a cake of bread, and a good piece of *flesh*, and a flagon of *wine*. So all the people departed every one to his house.

**20** 'Then David returned to bless his household. And Michal the daughter of Saul came out to meet David, and said, How glorious was the king of Israel to day, who <sup>a</sup>uncovered himself to day in the eyes of the handmaids of his servants, as one of the <sup>a</sup>vain fellows <sup>11</sup>shamelessly uncovereth himself! **21** And David said unto Michal, *It was* before the Lord, <sup>b</sup>which chose me before thy father, and before all his house, to appoint me ruler over the people of the Lord, over Israel: therefore will I play before the Lord. **22** And I will yet be more vile than thus, and will be base in mine own

<sup>a</sup> Psa. 30, title. — <sup>a</sup> Verses 14, 16; 1 Sam. 19, 24. — <sup>a</sup> Judges 9, 4. — <sup>11</sup> Or, *openly*. — <sup>b</sup> 1 Sam. 13, 14; 15, 23. — <sup>12</sup> Or, *of the handmaids of my servants*. — <sup>c</sup> See 1 Sam. 15, 35; Isa. 22, 14; Matt. 1, 25.

#### MICHAL'S REPROOF, 20-23.

**20. To bless his household**—The people seem (ver. 18) to have gladly received his blessing, but at his own home he met from one member, repulse.

**As one of the vain fellows**—"The proud daughter of Saul was offended at the fact that the king had let himself down on this occasion to the level of his people. She availed herself of the shortness of the priest's shoulder-dress to make a contemptuous remark concerning David's dancing, as an impropriety that was unbecoming in a king. 'Who knows whether the proud woman did not intend to sneer at the rank of the Levites, as one that was contemptible in her eyes?'"—*Keil*.

**21. Chose me before thy father**—A remark calculated to humble Michal by reminding her of her father's fall.

**22. I will yet be more vile**—I am ready to be still more despised, if I may thereby honour Jehovah. "How unlike the spirit of Michal, who seems to have had little interest in the God of Israel.

**23. Had no child**—A judgment upon her, in the eyes of the daughters of Israel, for her rash and haughty action. As Jehovah had rejected Saul from being king, so from that day David seems to have rejected Michal.

sight: and <sup>12</sup>of the maidservants which thou hast spoken of, of them shall I be had in honour. **23** Therefore Michal the daughter of Saul had no child <sup>c</sup>unto the day of her death.

#### CHAPTER VII.

**A**ND it came to pass, <sup>a</sup>when the king sat in his house, and the Lord had given him rest round about from all his enemies; **2** That the king said unto Nathan the prophet, See now, I dwell in <sup>b</sup>a house of cedar, <sup>c</sup>but the ark of God dwelleth within <sup>c</sup>curtains. **3** And Nathan said to the king, Go, do all that <sup>d</sup>is in thine heart; for the Lord <sup>e</sup>is with thee. **4** And it came to pass that night, that the word of the Lord came unto Nathan, saying, **5** Go and tell <sup>f</sup>my servant David, Thus saith the Lord, 'Shalt thou build me a house for me to dwell

<sup>a</sup> 1 Chron. 17, 1, &c. — <sup>b</sup> Chap. 5, 11. — <sup>c</sup> See Acts 7, 46. — <sup>d</sup> Exod. 26, 1; 40, 31. — <sup>e</sup> 1 Kings 8, 17, 18; 1 Chron. 22, 7; 28, 2. — <sup>f</sup> Heb. *to my servant, to David*. — <sup>g</sup> See 1 Kings 5, 3; 8, 19; 1 Chron. 22, 8; 28, 3.

#### CHAPTER VII.

DAVID'S PURPOSE TO BUILD THE TEMPLE, AND NATHAN'S MESSAGE FROM GOD CONCERNING IT, 1-17.

**1. Sat in his house**—Became established in his royal palace on Zion. **Had given him rest**—It was a time of national peace and quiet, not, however, after all David's wars.

**2. I dwell in a house of cedar, but the ark... within curtains**—A compunctious thought and feeling. He had housed himself right royally, while the sacred symbol of Jehovah's presence had been quite neglected. **Within curtains**—Literally, *in the midst of the curtain*, (1 Chron. xvii, 1,) *under curtains*, that is, tent-coverings, woven of goat's hair. Exod. xxvi, 7. On the tent in which the ark then abode, see note on chap. vi, 17.

**3. Nathan said**—The prophet gave this counsel from the apparent propriety and laudableness of David's purpose, and not by divine revelation. Accordingly he was called upon that night to counsel the king differently. Here we learn that the prophets were not always under inspiration.

**5. Shalt thou build me a house**—Is not such a purpose on thy part

in? **6** Whereas I have not dwelt in *any* house <sup>6</sup>since the time that I brought up the children of Israel out of Egypt, even to this day, but have walked in <sup>a</sup>a tent and in a tabernacle. **7** In *all the places* wherein I have <sup>1</sup>walked with all the children of Israel spake I a word with <sup>a</sup>any of the tribes of Israel, whom I commanded <sup>a</sup>to feed my people Israel, saying, Why build ye not me a house of cedar? **8** Now therefore so shalt thou say unto my servant David, Thus saith the LORD of hosts, <sup>1</sup>I took thee from the sheepcote, <sup>a</sup>from following the sheep, to be ruler over my people, over Israel: **9** And <sup>m</sup>I was with thee whithersoever thou wentest, <sup>a</sup>and have cut off all thine enemies <sup>4</sup>out of thy sight, and have made thee <sup>a</sup>a great name, like unto the

<sup>q</sup> 1 Kings 8. 16.—<sup>h</sup> Exodus 40. 18, 19, 34.—<sup>t</sup> Lev. 26. 11, 12; Deut. 23. 14.—<sup>3</sup> Or, *any of the judges*. 1 Chron. 17. 6.—<sup>k</sup> Chap. 5. 2; Psa. 78. 71, 72; Matt. 2. 6; Acts 20. 28.—<sup>l</sup> 1 Sam. 16. 11, 12; Psa. 78. 70.—<sup>3</sup> Hebrew, *from after*.—<sup>m</sup> 1 Sam. 18. 14; chap. 5. 10; 8. 6, 14.—<sup>n</sup> 1 Sam. 31. 6; Psa. 89. 23.—<sup>4</sup> Heb. *from thy face*.—<sup>o</sup> Gen. 12. 2.

presumption? Nay, rather, I will make thee a house. Compare verse 11. The question implies a negative answer, and in 1 Chron. xvii. 4, we have, "Thou shalt not build me a house."

**7. With any of the tribes**—In the persons of their representatives, the elders. In Chronicles the reading is *judges of Israel*. Hitherto there had been no command to build such a house as David proposed. According to Josephus (*Ant.* vii. 4, 4) Moses had foretold the building of such a temple, but no such prediction appears in his writings.

**10. I will appoint**—All the versions have, with strange unanimity, translated *שָׁמַרְתִּי*, *I have appointed*, as if it were in the future tense. All difficulty is removed and the sense made plain when it is properly translated as the preterit: *I have appointed a place*, etc., namely, the land of Canaan. **Will plant**—Rather, *have planted*. **As beforetime**—When in the bondage of Egypt.

**11. And as since**—During the time of the Judges, as well as in Egypt, had Israel suffered much from heathen foes. **The Lord . . . will make thee a house**—An allusion to the question of verse 5. Thou shalt not build a house for me,

name of the great *men* that *are* in the earth. **10** Moreover I will appoint a place for my people Israel, and will <sup>1</sup>plant them, that they may dwell in a place of their own, and move no more; <sup>1</sup>neither shall the children of wickedness afflict them any more, as beforetime, **11** And as <sup>1</sup>since the time that I commanded judges *to be* over my people Israel, and have <sup>a</sup>caused thee to rest from all thine enemies. Also the LORD telleth thee <sup>1</sup>that he will make thee a house. **12** And <sup>a</sup>when thy days be fulfilled, and thou <sup>a</sup>shalt sleep with thy fathers, <sup>a</sup>I will set up thy seed after thee, which shall proceed out of thy bowels, and I will establish his kingdom. **13** <sup>1</sup>He shall build a house for my name, and I will <sup>1</sup>stablish the throne of his kingdom

<sup>p</sup> Psa. 44. 2; 80. 8; Jer. 24. 6; Amos 9. 15.—<sup>q</sup> Psa. 89. 22.—<sup>r</sup> Judges 2. 14-16; 1 Sam. 12. 9, 11; Psa. 106. 42.—<sup>s</sup> Verse 1.—<sup>t</sup> Exod. 1. 21; Verse 27; 1 Kings 11. 38.—<sup>u</sup> 1 Kings 3. 1.—<sup>v</sup> Deut. 31. 16; 1 Kings 1. 21; Acts 13. 36.—<sup>w</sup> 1 Kings 8. 20; Psa. 132. 11.—<sup>x</sup> 1 Kings 5. 5; 6. 12; 8. 19; 1 Chron. 22. 10; 23. 6.—<sup>y</sup> Ver. 16; Psa. 89. 4, 29, 36, 37.

but I will make a house for thee in thy posterity. "This thought is not merely a play upon words entirely in the spirit of prophecy, but contains the deep general truth that God must first of all build a man's house before the man can build God's house, and has reference especially to the kingdom of God in Israel."—*Keil*.

**12. I will set up thy seed after thee**—Here is the germ of those Davidic prophecies of Messiah which come out in greater boldness and precision in some of his psalms. Psa. ii and cx. **Thy seed** refers primarily to Solomon and his successors, but it reaches on in its prophetic significance, and includes that Greater Son in whom alone the kingdom finds its eternal perpetuity.

**13. He shall build a house**—Here, again, the subject is primarily Solomon, for so Solomon himself explained it, 1 Kings v. 5; but the **for ever** with which the verse ends points unmistakably to a greater than Solomon. The house which Solomon built continued till the time of the Babylonish exile, when it was burned by Nebuchadnezzar, (2 Kings xxv. 8;) but it was rebuilt at the close of the exile, (Ezra vi. 15,) and of it then the prophet Haggai said, (Hag. ii. 9:) "The glory of thine

for ever. **14** "I will be his father, and he shall be my son. "If he commit iniquity, I will chasten him with the rod of men, and with the stripes of the children of men: **15** But my mercy shall not depart away from him," as I took ~~it~~ from Saul, whom I put away before thee. **16** And "thine house and thy kingdom shall be established for ever before thee:

*z* Psa. 89. 26, 27; Heb. 1. 5.—*a* Psa. 89. 30-33.  
—*b* 1 Sam. 15. 23, 28; 16. 14; 1 Kings 11. 13, 34.

latter house shall be greater than that of the former;" for this second temple was the connecting link between the Jews of Haggai's time and the Messiah, who said, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up." He spake of the temple of his body, (John ii, 19,) and by the resurrection from the dead he became, in his own sacred person, the foundation of a far more glorious building—a spiritual house, built up of living stones, for a habitation of God through the Spirit. Eph. ii, 22; 1 Pet. ii, 5.

**14. I will be his father, and he . . . my son**—Referred (Heb. i, 5) immediately to Christ. This was true of Solomon, whom God made greater than all the other kings of Israel and of the earth; but it was true in a deeper sense of Him on whom at Jordan the opened heavens shone, and of whom the Father said, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." **If he commit iniquity**—This is supposed only of Solomon and others of the royal seed who should succeed David on the throne. Clarke regards העוֹת as in the Niphal, and translates, "Even in his sufferings for iniquity I will chasten him," etc., thus making this verse a prophecy of the suffering Saviour. But the Hebrew verb is in the Hiphil form, and in every other passage where it occurs in this form means *to commit iniquity* or *act perversely*. This whole prophecy, as far as it refers to the promised seed, was fulfilled primarily in Solomon, and that is, therefore, a strained interpretation which tries to apply it all pre-eminently to Christ. **The rod of men**—That rod and those stripes of chastisement which scourge other men when they sin. The king's son is not to be exempted from

thy throne shall be established for ever. **17** According to all these words, and according to all this vision, so did Nathan speak unto David.

**18** Then went king David in, and sat before the Lord, and he said, "Who ~~am~~ I, O Lord God? and what ~~is~~ my house, that thou hast brought me hitherto? **19** And this was yet a small thing in

*c* Verse 13; Psa. 89. 26, 27; John 12. 34.—*d* Gen. 32. 10.

the punishments common to all men who act perversely. In this matter God is no respecter of persons. Accordingly, when Solomon forsook the law of the Lord, he was threatened with bitter and humiliating judgments. 1 Kings xi, 9-40.

**15. But my mercy shall not depart**—Even though the royal seed commit iniquity, yet for David and Jerusalem's sake the prophecy and promise of this Scripture shall not fail. "The family of Saul became totally extinct. The family of David remained till the incarnation. Joseph and Mary were both of that family; Jesus was the only heir to the kingdom of Israel. But he did not choose to sit on the secular throne, he ascended the spiritual throne, and now he is exalted to the right hand of God, a Prince and a Saviour, to give repentance and remission of sins."—*Clarke*.

**16. For ever . . . for ever**—Of all the words of promise that fell on David's ears these were the most charming. They find repeated utterance in his prayer, (verses 19, 25, 29,) often in the Psalms, (xviii, 50; lxxxix, 29,) and even echo in the angel's words of salutation to the mother of our Lord. Luke i, 32, 33. By them we see that this message of Nathan to David was largely a Messianic prophecy.

DAVID'S PRAYER, 18-29.

**18. Sat before the Lord**—In the sanctuary on Zion before the ark of the covenant. שָׁבַע, *sat*, cannot be pressed to show the posture of David while he prayed, for the word may also be rendered *waited*, or *tarried*. **Brought me hitherto**—From a humble shepherd boy to be ruler of all Israel. Verse 8.



thy sight, O LORD God; \*but thou hast spoken also of thy servant's house for a great while to come. 'And **is this the manner of man, O LORD God?** **20** And what can David say more unto thee? for thou, LORD God, \*knowest thy servant. **21** For thy word's sake, and according to thine own heart, hast thou done all these great things, to make thy servant know *them*. **22** Wherefore \*thou art great, O LORD God: for *'there is none like thee, neither is there any God besides thee, according to all that we have heard with our ears.* **23** And \*what one nation in the earth *is* like thy people, *even* like Israel, whom God went to redeem for a people to himself, and to make him a name, and to do for you great things and terrible, for thy land, before *'thy people, which thou redeemedst to thee from Egypt, from the nations' and their gods?* **24** For \*thou hast confirmed to thyself thy people Israel *to be* a people unto thee for ever:

e Verses 12, 13. — f Isa. 55. 8. — g Heb. *law*. — h Gen. 18. 19; Psa. 139. 1. — i 1 Chron. 16. 25; 2 Chron. 2. 5; Psa. 48. 1; 88. 10; 96. 4; 135. 5; 145. 3; Jer. 10. 6. — j Deut. 3. 24; 4. 35; 32. 39; 1 Sam. 2. 2; Psa. 86. 8; 89. 6, 8; Isa. 45. 5, 13, 22. — k Deut. 4. 7, 33, 34; 33. 29; Psa. 147. 20.

### 19. For a great while to come—

Reference to the *for ever* of verses 13 and 16. **Is this the manner of man**—Rather, *This is the law of man*. This gracious condescension of God in bestowing these promised blessings upon his servant David and his house is a sublime illustration of that law of love which should ever govern man—that law which says, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." Lev. xix. 18. As God dealt with David in his infinite grace, let man do unto his neighbour according to the ability which he may have. "When God the Lord," says Hengstenberg, "in his treatment of poor mortals, follows the rule which he has laid down for the conduct of men one towards another—when he shows himself kind and affectionate—this must fill with adoring amazement those who know themselves and God."

**21. For thy word's sake**—The word is the promise of the perpetuity of the throne of David, which was magnified before all Israel, and in later times referred to as the "sure mercies of David." The Divine purpose to exalt the throne of David involved, also,

"and thou, LORD, art become their God. **25** And now, O LORD God, the word that thou hast spoken concerning thy servant, and concerning his house, \*establish *it* for ever, and do as thou hast said. **26** And let thy name be magnified for ever, saying, The LORD of hosts *is* the God over Israel: and let the house of thy servant David be established before thee. **27** For thou, O LORD of hosts, God of Israel, hast \*revealed to thy servant, saying, I will build thee a house: therefore hath thy servant found in his heart to pray this prayer unto thee. **28** And now, O LORD God, thou *art* that God, and \*thy words be true, and thou hast promised this goodness unto thy servant: **29** Therefore now \*let it please thee to bless the house of thy servant, that it may continue for ever before thee: for thou, O LORD God, hast spoken *it*: and with thy blessing let the house of thy servant be blessed \*for ever.

l Deut. 9. 26; Neh. 1. 10. — m Deut. 26. 18. — n Psa. 48. 14. — o Gen. 32. 12; Psa. 119. 49; Jer. 11. 4, 5; Ezekiel 36. 37. — p Hebrew, *opened the ear*, Ruth 4. 4; 1 Samuel 9. 15. — q John 17. 17. — r Heb. *be thou pleased and bless*. — s Chap. 22. 51.

the purpose of magnifying the word of prophecy.

**23. To do for you great things**—For you refers to Israel. In the rapt earnestness and enthusiasm of his prayer, David seems in heart to have all Israel before him, and addresses them unconsciously as with an orator's directness. **Thy land**—God's land, the land of Canaan, because it was the land of divine promise.

This prayer of David is a model for all who approach the spiritual mercy-seat. It embodies *confession, adoration, and supplication*. David confesses his own unworthiness of blessings already received, (18,) adores Jehovah for personal favours, (19–21,) and also for the amazing displays of mercy and love for his chosen people, (22–24,) and lastly, with devout supplication, prays for the fulfilment of the Divine promise, (25–29.) Let the reader here observe that though the Divine promise to David and his seed was unconditional, and sure as the pledge of God could make it, (verses 15, 16,) the pious monarch still prays for its fulfilment. Compare Ezek. xxxvi, 36, 37.

**CHAPTER VIII.**  
**AND** \*after this it came to pass, that David smote the Philistines, and subdued them: and David took <sup>1</sup>Metheg-ammah out of the hand of the Philistines. **2** And <sup>2</sup>he smote Moab, and measured them with a line, casting them

<sup>a</sup> 1 Chronicles 18. 1, &c.—<sup>1</sup> Or, *The bridle of Ammah*.—<sup>b</sup> Numbers 24. 17.—<sup>c</sup> Verses 6, 14.

### CHAPTER VIII.

#### SUMMARY OF DAVID'S VICTORIES, 1-14.

We are not to suppose that these victories *all* occurred after the events recorded in the last chapter, nor that they are here recorded in exact chronological order. No such rigid method of writing history was known when these books of Samuel were compiled. Some of these wars occurred before and some after David purposed to build the temple. This list is a convenient summary, and stands as a monument to David's military ability.

**1. After this**—Most of the victories here enumerated occurred, in all probability, after the events of the previous chapter. The Divine promise given in the previous chapter inspired David to extend the bounds of his dominion. **Metheg-ammah**—Margin, *the bridle of Ammah*; literally, *the bridle of the mother*. It is not a proper name, but a figurative expression for the capital city of a province—the government of the mother city. So Gesenius and Fürst. There is an Arabic proverb: "I give thee not my bridle," that is, I do not yield the control of myself to thee. Instead of this expression we have in 1 Chron. xviii, 1: *Gath and her towns*; Hebrew, *Gath and her daughters*. On this capital city of the Philistines see on Josh. xi, 22. Ewald explains it as *the bridle of the arm*; that is, David tore from the Philistines the power by which they curbed Israel, as a rider curbs his horse by the bridle which his arm controls.

**2. Smote Moab**—The occasion and details of this war are unknown, though some Jewish writers have conjectured that it was undertaken to retaliate the death or ill-usage of David's parents. See note on 1 Sam. xxii, 4. The fearful

down to the ground; even with two lines measured he to put to death, and with one full line to keep alive. And so the Moabites <sup>c</sup>became David's servants, and <sup>d</sup>brought gifts. **3** David smote also <sup>2</sup>Hadadezer, the son of Rehob, king of <sup>e</sup>Zobah, as he went to recover <sup>f</sup>his

<sup>d</sup> Psa. 72. 10; see 1 Sam. 10. 27.—<sup>2</sup> Or, *Hadarezer*, 1 Chron. 18. 3.—<sup>e</sup> Chap. 10. 6; Psa. 60. title.—<sup>f</sup> See Gen. 15. 18.

slaughter to which David put the Moabites shows that they had wantonly provoked his wrath, and that of Israel. The incident related of Benaiah in chap. xxiii, 20, and 1 Chron. xi, 22, probably occurred at this time. **Measured them with a line**—A barbarous but convenient method of numbering the captives, and in accordance with the customs and spirit of that age. **Casting them down to the ground**—Rather, *causing them to lie down*. They were made to lie down in a row so as to be more conveniently measured with the line. **Two lines... to put to death... one full line to keep alive**—That is, two thirds were marked off for death, and one full third to be kept alive. "That they might not suffer by the roughness of this mode of marking them out, the line was so drawn as palpably to make the proportion marked off to be spared much the largest of the three thirds, which is doubtless the meaning of the *full line to keep alive*."—Kitto. **Brought gifts**—Paid tribute.

**3. Smote also Hadadezer**—In chap. x, 16, 19 and 1 Chron. xviii, 3 called *Hadarezer*. Owing to the fragmentary character of the accounts, and it being no design of the writer in either place to give all the details of these Aramean wars, the relation of this defeat of Hadadezer to that recorded in chap. x cannot be positively decided. The mere fact that the account of chap. x stands after this decides nothing in the case. Probably the Syrians' interference in the Ammonitish war, as recorded in chap. x, was the occasion of David's first battle with them, and the account of this chapter is a condensed statement of the results of that same war. By calling out his forces from beyond the Euphrates, (chap. x, 16,) Hadadezer seems to have lost his do-

border at the river Euphrates. 4 And David took <sup>2</sup>from him a thousand <sup>1</sup>*chariots*, and seven hundred horsemen, and twenty thousand footmen: and David <sup>3</sup>houghed all the chariot *horses*, but reserved of them <sup>4</sup>for a hundred chariots. 5 <sup>2</sup>And when the Syrians of Damascus came to succour Hadadezer king of Zobah, David slew of the Syrians two and twenty thousand men. 6 Then David put garrisons in Syria of Damascus: and

8 Or, *of his*.—4 As 1 Chron. 18. 4.—5 Josh. 11. 6, 9.—6 1 Kings 11. 23-25.—7 Verse 2.—8 Verse 14; chap. 7. 9.

minion in that quarter. But after his defeat by the Israelites, as soon as he could gather up his scattered army he went to recover that border, (יִד of this

verse,) and then David straightway pursued and gained the victories here recorded. So the order of these Syrian wars we take to be the following. The Syrians, hired by Hanun, come and fight with Joab before Medeba. Chap. x, 8, see note. Being defeated they gather up again, and, being reinforced by fresh troops from beyond the Euphrates, they suffer a second defeat at Helam. Chap. x, 15-19. The officers of the army, including several petty kings of Syria, make peace with David, but as soon as Hadarezer can recruit a new army he goes to recover his border beyond the river, when David pursues and defeats him a third time, and also the Syrians of Damascus, who interfere to help the king of Zobah. On Zobah see note on 1 Sam. xiv, 47. It was a great and powerful province of ancient Syria, and its kings were bitter foes of the Israelitish monarchy. It was rich in brass and gold, and seems to have extended over the vast plains that stretch off northeast of Damascus towards the Euphrates. **His border**—Hadadezer's border—the outskirts of his kingdom on the east. This he seems to have lost by going to assist the Ammonites. Chap. x, 16.

4. **Houghed all the chariot horses**—Cut the tendons of the ham, or the sinews of the hinder hoofs—a practice of ancient warfare. See Josh. xi, 6, 9. But the word *horses* is not in the Hebrew, and עָרָךְ, *to root up*, may also

the Syrians <sup>1</sup>became servants to David, and brought gifts. <sup>2</sup>And the Lord preserved David whithersoever he went. 7 And David took <sup>1</sup>the shields of gold that were on the servants of Hadadezer, and brought them to Jerusalem. 8 And from <sup>2</sup>Betah, and from <sup>3</sup>Berothai, cities of Hadadezer, king David took exceeding much brass. 9 When <sup>1</sup>Toi king of Hamath heard that David had smitten all the host of Hadadezer, 10 Then Toi

1 See 1 Kings 10. 16.—5 Or, *Tibhath*.—6 Or, *Chun*, 1 Chronicles 18. 8.—7 *Tou*, 1 Chronicles 18. 9.

mean to *destroy*. Hence Clarke, Parkhurst, and Fürst render: *David destroyed (or disjoined) all the chariots*. Josephus also says: "He took a thousand of his chariots and destroyed the greater part of them, and ordered that no more than one hundred should be kept." He would not have Israel trust in chariots. Compare Psa. xx, 7; Isa. xxx, 1. Keil translates and explains as follows: "*David lamed all the cavalry*; that is, he made the war chariots and cavalry perfectly useless by laming the horses."

5. **Syrians of Damascus**—Damascus was the metropolis of the Syrian empire, (see note on Gen. xv, 2,) and confederate with Zobah. According to Josephus, the king of Syria who reigned at this time at Damascus was called Hadad.

6. **Garrisons**—Large military forces. David wisely took measures to preserve order and maintain his authority over the subjugated provinces.

7. **Shields of gold**—Golden plated shields; an evidence of the wealth of the kingdom of Zobah.

8. **Betah and Berothai**—Places now unknown. The name *Berothai* seems naturally to point to the ancient Berytus, the modern Beyroot, on the seacoast of northern Phenicia, but this was far away from the line of David's conquests. Instead of these names we have in Chronicles *Tibhath* and *Chun*. **Much brass**—"Wherewith Solomon made the brazen sea, and the pillars, and the vessels of brass." 1 Chron. xviii, 8.

9. **Hamath**—A very ancient city of Syria situated on the Orontes river, about sixty miles southeast of Antioch. See on Num. xiii, 21, and Josh. xiii, 5.

sent <sup>m</sup>Joram his son unto king David, to <sup>s</sup>salute him, and to bless him, because he had fought against Hadadezer, and smitten him: for Hadadezer <sup>s</sup>had wars with Toi. And *Joram* <sup>10</sup>brought with him vessels of silver, and vessels of gold, and vessels of brass: **11** Which also king David <sup>a</sup>did dedicate unto the Lord, with the silver and gold that he had dedicated of all nations which he subdued; **12** Of Syria, and of Moab, and of the children of Ammon, and of the Philistines, and of Amalek, and of the spoil of Hadadezer, son of Rehob, king of Zobah. **13** And David gat *him* a name when

<sup>m</sup> 1 Chron. 18, 10, *Hadoram*.—<sup>s</sup> 8 Heb. *ask him of peace*.—<sup>s</sup> 9 Heb. *was a man of wars with*.—<sup>10</sup> Hebrew, *in his hand were*.—<sup>n</sup> 1 Kings 7, 51; 1 Chron. 18, 11; 28, 26.—<sup>11</sup> Heb. *his smiting*.—<sup>o</sup> 2 Kings 14, 7.—<sup>p</sup> See 1 Chron.

Its king was glad to have David for an ally.

**13. Gat him a name**—Or, *made him*

*a monument*, for **נָחָל**, *name*, is sometimes used in this sense. On his return he erected a memorial of his triumphs, and probably also celebrated them with a grand triumphal procession and a splendid exhibition of his spoils.

**From smiting of the Syrians in the valley of salt**—But *the Syrians* were not smitten in the valley of salt, for this valley is undoubtedly the great plain to the south of the Dead Sea, which abounds in rock salt and brackish springs and streams. Here, at a later day, Amaziah slew ten thousand Edomites. 2 Kings xiv, 7. The text of this verse is therefore faulty, and to be corrected from the parallel passage in 1 Chron. xviii, 12, which says that Abishai, the brother of Joab and a distinguished warrior of David's army, "slew of *the Edomites* in the valley of salt eighteen thousand men." The difference between **אֶדְוִיטִים**, *the Edomites*, and **אֲרָמִים**, *the Syrians*, is so slight that a copyist might easily mistake one for the other. Read therefore:

*From smiting the Edomites in the valley of salt.* 1 Kings xi, 15, 16, affords a few more items of this Edomite war. Joab remained there with the host of Israel for six months, until he had smitten every male. So David, Joab, and Abishai are all spoken of as engaged

he returned from <sup>11</sup> smiting of the Syrians in <sup>a</sup> the valley of salt, <sup>12</sup> *being* eighteen thousand *men*. **14** And he put garrisons in Edom; throughout all Edom put he garrisons, and <sup>a</sup>all they of Edom became David's servants. <sup>a</sup>And the Lord preserved David withersoever he went.

**15** And David reigned over all Israel; and David executed judgment and justice unto all his people. **16** <sup>a</sup>And Joab the son of Zeruiah *was* over the host; and <sup>a</sup>Jehoshaphat the son of Ahilud *was* <sup>13</sup> recorder; **17** And <sup>a</sup>Zadok the son of Ahitub, and Ahimelech the son of Abiathar, *were* the priests; and Seraiah *was*

<sup>8, 12</sup>; Psa. 60, title.—<sup>12</sup> Or, *slaying*.—<sup>a</sup> Gen. 37, 29, 37, 40; Num. 24, 18.—<sup>r</sup> Verse 6.—<sup>s</sup> Chap. 19, 13; 20, 23; 1 Chron. 11, 6; 18, 15.—<sup>t</sup> 1 Kings 4, 3.—<sup>13</sup> Or, *remembrancer*, or, *writer of chronicles*.—<sup>u</sup> 1 Chron. 24, 8.

in the conquest of Edom: David, as the royal head of the army and the nation; Joab, as captain or chief general; and Abishai, as having in this war signalized his valour by daring exploits, and leading his division of men into positions which met the chief brunt of the battle. To celebrate these victories David composed Psalm lx.

#### DAVID'S OFFICIALS, 15-18.

**16. Joab**—See notes on chap. ii, 13, 18. **Jehoshaphat... recorder**—This was an officer of high rank in the ancient Eastern courts, whose especial duty was to preserve such records as are referred to in Ezra vi, 1; Esther vi, 1. He kept an accurate record of all the items of importance that occurred in the kingdom.

**17. Zadok... and Ahimelech... priests**—The one officiating at Gibeon, the other at the new tabernacle in Jerusalem. See on chap. vi, 17. **Son of Abiathar**—But in 1 Sam. xxii, 20, Abiathar is called the son of Ahimelech; who, then, is this Ahimelech the son of Abiathar? Some have supposed that the names in the text have been transposed by the mistake of some copyist. Others, that Abiathar, son of the slain Ahimelech, had also a son named Ahimelech who performed the duties of high priest in connexion with his father. This latter supposition is strengthened by the fact that the associate priest of Zadok is called Ahim-

the <sup>14</sup>scribe; **18** And Benaiah the son of Jehoiada *was over* both the <sup>15</sup>Chereth-

14 Or, *secretary*.—v1 Chron. 18. 17.

elech in 1 Chron. xxiv, 3, 6, 31, but the former supposition seems to us more plausible. **The scribe**—Persons of this order were, before the Babylonish exile, private secretaries of the king. Their work was distinct from that of the *recorder* in this, that the scribe first provided the materials which the recorder afterwards transcribed and preserved among the archives. Heeren, in his "Historical Researches," thus speaks of the secretaries of the ancient Persian kings: "Whatever the monarch said or did was, of course, worthy of being recorded; and to this intent his person was usually surrounded by scribes or secretaries, whose office it was to register his words and actions. They were in almost constant attendance upon the sovereign, and especially when he appeared in public, on occasion of festivals, of public reviews, and even in the midst of the tumult of battle, and noted down the words which fell from him on such occasions. This institution was not peculiar to the Persians, but prevailed among all the principal nations of Asia. The king's scribes are mentioned in the earliest records of the Mongol conquerors; and it is well known that Hyder Ali usually appeared in public surrounded by forty such secretaries." At a later period the work of the scribes among the Jews was to write copies of the Scriptures and interpret the same.

**18. The Cherethites and the Pel-ethites**—The Syriac and Arabic versions render these words, *nobles and soldiers*; the Targum of Jonathan, *archers and slingers*. Josephus simply says: "He committed the command over his body guards to Benaiah," and this agrees with chap. xxiii, 23, where it is said that Benaiah was set over the guard, or privy council, of the king. The Hebrew words are in the form of adjectives, and may be translated by *executioners and runners*, and such offices they probably served in David's army. But the words seem to refer most nat-

ites and the Pelethites; and David's sons were <sup>18</sup>chief rulers.

v1 Sam. 30. 14.—15 Or, *princes*, chap. 20. 26.

urally to the nationality of the men, and to indicate that they were composed principally, if not altogether, of foreigners—Cretans and Philistines. A common and prevailing opinion is, that the Philistines were originally colonists from Crete, and perhaps numerous immigrants from that earlier home of the race were continually coming into Philistia during David's residence at Ziklag. These later immigrants may have been called Cherethites in distinction from the older Philistine settlers. See note on 1 Sam. xxx, 14. The fact that David had a considerable body of Gittites in his army (chap. xv, 18) forbids our assuming that he would never have composed his body-guard of foreigners. He may have had peculiar reasons for so doing of which we are now ignorant. And, as Ewald well says, "This small body could at no time become a source of danger to the State. Far more was to be apprehended from the *Gibborim*, (mighty men,) who obviously formed the commencement of a sort of *milites pretoriani*, or janissaries, and were already of sufficient importance to play a part at Solomon's accession. 1 Kings i, 8, 10. To this must be added that they might also be chosen from foreigners as soon as they conformed to the religion of the country. Uriah was a Hittite, but, as far as religion went, a good Israelite; Zelek was an Ammonite, (2 Sam. xxiii, 37,) and Itlmah a Moabite, (1 Chron. xi, 46;) and Ittai of Gath, who was appointed commander of one of the three divisions of the army in the battle against Absalom, is expressly designated as a foreigner by David. 2 Sam. xv, 19." **David's sons were chief rulers**—Literally, *priests*; margin, *princes*. The word has been explained as domestic priests, court chaplains, or spiritual advisers. The parallel passage in Chronicles seems to give the true sense, *chief at the hand of the king*; that is, his most intimate counsellors and confidants. See note on 1 Kings iv, 2, 5.

## CHAPTER IX.

**A**ND David said, Is there yet any that is left of the house of Saul, that I may <sup>a</sup>show him kindness for Jonathan's sake? **2** And *there was* of the house of Saul a servant whose name *was* <sup>b</sup>Ziba. And when they had called him unto David, the king said unto him, *Art thou Ziba?* And he said, Thy servant *is* <sup>c</sup>he. **3** And the king said, *Is there* not yet any of the house of Saul, that I may show the <sup>d</sup>kindness of God unto him? And Ziba said unto the king, Jonathan hath yet a son, *which is* <sup>e</sup>lame on *his* feet. **4** And the king said unto him, *Where is he?* And Ziba said unto the king, Behold, *he is* in the house of <sup>f</sup>Machir, the son of Ammiel, in Lodebar. **5** Then king David sent, and fetched him out of the house of Machir, the son of Ammiel, from Lodebar. **6** Now when

<sup>a</sup> 1 Sam. 18. 3; <sup>b</sup> 20. 14-17, 42; Prov. 27. 10. —  
<sup>c</sup> Chap. 16. 1; 19. 17, 29. — <sup>d</sup> 1 Sam. 20. 14. —  
<sup>e</sup> Chap. 4. 4. — <sup>f</sup> Chap. 17. 27.

## CHAPTER IX.

DAVID'S KINDNESS TO MEPHIBOSHETH,  
1-13.

**1. Is there yet any . . . of the house of Saul**—Being but five years old at his father's death, (chap. iv. 4,) Mephibosheth must have been born during the period of David's wanderings, so that it is nothing strange that David had no knowledge of him; and the incessant cares of his reign had thus far prevented the king's making special inquiry into this matter. Now, in a time of peace, his thoughts go back to the brotherly covenant made between himself and Jonathan, (1 Sam. xviii. 3; xx. 15, 16, 42,) and he yearns for opportunity to requite some of the kindness of that noble prince.

**2. Ziba**—This slave of Saul seems to have become a freedman at his master's death, and so well did he improve all advantages that at this time he had himself become the head of a family of fifteen sons and twenty slaves. Ver. 10.

**3. Lame**—See chap. iv. 4.

**4. Machir**—Josephus calls him "the principal man of Gilead." He also showed kindness to David when he fled from Absalom. Chap. xvii. 27. **Lodebar**—A town of Gilead, not far from Mahanaim, and probably identical with

<sup>1</sup>Mephibosheth, the son of Jonathan, the son of Saul, was come unto David, he fell on his face, and did reverence. And David said, Mephibosheth. And he answered, Behold thy servant! **7** And David said unto him, Fear not: 'for I will surely show thee kindness for Jonathan thy father's sake, and will restore thee all the land of Saul thy father; and thou shalt eat bread at my table continually. **8** And he bowed himself, and said, What *is* thy servant, that thou shouldest look upon such <sup>a</sup>a dead dog as I *am*? **9** Then the king called to Ziba, Saul's servant, and said unto him, <sup>b</sup>I have given unto thy master's son all that pertained to Saul and to all his house. **10** Thou therefore, and thy sons, and thy servants, shall till the land for him, and thou shalt bring in *the fruits*, that thy master's son may have food to eat: but

<sup>1</sup> *Merib-baal*, 1 Chron. 8. 34. — <sup>f</sup> Verses 1, 3. — <sup>g</sup> 1 Sam. 24. 14; chap. 16. 9. — <sup>h</sup> See chap. 16. 4; 19. 29.

*Debir* of Josh. xiii. 26. Its site is unknown.

**6. Fell on his face**—Probably fearing that he had been suspected as an aspirant to the throne of his grandfather Saul, (comp. chap. xvi. 3,) and had been summoned into the king's presence to receive sentence of death.

**7. Restore thee all the land of Saul**—The private estate of Saul is doubtless meant, comprising both what fell to him by inheritance from Kish, and what he had himself acquired. "The landed property belonging to Saul had either fallen to David as crown lands, or had been taken possession of by distant relations after the death of Saul."—*Keil*. **Eat bread at my table**—Be a royal courtier, and receive the treatment and familiarity of a member of the royal family.

**8. A dead dog**—Compare 1 Sam. xxiv. 14. "The strongest devisable hyperbole of unworthiness and degradation; for in a dead dog the vileness of a corpse is added to the vileness of a dog."—*Kittó*.

**9. Thy master's son**—Ziba had doubtless been accustomed to regard and call both Saul and Jonathan master. The word *son* is also often used where grandson, or even a more remote descendant, is intended.

Mephibosheth thy master's son 'shall eat bread alway at my table. Now Ziba had 'fifteen sons and twenty servants.

**11** Then said Ziba unto the king, 'According to all that my lord the king hath commanded his servant, so shall thy servant do. As for Mephibosheth, *said the king*, he shall eat at my table, as one of the king's sons. **12** And Mephibosheth had a young son, "whose name was Micha. And all that dwell in the house of Ziba *were* servants unto Mephibosheth. **13** So Mephibosheth dwelt in Jerusalem: "for he did eat continually at the king's table; and "was lame on both his feet.

### CHAPTER X.

**A**ND it came to pass after this, that the "king of the children of Am-

<sup>4</sup> Verses 7, 11, 13: chapter 19, 28. — <sup>k</sup> Chapter 19, 17. — <sup>l</sup> Chapter 16, 1, 4; 19, 26. — <sup>m</sup> 1 Chron. 8, 34. — <sup>n</sup> Verses 7, 1. — <sup>o</sup> Verse 3.

**12. Micha**—Called *Micah* in 1 Chron. viii, 35, where it appears that the posterity of Jonathan continued through many generations.

### CHAPTER X.

DAVID'S WAR WITH THE AMMONITES AND SYRIANS, 1-19.

This great contest with the Ammonites was the most fearful and long-continued of all the wars of David. It involved him in war with the Aramean kingdoms, and also with Edom, lasted apparently through five campaigns, and resulted in extending his dominion from the Desert of Paran to the river Euphrates.

**1. Ammon**—The territory of the Ammonites was contiguous to that of the Moabites. See on Gen. xix, 37, 38. Against this nation Jephthah and Saul had fought and been victorious. Judges xi, 32, 33; 1 Sam. xi, 11.

**2. His father showed kindness unto me**—When and how we are nowhere told, but it was probably during the time of his flight from Saul. **To comfort him**—To sympathize with him in the time of his mourning for his father.

**3. The princes**—The chiefs or sheiks of the people, who acted as counsellors of the king. **Thinkest thou**—"Courtiers, especially, are suspicious of each

mon died, and Hanun his son reigned in his stead. **2** Then said David, I will 'show kindness unto Hanun the son of 'Nahash, as his father showed kindness unto me. And David sent to comfort him by the hand of his servants for his father. And David's servants came into the land of the children of Ammon. **3** And the princes of the children of Ammon said unto Hanun their lord, 'Thinkest thou that David doth honour thy father, that he hath sent comforters unto thee? hath not David *rather* sent his servants unto thee, to search the city, and to spy it out, and to overthrow it? **4** Wherefore Hanun took David's servants, and shaved off the one half of their beards, and cut off their garments in the middle, *'even* to their buttocks, and sent them away. **5** When they told

<sup>a</sup> 1 Chron. 19, 1. &c. — <sup>b</sup> Deut. 23, 3, 6; Neh. 4, 3, 7; 13, 1, 3. — <sup>c</sup> 1 Sam. 11, 1. — <sup>d</sup> Hebrew, *In thine eyes doth David*. — <sup>e</sup> Isa. 50, 4; 47, 2.

other, and often mislead their sovereigns. They feel themselves to be insincere, and suspect others to be so too."—*Clarke*. **To search the city**—This city was Rabbah, the capital city of the children of Ammon. See on chap. xii, 26; Deut. iii, 11; Josh. xiii, 25.

**4. Shaved off the one half of their beards**—"More ignominious than to remove it altogether, although that, among the ancient and modern eastern nations that cultivate the beard, was an offence not to be named without horror. It is very difficult to us to realize the intense appreciation of, and respect for, the beard, which is entertained among the Persians, Arabians, and other bearded nations. This is truly to them the seat of honour. They treat their own beards with respect, suffering no defilement to come near them, and handling them with deliberate care. They bury with solicitude any stray hairs that come from it; to lose it by accident were worse than the loss of the head itself, which would, in their esteem, become ridiculous and useless without this essential appendage. For any one else to touch a man's beard irreverently, to speak of it lightly, to cast a reproach upon it, were an offence never to be forgotten or forgiven; but to cut or remove it by violence or stealth, were an affront, a disgrace a

unto David, he sent to meet them, because 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 stank before David, the children of Ammon sent and hired the Syrians of Beth-rehob, and the Syrians of Zoba, twenty thousand footmen, and of king Maacah a thousand men, and of Ishob twelve thousand men. **7** And

<sup>e</sup> 1 Kings 16. 34; 1 Chron. 19. 5.—<sup>f</sup> Genesis 24. 30; Exodus 5. 21; 1 Samuel 13. 4.—<sup>g</sup> Chapter 8. 3, 5.

horror, which scarcely the heart's blood of the offender can expiate."—*Kitto*.

**5. Tarry at Jericho**—The king knew that for these men to appear among their acquaintances before the marks of their dishonour were entirely gone would be to expose them to lasting ridicule and infamy; for all who might see them in that shameful plight would ever after, in their minds, associate them with that misfortune.

**6. Stank**—Were held in abomination. See note on 1 Sam. xiii. 4. **Sent and hired the Syrians**—In the note on chap. viii. 3, we have argued that probably this act of the Syrians in helping the Ammonites in their war against Israel was the occasion of David's Aramean wars. The mere fact that this account occurs in a subsequent chapter does not prove that the events themselves were in the like chronological sequence. The conquest of Ammon is also mentioned in that chapter, (verse 12;) but it could have been no conquest previous to this one, for if David had subdued them before the death of Nahash, how could he have presumed to send this embassy of condolence to Hanun? And, further, if the complete subjugation into which David reduced Hadarezer and his people were previous to this, is it not strange that in this more detailed narrative there is no mention of their revolting from their allegiance? **Beth-rehob**—Called also in verse 8, *Rehob*; a district lying probably southwest of Damascus, and north of Lake Merom. See on Judges xviii. 28. **Of king Maacah**—Rather, *of the king of Maacah*, Maacah being the name of the place, not of the king. The region of Maacah

when David heard of it, he sent Joab, and all the host of the mighty men. **8** And the children of Ammon came out, and put the battle in array at the entering in of the gate: and the Syrians of Zoba, and of Rehob, and Ishob, and Maacah, were by themselves in the field. **9** When Joab saw that the front of the battle was against him before and behind, he chose of all the choice men of Israel, and put them in array against the

<sup>2</sup> Or, *The men of Tob*; see Judges 11. 3, 5.—<sup>h</sup> Chapter 23. 8.—<sup>i</sup> Verse 6.—<sup>k</sup> Joshua 8. 21, 22; Judges 20. 42, 43.

seems to have bordered on Beth-rehob, and extended southward from Mount Hermon. See on Josh. xii. 5. **Ish-tob**—Rather, *men of Tob*. Tob was the district northeast of Gilead into which Jephthah fled when driven from his father's house. See margin, and Judges xi. 3. In 1 Chron. xix. 6, we are told that the Ammonites derived help from Mesopotamia also, and, according to our interpretation of chap. viii, at a later stage of this same war with Syria, when the Syrians of Damascus interfered to succour Hadarezer, they were also smitten before the army of Israel, and thus all these confederate principalities of Syria became subject to David. Thus the fragmentary narratives of chaps. viii and x of this book of Samuel, and the parallel passages in 1 Chronicles, make up at best only a broken and disconnected account of David's Syrian wars; and therefore, for want of sufficient data, we may not expect to clear up all discrepancies in numbers that appear between the separate accounts.

**8. At the entering in of the gate**—That is, most obviously, at the gate of their capital city, Rabbah. **Syrians... by themselves in the field**—The record in 1 Chronicles xix. 7 is, they pitched before Medeba, a city some distance south of Rabbah, and in the tribe of Reuben. See on Josh. xiii. 16.

**9. Before and behind**—Joab thus seems to have unwittingly taken a position between Rabbah and Medeba, so as to have the Ammonites in front and the Syrians behind. Hence he found it necessary to provide for fighting with both armies at the same time.



Syrians: **10** And the rest of the people he delivered into the hand of Abishai his brother, that he might put *them* in array against the children of Ammon.

**11** 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 come and help thee. **12** "Be of good courage, and let us "play the men for our people, and for the cities of our God: and "the LORD do that which seemeth him good.

**13** And Joab drew nigh, and the people that *were* with him, unto the battle against the Syrians: and they fled before him. **14** And when the children of Ammon saw that the Syrians were fled, then fled they also before Abishai, and entered into the city. So Joab returned from the children of Ammon, and came to Jerusalem. **15** And when the Syrians saw that they were smitten be-

fore Israel, they gathered themselves together. **16** And Hadarezer sent, and brought out the Syrians that *were* beyond "the river; and they came to Helam: and "Shobach the captain of the host of Hadarezer *went* before them. **17** And when it was told David, he gathered all Israel together, and passed over Jordan, and came to Helam. And the Syrians set themselves in array against David, and fought with him. **18** And the Syrians fled before Israel; and David slew *the men* of seven hundred chariots of the Syrians, and forty thousand "horsemen, and smote Shobach the captain of their hosts, who died there. **19** And when all the kings that *were* servants to Hadarezer saw that they were smitten before Israel, they made peace with Israel, and "served them. So the Syrians feared to help the children of Ammon any more.

*l* 1 Chronicles 19. 9, 12.—*m* Deut. 31. 6.—*n* 1 Samuel 4. 9; 1 Cor. 16. 13.—*o* 1 Samuel 8. 18; Job 1. 21.

3 That is, *Euphrates*.—4 Or, *Shophach*, 1 Chron. 19. 16.—*p* 1 Chron. 19. 18, *footmen*.—*q* Chap. 8. 6.

**11. If the Syrians be too strong for me**—So the understanding was not to attack both armies at the same time; but Abishai was to watch the success of Joab, and if he was likely to be repulsed, he should not attempt to fight the Ammonites, but come to his help. Nevertheless there was the possibility that the Ammonites might rush forth and attack Abishai's forces before Joab could come in contact with the Syrians, in which case Joab was not to attack the Syrians, but hold off, ready to render Abishai any needed assistance.

**12. Play the men**—Show yourselves courageous and brave. **The cities of our God**—The cities God had given Israel. The children of Israel were taught to regard themselves and their land as the property of God. Lev. xxv, 22.

**14. The children of Ammon... entered... the city**—Retreated from before the gates of Rabbah, (verse 8,) and fortified themselves within the capital. **Joab returned... to Jerusalem**—Deeming it unwise to lay siege to Rabbah at that time. Compare chapter xi, 1.

**16. Brought out the Syrians... beyond the river**—By which act he seems to have lost his dominion in that border. See chap. viii, 3. When the Syrian cities beyond the Euphrates

learned that their king had been smitten by the army of David they openly renounced their allegiance to the kingdom of Zobah. **Helam**—A place somewhere beyond the Jordan, and probably near the borders of Syria; but its situation has never been discovered. **Shobach the captain**—Who was to Hadarezer's army what Joab was to David's.

**18. Seven hundred chariots**—In 1 Chron. xix, 18, we have *seven thousand*. The discrepancy is doubtless the error of a copyist. **Forty thousand horsemen**—In Chronicles forty thousand *footmen*, another discrepancy resulting either from the carelessness of some early copyist, or the fragmentary character of these accounts. A fully detailed history of this war would doubtless give us many facts and figures now unknown.

**19. They made peace**—The kings or chieftains under Hadarezer made peace. It seems that Hadarezer himself was not present at this war, so that in this treaty with Israel his officers acted for him. **The Syrians feared to help... Ammon any more**—They had now suffered two disastrous defeats in attempting to help the Ammonites, the first in the field before Medeba, (verse 8; comp. 1 Chron. xix,) and the

## CHAPTER XI.

**A**ND it came to pass, <sup>1</sup>after the year was expired, at the time when kings go forth to battle, that <sup>2</sup>David sent Joab, and his servants with him, and all

<sup>1</sup> Heb. *at the return of the year*, 1 Kings 20.

Israel; and they destroyed the children of Ammon, and besieged Rabbah. But David tarried still at Jerusalem.

<sup>2</sup> And it came to pass in an evening-tide, that David arose from off his bed,

22, 26; 2 Chron. 36. 10. — *a* 1 Chron. 20. 1.

second at Helam. But, as we have argued in the notes on verse 6, and chap. viii, 3, there was yet another engagement subsequent to these, but probably intimately connected with them, and not long after. Hadarezer went to recover his border along the Euphrates, and this act was too much like violation of the peace David had just made with his subject-kings, and hence the war with Hadarezer, the interference of the Syrians of Damascus, and the consequent subjection of all Syria to the kingdom of Israel, recorded in chapter viii.

## CHAPTER XI.

## SIEGE OF RABBAH, 1.

**1. The time when kings go forth**—That season of the year when it was customary for kings or generals to enter upon their military campaigns. This was probably in April, at the close of the cold, rainy season. So Josephus. It is also likely that the intense heat of the summer sometimes caused a temporary cessation of military operations. But Harmer, in his *Observations*, on this passage shows that the Crusaders carried on war every month in the year.

**All Israel**—The entire military force, which with its commander had returned to Jerusalem at the close of the previous campaign against Ammon. Chap. x, 14.

**Destroyed the children of Ammon**

—The text of 1 Chron. xx, 1, reads, *wasted the country of the children of Ammon*, and this was probably the original reading here; for if Joab had destroyed the Ammonites why should he besiege their city? This siege continued long, and its result is given, chap. xii, 26–30.

**Rabbah** was the great city of the Ammonites, situated twenty-two miles east of the Jordan, and fourteen northeast of Heshbon. It lies near the head waters of the ancient Jabbok, (wady Zerka,) or one of its branches, at a point where the narrow valley opens

out into a small plain surrounded on every side by hills. Through the valley runs a copious stream, that receives occasional affluents in its course, and gave to the lower part of ancient Rabbah the name of “City of Waters.” Chap. xii, 27. Its modern name is Amman, but the principal ruins, which are very extensive and magnificent, consisting of prostrate marbles and ruined churches, temples, and theatre, are not properly the relics of the ancient capital of Ammon, but of the later Græco-Roman city Philadelphia, which grew up upon its ruins. See Map, page 234, and cut on page 503.

## DAVID'S ADULTERY, 2–5.

The foul crime here recorded was the turning point in David's life and reign. He had now reached the acme of his power and glory; the borders of his kingdom had become greatly enlarged, and most of the surrounding nations were tributary to his throne. The Ammonites yet hold out, but we shall soon see them utterly subdued. The coming wars and troubles of David are to be among his own people and in his own house, and these a punishment of sin.

When we contemplate the splendid character of David, and the glory of his many triumphs; when we survey at a glance his exaltation from a humble shepherd-boy to the widely-honoured king of Jehovah's people, and think of his many unrivalled excellences of mind and heart, we are ready to wish that his life had closed before these crimes of adultery and blood-guiltiness had polluted his mighty soul and darkened his life-history with an ineffaceable stain. It was probably this feeling that led the writer of Chronicles to pass over this whole section of David's history, as if he would fain leave it in eternal silence.

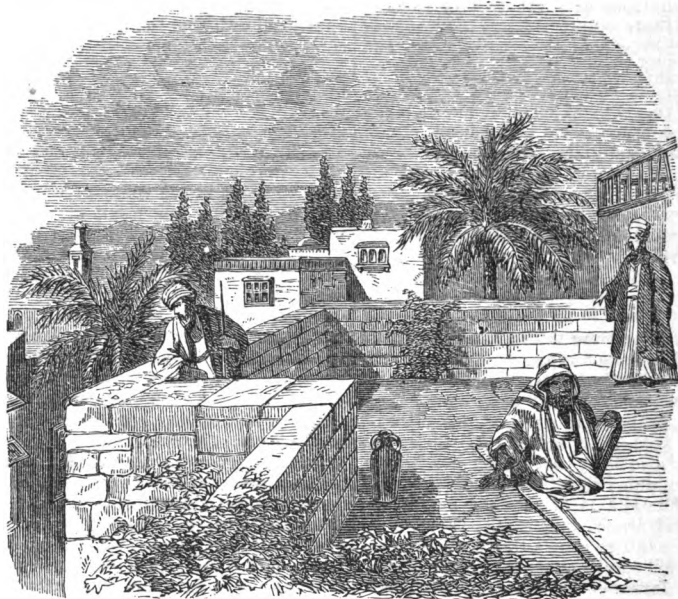
**2. In an evening-tide**—That is, towards evening, after having taken his

\*and walked upon the roof of the king's house: and from the roof he saw a woman washing herself; and the woman was very beautiful to look upon. 3 And David sent and inquired after the woman. And one said, Is not this Bathshe-

ba, the daughter of Eliam, the wife of Uriah the Hittite? 4 And David sent messengers, and took her; and she came in unto him, and he lay with her; for she was purified from her uncleanness: and she returned unto her house. 5 And

b Deut. 22. 8.—c Gen. 34. 2; Job 31. 1; Matt. 5. 28.—2 Or, *Bathsheba*, 1 Chron. 3. 5.—3 Or, *Ammiel*—d Chap. 23. 39.

e Psalm 51, title; James 1. 14.—4 Or, *and when she had purified herself, &c., she returned.*—f Lev. 15. 19, 28; 18. 19.



HOUSE WITH ROOF AND BATTLEMENTS.

mid-day rest. **Upon the roof**—"The roofs of these houses afford such a delightful promenade, and the prospect is so beautiful, that I can scarcely keep away from them day or night. During a large part of the year the roof is the most agreeable place about the establishment, especially in the morning and evening."—*Thomson*.

3 **A woman washing herself**—For the sake of healthfulness and refreshment after the heats of a summer day. But her washing in such an exposed place was imprudent and immodest, and has justly subjected her to the charge of a desire to be seen.

4. **David sent messengers**—So the king's great sin could not have been altogether secret. These messengers knew of it, and very possibly rumours of it reached Uriah's ears. **She came in unto him**—She seems to have yielded herself willingly to his desires. **For she was purified**—The word *for* is here unauthorized and incorrect. The margin gives the proper rendering: *And she purified herself from her uncleanness, and returned, etc.* This purification was that required by the law after carnal intercourse. Lev. xv, 18. Bathsheba was like many who are scrupulously careful about ceremonies,

the woman conceived, and sent and told David, and said, I *am* with child.

6 And David sent to Joab, *saying*, Send me Uriah the Hittite. And Joab sent Uriah to David. 7 And when Uriah was come unto him, David demanded of him <sup>a</sup>how Joab did, and how the people did, and how the war prospered. 8 And David said to Uriah, Go down to thy house, and <sup>a</sup>wash thy feet. And Uriah departed out of the king's house, and there <sup>a</sup>followed him a mess of *meat* from the king. 9 But Uriah <sup>a</sup>slept at the door of the king's house with all the servants of his lord, and went not down to his house. 10 And when they had told David, saying, Uriah went not down unto his house, David said unto Uriah, Camest thou not from *thy* journey? why

<sup>5</sup> Heb. *of the peace of*, &c.—<sup>g</sup> Gen. 18. 4; 13. 2.—<sup>6</sup> Heb. *went out after him*.

while they plunge without reserve into darkest crimes.

5. **Sent and told David**—The law required the death of both parties in the crime of adultery, (Lev. xx, 10,) and so, says Josephus, she admonished the king that he should contrive some way of concealing their guilt. This he at once set himself to do.

DAVID'S ARTIFICES TO CONCEAL HIS SIN AND TO KILL URIAH, 6-27.

8. **Go down to thy house and wash thy feet**—David's ostensible object in sending for Uriah was to learn how the war prospered; and, being apparently pleased with his report of affairs, he directs him to go home and rest himself before returning to the scenes of war. Washing the feet was customary after a journey and before retiring to sleep. Gen. xviii, 4; xix, 2. But the king's real design was to have Uriah pass the night with his wife, that the child already conceived by her might not be regarded as the fruit of their adultery. **There followed him a mess**—As a royal present to convince him of the king's affection for him. Very likely David feared that his sin was known or suspected, for the guilty soul is ever clouded with such suspicions.

11. **The ark, and Israel, and Judah, abide in tents**—That is, the houses like those occupied by David

*then* didst thou not go down unto thine house? 11 And Uriah said unto David, 'The ark, and Israel, and Judah, abide in tents; and <sup>a</sup>my lord Joab, and the servants of my lord, are encamped in the open fields; shall I then go into mine house, to eat and to drink, and to lie with my wife? *as* thou livest, and *as* thy soul liveth, I will not do this thing. 12 And David said to Uriah, Tarry here to day, also, and to morrow I will let thee depart. So Uriah abode in Jerusalem that day and the morrow. 13 And when David had called him, he did eat and drink before him; and he made him <sup>a</sup>drunk: and at even he went out to lie in his bed <sup>a</sup>with the servants of his lord, but went not down to his house. 14 And it came to pass in the morning,

<sup>a</sup> Job 5, 12, 14.—<sup>i</sup> Chap. 7. 2, 6.—<sup>k</sup> Chapter 20. 6.—<sup>l</sup> Gen. 19. 33, 35.—<sup>m</sup> Verse 9.

and Uriah, and other chief men, were comparatively few; most of the families of Israel yet dwelt in tents, and even the ark of the covenant yet dwelt in curtains. Chap. vii, 2. Most interpreters have erroneously supposed that the Israel and Judah here referred to were the warriors now besieging Rabbah, and that the ark had also been taken with them to battle. But the next sentence shows that the army besieging Rabbah were not in tents at all, but **in the open fields**. Uriah, in the spirit of an enthusiastic soldier, refuses at that period of the war to subject himself to the delights and comforts of his superior home, lest he become effeminate, and lose interest in the struggles for national honour. It is probable that Uriah had, upon his arrival at Jerusalem, received some hint or information of what had been going on in his absence, for David's sin had not been altogether secret. See note on verse 4.

12. **Tarry here to-day, also, and to-morrow**—He hopes yet to contrive some artifice to overreach him.

13. **He made him drunk**—Hoping thus to unman him, that he might forget or neglect his resolution to stay away from home. **But went not down to his house**—"The providence of God is here manifest," says Bishop Herve, "defeating David's base contrivances, and bringing his sin to the open light. It is no less clear how

O. T.

that David "wrote a letter to Joab, and sent it by the hand of Uriah. 15 And he wrote in the letter, saying, Set ye Uriah in the forefront of the hottest battle, and retire ye <sup>a</sup>from him, that he may <sup>b</sup>be smitten, and die. 16 And it came to pass, when Joab observed the city, that he assigned Uriah unto a place where he knew that valiant men *were*. 17 And the men of the city went out, and fought with Joab: and <sup>c</sup>there fell *some* of the people of the servants of David; and Uriah the Hittite died also. 18 Then Joab sent and told David all the things concerning the war; 19 And charged the messenger, saying, When thou hast made an end of telling the matters of the war unto the king, 20 And if so be that the king's wrath arise, and he say unto thee, Wherefore approached ye so nigh unto the city when ye did fight? knew ye not that they would shoot from the wall? 21 Who smote <sup>d</sup>Abimelech the son of <sup>e</sup>Jerubbesheth?

<sup>n</sup> See 1 Kings 21. 8, 9.—<sup>7</sup> Hebrew, *strong*.  
<sup>8</sup> Hebrew, *from after him*.—<sup>o</sup> Chapter 12. 9.—<sup>p</sup> Chap. 12. 9; Psa. 51. 14.—<sup>q</sup> Judges 9. 53.

mercy was at the bottom of this severity, which issued in David's deep repentance, and has also given to the Church one of the most solemn and searching warnings as to the evil of sin which is contained in the whole Bible."

14. **David wrote a letter**—Having been frustrated in his efforts thus far, his fallen soul conceives another dark and deadly crime. He knows that if Uriah lives, his own sin and Bathsheba's unfaithfulness and disgrace will be blazed before the nation's eye. He therefore deliberately seeks, and successfully accomplishes, Uriah's death. Grotius and others compare Uriah with Bellerophon, of classic fable.

15. **That he may be smitten**—By a similar device Saul had once sought the bringing about of David's death. Comp. Sam. xviii, 17, 25.

16. **Observed the city**—Laid out his plans for besieging it.

17. **There fell some of the people of . . . David**—More, probably, than was designed or desired, so that David's army sustained considerable loss.

20. **If . . . the king's wrath arise**—Joab had apprehensions that the king

did not a woman cast a piece of a mill-stone upon him from the wall, that he died in Thebez? why went ye nigh the wall? then say thou, Thy servant Uriah the Hittite is dead also. 22 So the messenger went, and came and showed David all that Joab had sent him for. 23 And the messenger said unto David, Surely the men prevailed against us, and came out unto us into the field, and we were upon them even unto the entering of the gate. 24 And the shooters shot from off the wall upon thy servants, and *some* of the king's servants be dead, and thy servant Uriah the Hittite is dead also. 25 Then David said unto the messenger, Thus shalt thou say unto Joab, Let not this thing <sup>10</sup>displease thee, <sup>a</sup>for the sword devoureth <sup>11</sup>one as well as another: make thy battle more strong against the city, and overthrow it: and encourage thou him. 26 And when the wife of Uriah heard that Uriah her husband was dead, she mourned for her

<sup>9</sup> That is, *Let the shameful thing plead*. See Jer. 11. 13.—<sup>r</sup> Judges 6. 32, *Jerubbail*.—<sup>10</sup> Heb. *be evil in thine eyes*.—<sup>s</sup> 1 Sam. 6. 9; Eccles. 9. 1, 3.—<sup>11</sup> Heb. *so and such*.

might regard the loss as greater than necessary.

21. **Son of Jerubbesheth**—Rather, *of Jerubbail*. See Judges ix.

24. **Uriah the Hittite is dead also**—The messenger did not wait, as Joab directed, to announce Uriah's death separately. His message was, like several other messages we have noticed, (chap. i, 4; 1 Sam. iv, 17.) climacteric, and Uriah's death, as the most signal loss, is announced last. This messenger must have understood, however, that Uriah's death was not afflictive to the king.

25. **Thus shalt thou say unto Joab**—This message was dictated by an abominable hypocrisy. He would thus affect sorrow for the fall of the noble Uriah, and seek to cover his own guilt in the matter.

26. **She mourned for her husband**—Probably seven days. Compare Gen. 1, 10; 1 Sam. xxxi, 13. David would seek to take her to wife as long as possible before childbirth, in order to hide his sin, and there appears to have been no reluctance on her part. "The whole of her conduct indicates that she observed the form without feeling the power of sorrow. She lost a cap-

husband. **27** And when the mourning was past, David sent and fetched her to his house, and she 'became his wife, and bare him a son. But the thing that David had done <sup>12</sup>displeased the Lord.

## CHAPTER XII.

**A**ND the Lord sent Nathan unto David. And 'he came unto him, and 'said unto him, There were two men in one city; the one rich, and the other poor. **2** The rich *man* had exceeding many flocks and herds: **3** But the poor *man* had nothing, save 'one little ewe lamb, which he had bought and nourished up: and it grew up together with him, and with his children; it did

<sup>t</sup> Chap. 12. 9.—<sup>12</sup> Heb. *was evil in the eyes* of:—<sup>a</sup> Psa. 51. title.—<sup>b</sup> See chap. 14. 5, &c.; 1 Kings 20. 35-41; Isa. 5. 3.—<sup>c</sup> Prov. 5. 18, 19.

tain and got a king for her spouse; and therefore 'she shed reluctant tears, and forced out groans from a joyful heart.'"—*Clarke*.

**27. But the thing that David had done displeased the Lord**—"To our mind there is nothing in all that man has written so terribly emphatic as the quiet sentence which the historian inserts at the end of his account of these sad transactions."—*Kitto*.

## CHAPTER XII.

NATHAN'S PARABLE AGAINST DAVID,  
1-14.

"The year had passed; the dead Uriah was forgotten; the child of guilt was born in the royal house, and loved with all the passionate tenderness of David's paternal heart. Suddenly the prophet Nathan appears before him. He comes as if to claim redress for a wrong in humble life. It was the true mission of the prophets, as champions of the oppressed, in the courts of kings. It was the true prophetic spirit that spoke through Nathan's mouth. The apologue of the rich man and the ewe lamb has, besides its own intrinsic tenderness, a supernatural elevation, which is the best sign of true revelation. It ventures to disregard all particulars, and is content to aim at awakening the general sense of outraged justice. It fastens on the essential guilt of David's sin—not its sensuality, or its impurity,

eat of his own 'meat, and drank of his own cup, and lay in his bosom, and was unto him as a daughter. **4** And there came a traveller unto the rich man, and he spared to take of his own flock and of his own herd, to dress for the wayfaring man that was come unto him; but 'took the poor man's lamb, and dressed it for the man that was come to him. **5** And David's anger was greatly kindled against the man; and he said to Nathan, *As* the Lord liveth, the man that hath done this *thing* 'shall surely die: **6** And he shall restore the lamb 'fourfold, because he did this thing, and because he had no pity. **7** And Nathan said to David, Thou *art* the man. Thus

<sup>1</sup> Hebrew, *morsel*.—<sup>d</sup> Chap. 11. 8, 4.—<sup>2</sup> Or, *is worthy to die*, or, *is a son of death*, 1 Sam. 26. 16.—<sup>e</sup> Exod. 22. 1; Luke 19. 8.

so much as its meanness and selfishness. It rouses the king's conscience by that teaching described in 1 Cor. xiv, 24, 25, as specially characteristic of prophecy, making manifest his own sin in the indignation which he has expressed at the sin of another."—*Stanley*.

**1. Sent Nathan unto David**—This was after the birth of the child of Bathsheba. Compare verses 14 and 15 with chap. xi, 27. By this time, perhaps, David began to think that his sin was unknown or forgotten. **Two men in one city**—David and Uriah.

**3. One little ewe lamb**—Referring tenderly to Bathsheba. **Lay in his bosom**—As a family pet. Perhaps designed to indicate that Uriah was passionately devoted to his wife.

**4. Spared to take of his own**—David had Saul's barem, and all the house of Israel, from which to take young virgins as wives, without interfering with Uriah's possessions. Compare verse 8.

**6. Fourfold**—Compare Exod. xxii, 1: "If a man steal an ox, or a sheep, and kill it, or sell it, he shall restore five oxen for an ox, and four sheep for a sheep."

**7. Thou art the man**—Terrible words for David's guilty soul. Self-condemned and self-sentenced unto death, how shall he escape the wrath of God! In this unflinching charge Nathan appears the great, bold, faithful prophet.

saith the LORD God of Israel, I 'anointed thee king over Israel, and I delivered thee out of the hand of Saul; **8** And I gave thee thy master's house, and thy master's wives into thy bosom, and gave thee the house of Israel and of Judah; and if *that had been* too little, I would moreover have given unto thee such and such things. **9** 'Wherefore hast thou <sup>b</sup>despised the commandment of the LORD, to do evil in his sight? 'thou hast killed Uriah the Hittite with the sword, and hast taken his wife *to be* thy wife, and hast slain him with the sword of the children of Ammon. **10** Now therefore <sup>a</sup>the sword shall never depart from thine

<sup>f</sup> 1 Samuel 16. 13. — <sup>g</sup> See 1 Samuel 15. 19. — <sup>h</sup> Num. 15. 31. — <sup>i</sup> Chap. 11. 15-17, 27. — <sup>k</sup> Amos 7. 9. — <sup>l</sup> Deut. 28. 30; chap. 16. 22. — <sup>m</sup> Chap. 16. 22.

**8. Thy master's wives**—In the East, when the king died or was superseded by another, his successor received his wives and concubines together with the kingdom. Hence for Absalom to go in unto his father's concubines in the sight of all Israel (chap. xvi, 21, 22) was to be a proof to Israel that he had taken possession of all the prerogatives of the kingdom. Thus David had succeeded Saul in all the rights of the kingdom, though we have no record of his touching any of his wives or concubines. **Such and such things**—Literally, *according to these and according to those*; that is, whatsoever thou mightest have desired.

**9. Despised the commandment of the Lord**—Which says, "Thou shalt not kill." David was guilty of murder. **Thou hast killed Uriah... with the sword... hast slain him with the sword of the children of Ammon**—This is not tautology, for to slay with the sword of the heathen Ammonites was even more aggravating than to kill one outright; and the last term, *hast slain*—from *הָרַג*, *to murder*—is stronger than the former, *hast killed*—from *נָכַח*, *to smite*.

**10. The sword shall never depart from thine house**—This prediction was most terribly fulfilled, as the subsequent history will show, especially from the murder of Amnon by his brother to the slaughter of the sons of Zedekiah before their father's eyes.

house; because thou hast despised me, and hast taken the wife of Uriah the Hittite to be thy wife. **11** Thus saith the LORD, Behold, I will raise up evil against thee out of thine own house, and I will 'take thy wives before thine eyes, and give *them* unto thy neighbour, and he shall lie with thy wives in the sight of this sun. **12** For thou didst <sup>a</sup>secretly: <sup>b</sup>but I will do this thing before all Israel, and before the sun. **13** 'And David said unto Nathan, 'I have sinned against the LORD. And Nathan said unto David, The LORD also hath <sup>c</sup>put away thy sin; thou shalt not die. **14** Howbeit, because by this deed thou hast

<sup>n</sup> See 1 Samuel 15. 24. — <sup>o</sup> Chapter 24. 10; Job 7. 20; Psa. 32. 5; 51. 4; Prov. 28. 13. — <sup>p</sup> Chapter 24. 10; Job 7. 21; Psalm 32. 1; Micah 7. 18; Zech. 8. 4.

**11. Evil against thee out of thine own house**—This was realized especially in Absalom's rebellion. **Take thy wives**—See how this was fulfilled in chap. xvi, 22. **Thy neighbour**—Absalom, who was also his son. Chap. iii, 3. But though a son, he became so bitterly alienated from his father by rebellion as to be significantly called *neighbour*.

**13. I have sinned against the Lord**—David's heart is now laid open to his eyes, and he sees, and shudders at, his enormous crimes, and feels that death is his just desert. But for him there is yet a voice of mercy. **The Lord... hath put away thy sin; thou shalt not die**—Amazing grace! Pardon seems to be in waiting for the sinner to confess and repent.

**14. Howbeit**—The honour of God's holy law must be regarded. Though David be forgiven he must yet suffer loss. "He is still a son, but he is no longer a Joseph, rejoicing in his father's love, and proud of the coat of many colours which that love has cast upon him; but rather a Reuben, pardoned, pitied, and forgiven, yet not unpunished by the father whose honour he has defiled. Alas for him! The bird which once rose to heights unattained before by mortal wing, filling the air with its joyful songs, now lies with maimed wing upon the ground, pouring forth its doleful cries to God."—*Kittó*. To this period of David's life belongs Psalm li. \*

given great occasion to the enemies of the Lord <sup>to</sup> blaspheme, the child also *that is* born unto thee shall surely die.

**15** And Nathan departed unto his house. And the Lord <sup>struck</sup> the child that Uriah's wife bare unto David, and it was very sick. **16** David therefore besought God for the child; and David <sup>fasted</sup>, and went in, and <sup>lay</sup> all night upon the earth. **17** And the elders of his house arose, and *went* to him, to raise him up from the earth: but he would not, neither did he eat bread with them. **18** And it came to pass on the seventh day, that the child died. And the servants of David feared to tell him that the child was dead: for they said, Behold, while the child was yet alive, we spake unto him, and he would not

hearken unto our voice: how will he then <sup>vex</sup> himself, if we tell him that the child is dead? **19** But when David saw that his servants whispered, David perceived that the child was dead: therefore David said unto his servants, Is the child dead? And they said, He is dead. **20** Then David arose from the earth, and washed, and <sup>anointed</sup> himself, and changed his apparel, and came into the house of the Lord, and <sup>worshipped</sup>: then he came to his own house; and when he required, they set bread before him, and he did eat. **21** Then said his servants unto him, What thing *is* this that thou hast done? thou didst fast and weep for the child *while it was* alive; but when the child was dead, thou didst rise and eat bread. **22** And he said,

<sup>q</sup> Isaiah 52. 5; Ezekiel 36. 20, 23; Romans 9. 24.—<sup>r</sup> Deut. 32. 39; 1 Sam. 25. 38.

<sup>3</sup> Heb. *fasted a fast*.—<sup>s</sup> Ch. 13. 31.—<sup>t</sup> Heb. *do hurt*.—<sup>u</sup> Ruth 3. 3; Eccles. 9. 8.—<sup>v</sup> Job 1. 20.

#### DEATH OF THE CHILD OF DAVID AND BATHSHEBA, 15-23.

There is no section of Old Testament history more graphically and touchingly worded than this. Every verse presents a vivid picture. We seem to see the infant child wracked with pain and struck with death, (15.) The conscience-smitten king flies to his chamber, and spends seven days and nights in fasting and in tears, much of the time prostrate upon the floor, and pouring out his groanings all night to God, (16;) his most confidential advisers try to lift him up and console him, but he will not be comforted, (17.) At length the child dies, but they fear to tell the king, lest his frenzy know no control, and, lingering in the distance, they whisper to each other with mingled sorrow and amazement, (18, 19;) but as soon as he learns of his death he dries up his tears, and enters the sanctuary, and worships God, (20.) The servants marvel, but he explains his conduct in words most tenderly expressive of his faith in God and immortality.

**15. The Lord struck the child—**With some fatal disease which, on the seventh day, resulted in death.

**16. Besought God for the child—**For, according to verse 22, he entertained some hope that God might yet spare him. **Went in—**Into some pri-

vate apartment of his own house. **Lay all night upon the earth—**Evidence of profoundest anguish and grief. Compare chap. xiii. 31.

**17. The elders of his house—**The oldest, most experienced, and confidential of his servants.

**20. Washed..anointed..changed his apparel—**The common custom in the East after a period of mourning, for not only the apparel, but the person, becomes unclean by prostration on the ground. **Came into the house of the Lord—**Went from his own house, where he had wept and fasted, to the sanctuary, where the ark abode.

**21. What thing is this that thou hast done—**The bereaved are accustomed to fast and weep after the death of their relative; but David does his mourning before the death of the child, and feasts immediately after. "The practice of the East is, to leave a relation of the deceased person to weep and mourn, till, on the third or fourth day at furthest, the relations and friends go to see him, cause him to eat, lead him to a bath, and cause him to put on new vestments, he having before thrown himself on the ground. The extremity of David's sorrow for the child's illness, and his not observing the common forms of grief afterwards, was what surprised his servants."—*Harmer's Observations*.



While the child was yet alive, I fasted and wept: for I said, Who can tell whether God will be gracious to me, that the child may live? **23** But now he is dead, wherefore should I fast? can I bring him back again? I shall go to him, but he shall not return to me.

**24** And David comforted Bathsheba his wife, and went in unto her, and lay with her: and she bare a son, and he called his name Solomon: and the Lord loved him. **25** And he sent by the hand of Nathan the prophet; and he

See Isa. 38. 1, 5; Jonah 3. 9.—*v* Job 7. 8-10.  
—*a* Matt. 1. 6.—*y* 1 Chron. 22. 9.—*z* That is,

**23. I shall go to him**—So as to rejoin him in a state of conscious existence in another world. Nothing short of this idea can well satisfy the profound faith and hope of the forgiven king. He was evidently comforted by the thought here expressed; but what comfort could it be if the place of reunion with the lost child were but the grave—the cold, dark charnel house of corruption, earth, and worms! How many are comforted by this same faith that their beloved dead “are not lost, but gone before.”

BIRTH OF SOLOMON, 24, 25.

**24. Called his name Solomon**—

שְׁלֹמֹה, *Shelomoh*, the peaceful; so called because his reign was to be a peaceful one, (compare 1 Chron. xxii, 9,) and also because, being peculiarly associated in prophecy with “David’s greater Son,” in whom the throne of his kingdom should be established forever, (comp. chap. vii, 13,) he was to be a figure of that Messiah who is the Prince of Peace. **The Lord loved him**—Did not smite him as he did the other child of Bathsheba, but let him live, and bestowed upon him remarkable favour.

**25. He sent**—That is, Jehovah sent Nathan to give the child yet another name peculiarly comforting to David. **Jedidiah**—That is, *darling of Jehovah*. This name and that of David are from cognate roots, which are identical in meaning, and all such play on words had great significance with both the an-

cient and modern Orientals. Great must have been David’s comfort when Nathan, who had so lately uttered against him the judgment of God, came with a message of love, and gave the newborn child a name so expressive of Jehovah’s restored favour. **Because of the Lord**—That is, because the Lord loved him.

CONQUEST OF RABBAH, 26-30.

**26. Joab fought against Rabbah**—

This siege seems to have been going on during all the incidents recorded between chap. xi, 1 and here. **Took the royal city**—Called in the next verse, *the city of waters*. Ancient Rabbah seems to have been divided into two parts—the city proper, containing the royal palace, and amply supplied with water from the stream that still flows through its ruins, and the citadel, or acropolis, which occupied one of the neighbouring heights. See note on chap. xi, 1.

**28. Encamp against the city and take it**—The city here meant was the acropolis or upper city, which, like the stronghold of Zion, still held out against the besiegers, after the lower city had fallen into their hands. See note on chap. v, 6. **It be called after my name**—So that I bear away all the glory of the victory. This was a sort of challenge, half jest, half earnest, and shows Joab’s characteristic boldness with the king. Compare his rebuke in chap. xix, 5-7.

**29. All the people**—All the men of war that were not with Joab at Rabbah, doubtless largely made up of fresh recruits.

*Beloved of the LORD*.—*a* 1 Chr. 20. 1.—*a* Deut. 3. 11.—*b* Heb. *my name be called upon it*.

it. **30** <sup>b</sup>And he took their king's crown from off his head, the weight whereof *was* a talent of gold with the precious

δ 1 Chron. 20. 2.

**30. Took their king's crown—**

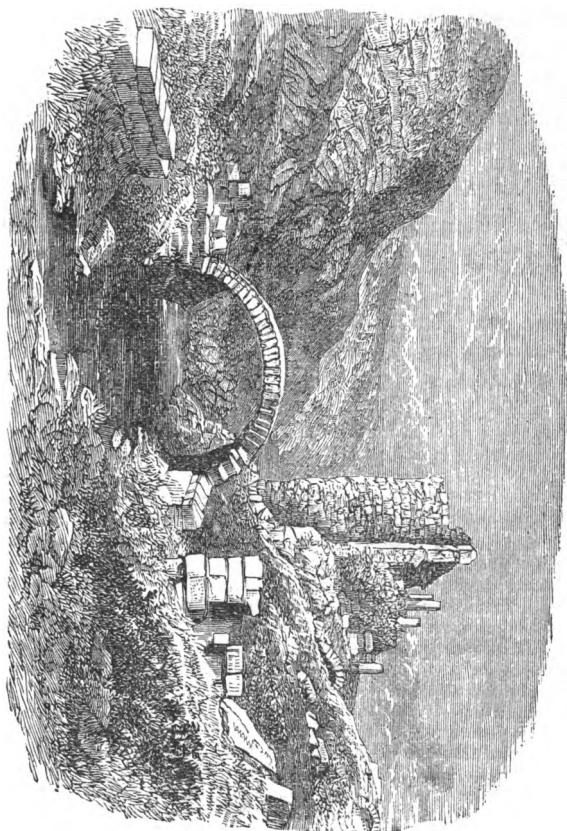
Some take מלכָם, *malcam*, rendered *their king*, as a proper name, *Milcom*, (compare 1 Kings xi, 5; 2 Kings xxiii, 23, and Zeph. i, 5,) the great Ammonite idol, elsewhere called *Molech*. The Septuagint reads, *took the crown of Molcom their king*. But David would hardly have suffered the crown of that

stones: and it was *set* on David's head. And he brought forth the spoil of the city <sup>7</sup>in great abundance. **31** And he

7 Heb. *very great*.

abominable idol to be put upon his head. **The weight... a talent of gold**—More than one hundred pounds. This seems incredibly heavy for a crown worn upon the head, and so many interpreters have explained the meaning as *worth the weight of a gold talent*. But this explanation hardly accords with the natural meaning of the words. Pfeiffer, without sufficient evidence, un

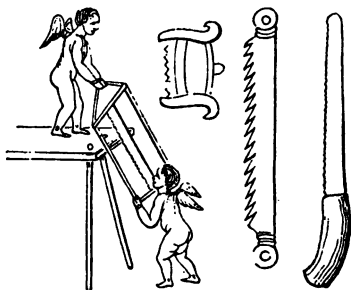
RUINS OF RABBAH.



brought forth the people that *were* therein, and put *them* under saws, and under harrows of iron, and under axes of iron, and made them pass through the brick-

derstands here the weight not of a Hebrew but a Syriac talent. It is better to regard the statement as an inexact but popular estimate of the weight of a crown unusually large and heavy. Sir Harford Jones Brydges describes the Persian crown of state as excessively heavy, and relates that, happening to look back, on quitting the audience chamber, he saw the king lifting his crown from his head, as if anxious to relieve himself from its oppressive weight. **With the precious stones**—The meaning is, according to 1 Chron. xx, 2, that the crown was set with precious stones.

**31. Put them under saws**—That is, as 1 Chron. xx, 3 explains it, *cut them with saws*. They were sawn asunder, as Isaiah is said to have been



ANCIENT SAWS.

tortured. Heb. xi, 37. Shaw, in his *Travels*, describes a case of sawing asunder by placing the criminal between boards, and then beginning at the head. The above cut of ancient saws is from paintings found at Herculaneum. **Harrows of iron**—Rather, as the cognate Hebrew word is rendered in Amos i, 3, *Threshing instruments of iron*. The victims were probably made to lie down on the ground, as were the Moabites when David measured them with a line, (chap. viii, 2,) and a heavy threshing instrument, with jagged iron rollers underneath, was drawn over them. **Axes of iron**—For cut of an-

kiln: and thus did he unto all the cities of the children of Ammon. So David and all the people returned unto Jerusalem.

cient axes see on 1 Sam. xiii, 21. But it is not clear that the word מַחֲרִית, which occurs here only, means axes. Keil renders it simply *iron cutting tools*, and we incline to believe with him that "the meaning cannot be more precisely determined." **Made them pass through the brick-kiln**—Burned to death vast numbers of them by forcing them into the fires of brick-kilns. By these various instruments and methods of torture did David execute the captive Ammonites, thus retaliating upon them cruelties equivalent to what they themselves were accustomed to impose upon their captives. Many have cried out against these terrible cruelties, and thought it impossible that David could have been barbarous enough to authorize them. Hence has arisen another interpretation, which makes the text mean that David enslaved the people, and *set them at* sawing and hewing wood, making or using iron instruments, and burning brick. But this interpretation accords not well with the words, has the text in Chronicles decidedly against it, and is also open to the objection that the Hebrew people had little or no need of these kinds of labour. Their houses were of stone, or else simply tents; their iron instruments were comparatively few, and they certainly made no such use of wood as required so many sawyers and hewers as all these cities of the Ammonites afforded. But if we consider the customs of that age, and the barbarous character of these Ammonites, we will see the ground and reason of David's severity. They were wont to rip up women with child, (Amos i, 13;) they would not covenant with the men of Jabesh except that they might thrust out all their right eyes, (1 Sam. xi, 2,) and they had provoked this war by their most shameful treatment of David's friendly ambassadors. Chap. x, 4. If, then, it was proper barbarously to mutilate Adoni-bezek because he had thus mutilated other kings, (Judges i, 6, 7,) and to hew Agag

## CHAPTER XIII.

**A**ND it came to pass after this, \* that Absalom the son of David had a fair sister, whose name was <sup>b</sup> Tamar; and Amnon the son of David loved her. **2** And Amnon was so vexed, that he fell sick for his sister Tamar; for she was a virgin; and <sup>c</sup> Amnon thought it hard for him to do any thing to her. **3** But Amnon had a friend, whose name was Jonadab, <sup>d</sup> the son of Shimeah David's brother: and Jonadab was a very subtille man. **4** And he said unto him, Why art thou, *being* the king's son, <sup>e</sup> lean <sup>f</sup> from day to day? wilt thou not tell me? And Amnon said unto him, I love Tamar, my brother Absalom's sister. **5** And Jonadab said unto him, <sup>g</sup> Lay

<sup>a</sup> Chap. 3. 2, 3. — <sup>b</sup> 1 Chron. 3. 9. — 1 Heb. *it was marvellous*, or, *hidden in the eyes of Amnon*. — <sup>c</sup> See 1 Sam. 16. 9.

in pieces because his sword had made women childless, (1 Sam. xv, 33,) and utterly destroy the idolatrous nations of Canaan, (Deut. vii, 2; Josh. vi, 21; viii, 25, 26; 1 Sam. xv, 3,) it is surely a strange inconsistency to cry out against this retaliatory severity of David, as if it were unparalleled and diabolical. The measure was strictly in accordance with the military customs of the age.

## CHAPTER XIII.

## AMNON'S INCEST, 1-19.

The charm and power of David's name in Israel must have been largely broken as his sins in the matter of Uriah the Hittite became known to his family and among the people. His own deep penitence and humiliation before God speedily brought him mercy and pardon, but the silent influence of royal example left its evil leaven to work in the court and in the nation. And the institution of polygamy, fostered in the royal household, was the fruitful source of feuds and crimes. Its necessary tendency was to favour dissoluteness of life among the members of the king's household, and also to occasion numberless bickerings and fearful struggles over the matter of succession to the throne. All this is abundantly shown in the following history, and especially in the sins and ruin of Amnon and Absalom.

thee down on thy bed, and make thyself sick: and when thy father cometh to see thee, say unto him, I pray thee, let my sister Tamar come, and give me meat, and dress the meat in my sight, that I may see *it*, and eat *it* at her hand. **6** So Amnon lay down, and made himself sick: and when the king was come to see him, Amnon said unto the king, I pray thee, let Tamar my sister come, and <sup>h</sup> make me a couple of cakes in my sight, that I may eat at her hand. **7** Then David sent home to Tamar, saying, Go now to thy brother Amnon's house, and dress him meat. **8** So Tamar went to her brother Amnon's house; and he was laid down. And she took <sup>i</sup> flour, and kneaded *it*, and made cakes in his sight,

<sup>2</sup> Heb. *thin*. — <sup>3</sup> Heb. *morning by morning*. — <sup>d</sup> Chap. 16. 21, 23; 17. 1, 4; Psa. 50. 18, 19. — <sup>e</sup> Prov. 19. 27. — <sup>f</sup> Gen. 18. 6. — <sup>g</sup> 1 Or, *paste*.

**1. It came to pass after this** — Probably not long after the events of the last chapter. The divine judgments upon David's house followed hard after his sin. **Tamar**—Sister of Absalom, and half sister of Amnon. Compare the marginal references.

**2. So vexed, that he fell sick** — "Not being able to obtain his desires, his grief so ate up his body that he grew lean, and his colour was changed." — *Josephus*. **Amnon thought it hard** — Literally, *it was difficult in the eyes of Amnon to do her any thing*. The meaning is, that being a virgin, Tamar was kept in such seclusion and custody that it was hardly possible for him to come at her; and, being his half sister, it was unlawful for him to marry her. Lev. xx, 17.

**3. A friend... a very subtille man** — "One of those characters," says Stanley, "who in great houses pride themselves on being acquainted and on dealing with all the secrets of the family." Compare his acts and words in verses 32-35.

**6. Cakes**—Heb., *heart cakes*; some kind of delicious pastry, perhaps folded and laid together in the shape of a heart.

**8. Amnon's house**—It appears that each of the king's sons had a separate establishment of his own. **Flour**—Margin, more correctly, *paste*, or dough. Here we observe that in that more sim-

and did bake the cakes. **9** And she took a pan, and poured *them* out before him; but he refused to eat. And Amnon said, 'Have out all men from me. And they went out every man from him. **10** And Amnon said unto Tamar, Bring the meat into the chamber, that I may eat of thine hand. And Tamar took the cakes which she had made, and brought *them* into the chamber to Amnon her brother. **11** And when she had brought *them* unto him to eat, he <sup>a</sup>took hold of her, and said unto her, Come lie with me, my sister. **12** And she answered him, Nay, my brother, do not <sup>a</sup>force me; for <sup>b</sup>'no such thing ought to be done in Israel: do not thou this' folly. **13** And I, whither shall I cause my shame to go? and as for thee, thou shalt be as one of the fools in Israel. Now therefore, I pray thee, speak unto the king; <sup>a</sup>for he will not withhold me from thee. **14** Howbeit he would not hearken unto

her voice: but, being stronger than she, <sup>a</sup>forced her, and lay with her. **15** Then Amnon hated her <sup>a</sup>exceedingly: so that the hatred wherewith he hated her *was* greater than the love wherewith he had loved her. And Amnon said unto her, Arise, be gone. **16** And she said unto him, *There is no cause: this evil in sending me away is greater than the other that thou didst unto me.* But he would not hearken unto her. **17** Then he called his servant that ministered unto him, and said, Put now this *woman* out from me, and bolt the door after her. **18** And *she had* <sup>a</sup>a garment of divers colours upon her: for with such robes were the king's daughters *that were* virgins apparelled. Then his servant brought her out, and bolted the door after her. **19** And Tamar put <sup>a</sup>ashes on her head, and rent her garment of divers colours that *was* on her, and <sup>a</sup>laid her hand on her head, and went on crying.

<sup>f</sup> Gen. 45. 1.—<sup>g</sup> Gen. 39. 12.—<sup>5</sup> Heb. *humble me*, Genesis 34. 2.—<sup>h</sup> Lev. 18. 9, 11; 20. 17.—<sup>6</sup> Heb. *it ought not so to be done*.—<sup>i</sup> Genesis 34. 7; Judges 19. 23; 20. 6.—<sup>k</sup> See Lev. 18. 9, 11.

<sup>l</sup> Deut. 22. 25; see chap. 12. 11.—<sup>7</sup> Heb. *with great hatred greatly*.—<sup>m</sup> Gen. 37. 3; Judges 5. 30; Psa. 45. 14.—<sup>n</sup> Joshua 7. 6; chap. 1. 2; Job 2. 12.—<sup>o</sup> Jer. 2. 37.

ple age kings' daughters were accustomed to the arts and practices of cookery.

**10. Bring the meat into the chamber**—This chamber was adjoining the one where Tamar baked the cake.

**12. No such thing ought to be done in Israel**—In heathen nations, where idol gods were worshipped by impure practices, this might be tolerated, but not among the chosen people, whose sacred laws condemned it. See marginal references. **Folly**—This word is often used in the sense of a *disgraceful act*.

**13. One of the fools**—A disgraced, dishonoured, shameful Hebrew. **He will not withhold me**—What all she meant by these words we cannot tell. They may have been with her only a pretext to get out of his hands; or, being the daughter of a foreigner, she may have been ignorant of the law which forbade their marriage, (Lev. xviii. 9; Deut. xxvii. 22,) or she may have thought that the king had power to suspend the law in their case.

**15. Hated her exceedingly**—His love had been the offspring of his foul desire, and when that was satiated his sin, his danger, and shame all rushed

upon his thoughts, and generated this hatred in his soul. "He now feels for the first time," says Ewald, "the sinfulness of his deed, and the impossibility of his love being ever reciprocated."

**16. No cause**—For this additional violence and rage. The passage should be rendered thus: *There is not cause for this greater evil than the other which thou hast done with me, to thrust me away. This evil... is greater than the other*—For it would publish their shame to all the city, and make it appear that their incest had been brought about by some lewd proposal of hers.

**18. A garment of divers colours**—A loose outer garment reaching down to the ankles and covering the arms, for such the original word, פָּסִים, seems to indicate; and Josephus says, "The virgins of old time wore such loose coats tied at the hands, and let down to the ankles, that the inner coats might not be seen." But even this robe of royalty protected her not from shameful abuse.

**19. Ashes on her head... rent her garment... hand on her head**—Signs of humiliation, agony, and despair. See references. **Went on crying**—Scream-

**20** And Absalom her brother said unto her, Hath <sup>a</sup>Amnon thy brother been with thee? but hold now thy peace, my sister: he <sup>is</sup> thy brother; <sup>b</sup>regard not this thing. So Tamar remained <sup>10</sup>desolate in her brother Absalom's house. **21** But when king David heard of all these things, he was very wroth. **22** And Absalom spake unto his brother Amnon <sup>c</sup>neither good nor bad: for Absalom <sup>d</sup>hated Amnon, because he had forced his sister Tamar. **23** And it came to pass after two full years, that Absalom <sup>e</sup>had sheepshearers in Baal-hazor, which <sup>is</sup> beside Ephraim: and Absalom invited all the king's sons. **24** And Absalom came to the king, and said, Behold now, thy servant hath sheepshearers; <sup>f</sup>let the king, I beseech thee, and his servants go with thy servant. **25** And the king said to Absalom, Nay, my son,

<sup>8</sup> Heb. *Aminon*.—<sup>9</sup> Hebrew, *set not thine heart*.—<sup>10</sup> Heb. *and desolate*.—<sup>p</sup> Gen. 24. 50; 31. 24.—<sup>q</sup> Levit. 19. 17, 18.—<sup>r</sup> See Genesis 38. 12, 13; 1 Sam. 25. 4, 36.—<sup>s</sup> Chap. 11. 8, 15; P-s. 12. 2; 55. 21; Jer. 41. 6, 7.

ing aloud through the streets of the city, frantic over the disgrace and violence she had so cruelly received.

#### ABSALOM'S REVENGE, 20-36.

**20. Absalom... said unto her**—He seems to have met her while in the sad plight described in verse 19, and took her at once to his own house. **Regard not this thing**—Thus he tried to soothe her troubled spirit, though he himself felt most keenly her disgrace, and planned a deadly purpose of revenge. **Remained desolate**—Literally, *Tamar remained and was desolate*. That is, she stayed at Absalom's house, and did not go home to her father's. **Desolate**—Was never married.

**21. He was very wroth**—But he let him go unpunished, for, as the Septuagint adds, "he afflicted not the spirit of Amnon, his son, for he loved him because he was his firstborn." In more than one instance did David's paternal affection run away with his judgment. But Amnon's deed must have brought home to David's soul a bitter memory of his own dark crime.

**23. Sheepshearers**—The season of sheepshearing was the occasion of a great festival. See 1 Sam. xxv, 4, 8, 36, and notes. **Baal-hazor, which is be-**

let us not all now go, lest we be chargeable unto thee. And he pressed him: howbeit he would not go, but <sup>blessed</sup> him. **26** Then said Absalom, If not, I pray thee, let my brother Amnon go with us. And the king said unto him, Why should he go with thee? **27** But Absalom pressed him, that he let Amnon and all the king's sons go with him. **28** Now Absalom had commanded his servants, saying, Mark ye now when Amnon's <sup>a</sup>heart is merry with wine, and when I say unto you, Smite Amnon; then kill him, fear not: <sup>11</sup>have not I commanded you? be courageous, and be <sup>12</sup>valiant. **29** And the servants of Absalom did unto Amnon as Absalom had commanded. Then all the king's sons arose, and every man <sup>13</sup>gat him up upon his mule, and fled. **30** And it came to pass, while they were yet in the way,

<sup>t</sup> Ruth 2. 4.—<sup>u</sup> Judges 19. 6, 9, 22; Ruth 3. 7; 1 Samuel 25. 36; Esther 1. 10; Psalm 104. 15.—<sup>11</sup> Or, *will you not, since I have commanded you?* Joshua 1. 9.—<sup>12</sup> Heb. *sons of valour*.—<sup>13</sup> Heb. *rode*.

**side Ephraim**—Probably the modern Tell Asur, which is about ten miles north of Jerusalem, and near to the ancient *Ophrah*, (see Joshua xviii, 23; 1 Sam. xiii, 17,) which was also called *Ephraim*. 2 Chron. xiii, 19; John xi, 54. The identity of these places, however, has not been fully established.

**25. He would not go**—Absalom doubtless expected the king would decline going, and thereby hoped to secure more certainly his permission for Amnon to go.

**26. Why should he go**—David suspected some evil, for he had reason to fear the existence in Absalom's heart of deadly enmity towards Amnon.

**27. He let Amnon and all the king's sons go**—Hoping that perhaps this friendly feast might work for good, and deepen the friendship of all these sons.

**28. Have not I commanded you**—No guilt will be on you, for I take all the responsibility on myself; only obey you my orders.

**29. All the king's sons arose**—In greatest terror and alarm, not knowing the designed extent of this foul play. **Mule**—This is the first mention of mules in Scripture, for מִיָּמִים, translated *mules* in Gen. xxxvi, 24, undoubtedly

that tidings came to David, saying, Absalom hath slain all the king's sons, and there is not one of them left. **31** Then the king arose, and tare his garments, and lay on the earth; and all his servants stood by with their clothes rent. **32** And Jonadab, the son of Shimeah David's brother, answered and said, Let not my lord suppose that they have slain all the young men the king's sons; for Amnon only is dead: for by the appointment of Absalom this hath been determined from the day that he forced his sister Tamar. **33** Now therefore let not my lord the king take the thing to his heart, to think that all the king's sons are dead: for Amnon only is dead. **34** But Absalom fled. And the young man that kept the watch lifted up his

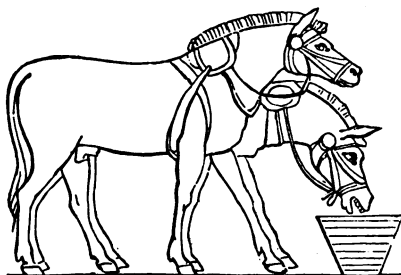
eyes and looked, and behold, there came much people by the way of the hill side behind him. **35** And Jonadab said unto the king, Behold, the king's sons come: as thy servant said, so it is. **36** And it came to pass, as soon as he had made an end of speaking, that, behold, the king's sons came, and lifted up their voice and wept: and the king also and all his servants wept very sore.

**37** But Absalom fled, and went to Talmi, the son of Ammihud, king of Geshur. And David mourned for his son every day. **38** So Absalom fled, and went to Geshur, and was there three years. **39** And the soul of King David longed to go forth unto Absalom: for he was comforted concerning Amnon, seeing he was dead.

v Chap. 1. 11.—w Chap. 12. 16.—x Verse 8.  
—14 Heb. mouth.—15 Or, settled.—y Chapter 19. 19.—z Verse 38.—16 Heb, according to the word of thy servant.

17 Hebrew, with a great weeping greatly.  
—a Chapter 3. 3.—18 Or, Ammihur.—  
b Chap. 14. 23, 33; 15. 8.—19 Or, was consumed,  
Psa. 84. 2.—c Gen. 39. 12.

means *warm springs*, as the Vulgate there renders it. The law prohibited the Hebrews to "gender cattle with a



MULES FROM AN EGYPTIAN PAINTING.

diverse kind," (Lev. xix, 19,) and so they probably first came into possession of mules by importation. Compare Ezek. xxvii, 14. It seems from Scripture notices of these animals that only kings and great men used them.

**30. Tidings came**—Some excited person, seeing Amnon fall, and expecting that all the other sons would share the same fate, ran to Jerusalem at once to bear the awful news.

**32. Jonadab... said**—That subtle busybody, who is posted on all the secrets of the royal family, (verses 3-5,) now coolly explains the matter as only a thing that had long been determined.

ABSALOM'S FLIGHT TO GESHUR, 37-39.

**37. Absalom fled**—When the other sons of the king arose and fled, he took advantage of the confusion and escaped out of the land. Verses 29, 34. **Went to Talmi**—His maternal grandfather. Chap. iii, 3. **Geshur**—A province belonging, at the time of Absalom's flight, to Syria. Chap. xv, 8. It was on the northern border of Bashan, and adjoining the province of Argob. See Deut. iii, 14; Josh. xii, 5. "It is a remarkable fact—and it shows how little change three thousand years have produced on this eastern land—that Bashan is still the refuge of all offenders. If a man can

only reach it, no matter what may have been his crimes or his failings, he is safe; the officers of government dare not follow him, and the avenger of blood even turns away in despair. During a short tour in Bashan, I met more than a dozen refugees, who, like Absalom in Geshur, awaited in security some favourable turn of events."—Porter.

**38. Three years**—During which time, as we learn from the next verse, David became reconciled to the loss of Amnon and yearned to see Absalom again. His undue paternal affections involved him in additional and greater sorrows.

## CHAPTER XIV.

**N**OW Joab the son of Zeruiah perceived that the king's heart *was* toward Absalom. **2** And Joab sent to Tekoah, and fetched thence a wise woman, and said unto her, I pray thee, feign thyself to be a mourner, and put on now mourning apparel, and anoint not thyself with oil, but be as a woman that had a long time mourned for the dead: **3** And come to the king, and speak on this manner unto him. So Joab put the words in her mouth. **4** And when the woman of Tekoah spake to the king, she fell on her face to the ground, and did obeisance, and said, 'Help, O king. **5** And the king said unto her, What aileth thee? And she answered, 'I *am* indeed a widow woman, and mine husband is dead. **6** And thy handmaid had two sons, and they two strove together in the field, and *there was* none to part them, but the one smote the other, and slew him. **7** And, behold, the whole family is risen against thine handmaid, and they

said, Deliver him that smote his brother, that we may kill him, for the life of his brother whom he slew; and we will destroy the heir also: and so they shall quench my coal which is left, and shall not leave to my husband *neither* name nor remainder upon the earth. **8** And the king said unto the woman, Go to thine house, and I will give charge concerning thee. **9** And the woman of Tekoah said unto the king, My lord, O king, the iniquity *be* on me, and on my father's house: and the king and his throne *be* guiltless. **10** And the king said, Whosoever saith *ought* unto thee, bring him to me, and he shall not touch thee any more. **11** Then said she, I pray thee, let the king remember the Lord thy God, that thou wouldest not suffer the revengers of blood to destroy any more, lest they destroy my son. And he said, As the Lord liveth, there shall not one hair of thy son fall to the earth. **12** Then the woman said, Let thine handmaid, I pray thee, speak *one* word unto my lord the king. And

*a* Chap. 12, 39. — *b* 2 Chron. 11, 6. — *c* See Ruth 3, 3. — *d* Ver. 19; Exod. 4, 15. — *e* 1 Sam. 20, 41; chap. 1, 2. — *f* Heb. *Nave*. — *g* See 2 Kings 6, 26, 28. — *h* See chap. 12, 1. — *i* Heb. *no deliverer between them*. — *k* Num. 35, 19; Deut. 19, 12.

*3* Heb. *upon the face of the earth*. — *4* Gen. 27, 13; 1 Sam. 25, 31; Matt. 27, 25. — *k* Chap. 3, 28, 29; 1 Kings 2, 31. — *4* Hebrew, *that the revenger of blood do not multiply to destroy*. — *l* Num. 35, 19. — *m* 1 Sam. 14, 45; Acts 27, 34.

## CHAPTER XIV.

## ABSALOM'S RETURN AND RESTORATION TO FAVOUR, 1-33.

**1. Joab...perceived**—He was always artful, shrewd, foreseeing, and laying plans for the future. From what he knew of the **king's heart** he had reason to think that Absalom might be the next king of Israel, and then how important to himself that Absalom feel indebted to him for his restoration from exile. **Toward Absalom**—Not *against* him, as several interpreters explain the sense, for that would contradict chap. xiii, 39, and render inexplicable the later conduct of the king towards Absalom. Chap. xviii, 5, 12, 33. Besides, if Joab had known that the king was bitterly hostile to Absalom, we cannot see his object in interceding for him. When Absalom was engaged in the war of rebellion against David it was by Joab's hand that he was slain. Chap. xviii, 14.

**2. Tekoah**—Twelve miles south of Jerusalem. Its ruins are still to be seen, and bear the name Tekua. "It

lies on an elevated hill, not steep, but broad on the top, and covered with ruins to the extent of four or five acres. These consist chiefly in the foundations of houses built of squared stones, some of which are bevelled.... There are many cisterns excavated in the rocks, and not far off is a living spring, from which our Arabs brought us fine water."—*Robinson*. **A wise woman**—As her skilful appeals to David, and her language, so exquisite in beauty and pathos, abundantly show. **Anoint not thyself**—So as to appear shabbily, and not as one that has just put away mourning. Comp. chap. xii, 20.

**7. Quench my coal**—Extinguish the last living ember that gives light and joy to my house. A beautiful image to indicate the extinction of descendants. As a live coal hid in the ashes is the means of kindling future fires and light, so a widow's only son is her only means of perpetuating her husband's name.

**11. Let the king remember the Lord thy God**—She wishes to bind him by a solemn oath, and by this language indicates that desire.



he said, Say on. **13** And the woman said, Wherefore then hast thou thought such a thing against<sup>a</sup> the people of God? for the king doth speak this thing as one which is faulty, in that the king doth not fetch home again<sup>a</sup> his banished.

**14** For we<sup>a</sup> must needs die, and *are* as water spilt on the ground, which cannot be gathered up again; <sup>a</sup>neither doth God respect *any* person; yet doth he <sup>a</sup>devise means, that his banished be not expelled from him. **15** Now therefore that I am come to speak of this thing unto my lord the king, *it is* because the people have made me afraid: and thy handmaid said, I will now speak unto the king; it may be that the king will perform the request of his handmaid.

**16** For the king will hear, to deliver his handmaid out of the hand of the man *that would* destroy me and my son together out of the inheritance of God.

**17** Then thine handmaid said, The word of my lord the king shall now be <sup>a</sup>comfortable: for<sup>a</sup> as an angel of God, so *is* my lord the king<sup>a</sup> to discern good and bad: therefore the LORD thy God will be with thee. **18** Then the king answered and said unto the woman, Hide not from me, I pray thee, the thing that I shall ask thee. And the woman said, Let my lord the king now

speak. **19** And the king said, *Is not* the hand of Joab with thee in all this? And the woman answered and said, *As* thy soul liveth, my lord the king, none can turn to the right hand or to the left from aught that my lord the king hath spoken: for thy servant Joab, he bade me, and <sup>a</sup>he put all these words in the mouth of thine handmaid: **20** To fetch about this form of speech hath thy servant Joab done this thing: and my lord *is* wise, <sup>a</sup>according to the wisdom of an angel of God, to know all *things* that *are* in the earth. **21** And the king said unto Joab, Behold now, I have done this thing: go therefore, bring the young man Absalom again. **22** And Joab fell to the ground on his face, and bowed himself, and <sup>a</sup>thanked the king: and Joab said, To day thy servant knoweth that I have found grace in thy sight, my lord, O king, in that the king hath fulfilled the request of<sup>a</sup> his servant. **23** So Joab arose <sup>a</sup>and went to Ges'ur, and brought Absalom to Jerusalem. **24** And the king said, Let him turn to his own house, and let him <sup>a</sup>not see my face. So Absalom returned to his own house, and saw not the king's face. **25** <sup>10</sup> But in all Israel there was none to be so much praised as Absalom for his beauty: <sup>a</sup>from the sole of his foot even to the

<sup>a</sup> Judg. 20. 2. — <sup>c</sup> Chap. 13. 37, 38. — <sup>p</sup> Job 34. 15; Heb. 9. 27. — <sup>5</sup> Or, *because God hath not taken away his life, he hath also devised means, &c.* — <sup>q</sup> Num. 35. 15, 25, 28. — <sup>6</sup> Hebrew, *for rest.* — <sup>r</sup> Verse 20; chap. 19. 27. — <sup>7</sup> Heb.

*to hear.* — <sup>8</sup> Verse 3. — <sup>t</sup> Verse 17; chap. 19. 27. — <sup>8</sup> Heb. *blessed.* — <sup>9</sup> Or, *thy.* — <sup>u</sup> Chap. 13. 37. — <sup>v</sup> Gen. 43. 3; chap. 3. 13. — <sup>10</sup> Heb. *And as Absalom there was not a beautiful man in all Israel to praise greatly.* — <sup>w</sup> Isa. 1. 6.

**13. His banished.**—The exiled Absalom. Here the woman skilfully insinuates her ulterior object in this visit to the king. In this he sees the hand of Joab. Verse 19.

**14. As water spilt upon the ground.**—"What could be better calculated to gain the attention of a poet like David than the beautiful images which she employs, and which are fully equal to any that he himself ever uttered; and if we, with our comparatively dull intellects, are impressed at once by the exquisite beauty and pathos of this expression, how keenly must it have been appreciated by him—the great master of solemn thought and poetical expression? We conceive that we behold him start upon his throne when these words fall upon his ear, and he feels at once that no common woman is before him."—*Killo*. **Neither doth God re-**

**spect any person.**—Rather, *God doth not take away life*. The reference is to the life of one that has wandered from him: God is merciful, and does not take away his life. **Yet doth he devise means.**—God takes measures to bring back sinners who have departed from him.

**15. The people have made me afraid.**—The whole family mentioned in verse 7, who rose as blood avengers against the heir.

**17. To discern good and bad.**—Rather, *to hear good and bad*. The king shows his kindness by listening to every just complaint, and giving comfort to the aggrieved by his decisions.

**24. Let him not see my face.**—Though his heart yearn in its love for him, yet his respect for law and justice leads him for the present to show this sternness and severity.

crown of his head there was no blemish in him. **26** And when he polled his head, (for it was at every year's end that he polled it; because *the hair* was heavy on him, therefore he polled it,) he weighed the hair of his head at two hundred shekels after the king's weight. **27** And <sup>2</sup>unto Absalom there were born three sons, and one daughter, whose name *was* Tamar: she was a woman of a fair countenance. **28** So Absalom dwelt two full years in Jerusalem, <sup>3</sup>and saw not the king's face. **29** Therefore Absalom sent for Joab, to have sent him to the king; but he would not come to him: and when he sent again the second time, he would not come. **30** Therefore he said unto his servants, See, Joab's field is <sup>11</sup>near mine, and he hath barley

there; go and set it on fire. And Absalom's servants set the field on fire. **31** Then Joab arose, and came to Absalom unto *his* house, and said unto him, Wherefore have thy servants set my field on fire? **32** And Absalom answered Joab, Behold, I sent unto thee, saying, Come hither, that I may send thee to the king, to say, Wherefore am I come from Geshur? *it had been good for me to have been there still*: now therefore let me see the king's face; and <sup>2</sup>if there be *any* iniquity in me, let him kill me. **33** So Joab came to the king, and told him: and when he had called for Absalom, he came to the king, and bowed himself on his face to the ground before the king: and the king <sup>1</sup>kissed Absalom.

<sup>2</sup> See chap. 18. 18.—<sup>3</sup> Verse 24.—<sup>11</sup> Heb. *near my place*.

<sup>1</sup> 1 Sam. 15. 13; Psalm 36. 2; Prov. 28. 13.—<sup>2</sup> Gen. 33. 4; 45. 15; Luke 15. 20.

**26. Polled his head**—Cut or clipped off the superabundant growth of the hair. **At every year's end**—Literally, *from the end of days to days*; that is, from time to time. **Two hundred shekels after the king's weight**—The king's shekel is supposed to have been less than the common shekel, and Bochart makes the weight of two hundred shekels equal to three pounds and two ounces avoirdupois. Others think there is an error in the text caused by the former use of letters for numbers, and the transcriber's mistaking one for another. Thus,  $\gamma=4$ ,  $\rho=200$ ,  $\lambda=30$ ; and one of these might easily have been mistaken for another. It is impossible positively to solve the difficulty, but in any case it is clear that the weight of Absalom's hair was surprisingly great, and this was regarded as adding to his beauty. "The hair of men will grow as thick as that of women, and perhaps thicker; and if we may judge from the cues of the Chinese, which sometimes reach to the ground, it will grow as long; and such hair, if of proportionate bulk, must, one would think, weigh at least three or four pounds. Indeed, we have read the well known case of a lady whose hair reached the ground, and weighed upon her head (and therefore without including the weight of the parts nearest the scalp) upwards of four pounds."—*Kitto*.

**27. Whose name was Tamar**—After her aunt. Chap. xiii. 1. Why are not his son's names given? Probably because they died in infancy, and so he erected a pillar to perpetuate his name. Chap. xviii. 18.

**28. Two full years... and saw not the king's face.**—Tiresome waiting for a restless soul like Absalom. Better for him were the wilds of Geshur, where the restraints of law and fear of the king pre-<sup>1</sup>sed lightly on his thoughts.

**29. He would not come**—Joab deemed it prudent for him to avoid any intimacy with Absalom. Perhaps during his two years' residence in Jerusalem some of his aspirations to the throne had become manifest, and Joab, seeing the king did not visit him or allow him to come to his palace, thought it best for himself to be cautious.

**30. Set it on fire**—This act shows up the bold and daring spirit of this prince. Only one of such spirit could plan and carry out the bold scheme of usurping a father's throne.

**32. If there be... iniquity in me, let him kill me**—Absalom pretends to be very innocent, but had justice been meted out to him he could not have stood for a day. But he knew his father's tender and sensitive nature; he knew his weakness, too, and was doubtless well satisfied that a bold and defiant challenge would soon lead David to make a reconciliation.

## CHAPTER XV.

**A**ND <sup>a</sup>it came to pass after this, that Absalom <sup>b</sup>prepared him chariots and horses, and fifty men to run before him. **2** And Absalom rose up early, and stood beside the way of the gate: and it was *so*, that when any man that had a controversy <sup>c</sup>came to the king for judgment, then Absalom called unto him, and said, Of what city *a t* thou? And he said, Thy servant, *is* of one of the tribes of Israel. **3** And Absalom said unto him, See, thy matters *are* good and right; but <sup>d</sup>*there is* no man *deputed* of the king to hear thee. **4** Ab-

<sup>a</sup> Chap. 12. 11.—<sup>b</sup> 1 Kings 1. 5.—<sup>c</sup> 1 Heb. *to come*.—<sup>d</sup> Or, *none will hear thee from the*

salom said moreover, *Oh that I were made judge in the land, that every man which hath any suit or cause might come unto me, and I would do him justice!* **5** And it was *so*, that when any man came nigh *to him* to do him obedience, he put forth his hand, and took him, and kissed him. **6** And on this manner did Absalom to all Israel that came to the king for judgment: *so* Absalom stole the hearts of the men of Israel. **7** And it came to pass <sup>e</sup>after forty years, that Absalom said unto the king, I pray thee, let me go and pay my vow, which I have vowed unto the LORD,

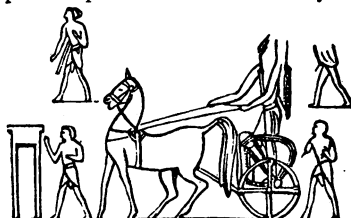
*king downward*.—<sup>c</sup> Judges 9. 29.—<sup>d</sup> Romans 16. 18.—<sup>e</sup> 1 Sam. 16. 1.

## CHAPTER XV.

## ABSALOM'S REBELLION, 1-12.

Absalom had a boundless ambition to attain the crown. There is reason to think that these aspirations were forming before the time of Amnon's incest with his sister, so that that disgrace of Tamar was not the sole reason for his slaying Amnon. David's first-born was an obstacle in his way to the throne, and if he lived Absalom's hopes must die. But now, with Amnon out of the way, and himself reinstated in the royal favour, he yet fears that he will fail to receive the kingdom by inheritance, and, too ambitious to await his chances in the future, he plots and carries out this bold rebellion, the history of which extends through the four following chapters.

**1. Prepared him chariots and horses**—Like Adonijah, who at a later period aspired to the throne. Many of



ANCIENT EGYPTIAN CURRICLE.

these horses and chariots were probably those that David had captured in war. **Fifty men to run before him**—So

that he affected royalty in its most ostentatious form.

**2. The way of the gate**—The way to the gate of the city, along which persons having complaints were wont to come. The gate of the city was the well known place of the ancient court. Ruth iv. 1.

**3. Thy matters are good and right**—Thy case is a worthy and righteous one, and ought to be tried, and all thy grievances redressed. **No man deputed of the king to hear thee**—This was a charge against his father's administration, and calculated to spread dissatisfaction among the people. The marginal reading, *none will hear thee, from the king downward*, is untenable.

**6. Stole the hearts**—Insinuated himself into the affections of the people. Not only did the designing measures just mentioned assist him in this, but also his personal beauty. Chap. xiv. 25.

**7. After forty years**—This is an error in the text, for David reigned but forty years in all, (1 Kings ii. 11,) and he certainly had reigned many years before Absalom's rebellion. The Syriac and Arabic versions read *four years*, and with this agrees Josephus; and this, in the opinion of nearly all critics, is to be regarded as the true reading. The meaning is, four years after his restoration to the royal favour. **My vow**—Whether Absalom ever made any such vow as he here pretends is altogether uncertain. Most probably it was only a pretext to enable him the better to carry out his plans of rebellion.

in Hebron. **8** 'For thy servant' vowed a vow' while I abode at Geshur in Syria, saying, If the Lord shall bring me again indeed to Jerusalem, then I will serve the Lord. **9** And the king said unto him, Go in peace. So he arose, and went to Hebron. **10** But Absalom sent spies throughout all the tribes of Israel, saying, As soon as ye hear the sound of the trumpet, then ye shall say, Absalom reigneth in Hebron. **11** And with Absalom went two hundred men out of Jerusalem, *that were* called; and they went in their simplicity, and they knew not any thing. **12** And Absalom sent for Ahithophel the Gilonite, David's counsellor, from his city, *even* from Giloh, while he offered sacrifices. And the

*f* 1 Samuel 16. 2. — *g* Gen. 28. 21, 21. — *h* Chap. 13. 38. — *i* 1 Sam. 9. 13; 16. 3. 5. — *k* Gen. 20. 5. — *l* Psa. 41. 9; 55. 12-14. — *m* Josh. 15. 51. — *n* Psa.

**9. Went to Hebron**—Where he was born, and where his father had first been anointed king.

**10. Spies**—So called, says Keil, "because they were first of all to ascertain the feelings of the people in the different tribes, and were only to execute their commission in places where they could reckon upon support." **Sound of the trumpet**—The common signal to call the people together for purposes of war or self-defence. Jer. iv, 5, 19.

**11. Two hundred men... called**—Persons who had been personally and privately invited or "bidden" to attend the sacrificial festival which he proposed to make at Hebron. Compare marginal references. **In their simplicity**—In complete innocence, not knowing the designs of Absalom. This helped to hide from the inhabitants of Jerusalem the conspiracy of the prince.

**12. Ahithophel the Gilonite**—So called from Giloh, his native city in the southern hills of Judah. In nothing was the strength of Absalom's conspiracy more manifest than in his attaching to his cause a man of so much influence as this wisest of David's counsellors. His counsel was as an oracle of God, (chap. xvi, 23,) and nothing seemed to disturb David more than the information that Ahithophel was among his foes. Verse 31. The manner of Absalom's sending for him, as here stated, seems to indicate that he was already privy to the plot. He had perhaps be-

conspiracy was strong; for the people increased continually with Absalom.

**13** And there came a messenger to David, saying, The hearts of the men of Israel are after Absalom. **14** And David said unto all his servants that were with him at Jerusalem, Arise, and let us flee; for we shall not else escape from Absalom: make speed to depart, lest he overtake us suddenly, and bring evil upon us, and smite the city with the edge of the sword. **15** And the king's servants said unto the king, Behold, thy servants are ready to do whatsoever my lord the king shall appoint. **16** And the king went forth, and all his household after him. And the king left ten women, which were con-

*s* 1.—*o* Ver. 6; Judg. 9. 8.—*p* Chap. 19. 9; Psa. 3, title.—*q* Heb. thrust.—*r* Heb. choose.—*s* Psa. 3, title.—*t* Heb. at his feet.—*u* Chap. 16, 21, 22.

come disaffected toward David on account of his seduction of Bathsheba, his granddaughter. **Giloh**—Somewhere to the south of Hebron, but its site is unknown. See at Josh. xv, 51.

**While he offered sacrifices**—That is, while Absalom was offering the sacrifices connected with the festival which he made for his followers. "When we reflect," says Ewald, "that the men who played the most important parts under Absalom—his general, Amasa, who was a near relative of Joab and of David, and Ahithophel, a citizen of Giloh—belonged to the tribe of Judah, and that the insurrection itself sprung into being at Hebron, the ancient capital of Judah, it becomes certain that some discontent in David's own tribe here came into play."

#### DAVID'S FLIGHT FROM JERUSALEM, 13-30.

**14. Arise, and let us flee**—His deep consciousness of that guilt which brought all this evil upon him unmanned him in the hour of danger, and that mighty warrior, whose sword had subdued all the nations around him, now for the first time turns his back to the foe. But, as Nathan had forewarned him, the evil was in his own house, (chap. xii, 11,) and he felt there was no safety for him at his home.

**16. After him**—Hebrew, as margin, *at his feet*; that is, in his train. Compare Judges iv, 10, and references.

cupines, to keep the house. **17** And the king went forth, and all the people after him, and tarried in a place that was far off. **18** And all his servants passed on beside him; \*and all the Cherethites, and all the Pelethites, and all the Gittites, six hundred men which came after him from Gath, passed on before the king. **19** Then said the king to 'Ittai the Gittite, Wherefore goest thou also with us? return to thy place, and abide with the king: for thou art a stranger, and also an exile. **20** Whereas thou camest *but* yesterday, should I this day \*make thee go up and down with us? seeing I go \*whither I may, return thou, and take back thy brethren: mercy and truth be with thee.

\* Chap. 8, 18. —† Chap. 18, 2. —‡ Heb. *make thee wander in going.* —§ 1 Sam. 21, 13.

**17. A place that was far off**—Literally, *a house of the distance*. A place outside of the city in the Kidron valley.

**18. Cherethites**—See note on chap. viii, 18. **The Gittites, six hundred men**—That old, tried, and faithful band whom he had gathered around him principally when he enjoyed the protection of the king of Gath, (1 Samuel xxvii, 2,) and from that land of their refuge ever after bore the name of Gittites. We need not suppose that these Gittites were all Philistines from Gath, and all foreigners who had become proselytes to the Jewish religion. But it is very likely that most of these six hundred were of foreign birth. As one after another of the old warriors died, the king, perhaps to perpetuate old associations, filled up their places with men from Gath. See note on chap. viii, 18.

**19. Ittai the Gittite**—A stranger and exile, probably from Gath, who had very recently attached himself to David, and brought with him his family, and a large number of his relatives or fellow-countrymen. **Return to thy place**—The place set apart for his residence in Jerusalem. **Abide with the king**—That is, with Absalom. David says this to test his loyalty.

**20. Take back thy brethren**—These brethren are not to be regarded as identical with the six hundred Gittites mentioned above, but as a number

**21** And Ittai answered the king, and said, \*As the Lord liveth, and as my lord the king liveth, surely in what place my lord the king shall be, whether in death or life, even there also will thy servant be. **22** And David said to Ittai, Go and pass over. And Ittai the Gittite passed over, and all his men, and all the little ones that *were* with him. **23** And all the country wept with a loud voice, and all the people passed over: the king also himself passed over the brook \*Kidron, and all the people passed over, toward the way of the \*wilderness. **24** And lo Zadok also, and all the Levites *were* with him, \*bearing the ark of the covenant of God: and they set down the ark of God; and Abi-

† Ruth 1, 16, 17; Prov. 17, 17; 19, 24. —‡ John 18, 1, *Cedron.* —§ Chap. 16, 2. —¶ Num. 4, 15.

of Ittai's fellow-exiles, and perhaps blood relatives, who had been forced to leave their country for some cause now unknown.

**21. Ittai answered**—This answer, so solemn and so full of loyalty to David, won for him such a place in the king's heart that he subsequently advanced him to the command of a third part of his army, and made him a peer of Joab and Abishai. See chap. xviii, 2.

**22. All his men**—The *brethren* of verse 20.

**23. The brook Kidron**—This mountain ravine commences a little more than a mile northwest of Jerusalem, runs more than a mile in an easterly direction, and then turns southward and passes directly below the walls of the city on the east. To the south of the city it joins with the valley of Hinnom, and runs off in a southeasterly direction, through a deep, wild gorge, to the Dead Sea. It contains the bed of a streamlet, but no water runs in it except after heavy rains have fallen on the surrounding hills. **Toward the way of the wilderness**—The way that led through the wild desert of Judah, which lay between Jerusalem and the Jordan, and extended south along the Dead Sea.

**24. Zadok**—See chap. viii, 17, and note on chap. vi, 17. **Bearing the ark**—They felt it would not do to let this holy shrine fall into the hands of

Abiathar went up, until all the people had done passing out of the city. **25** And the king said unto Zadok, Carry back the ark of God into the city: if I shall find favour in the eyes of the Lord, he will bring me again, and show me both it, and his habitation: **26** But if he thus say, I have no delight in thee; behold, *here am I*, let him do to me as seemeth good unto him. **27** The king said also unto Zadok the priest, *Art not thou a seer?* return into the city in peace, and your two sons with you, Ahimaaz thy son, and Jonathan the son of Abiathar. **28** See, I will tarry in the plain of the wilderness, until there come word from you to certify me. **29** Zadok therefore and Abiathar carried the ark of God again to Jerusalem: and they tarried there. **30** And David

went up by the ascent of *mount Olivet*, and wept as he went up, and had his head covered, and he went barefoot: and all the people that *was* with him covered every man his head, and they went up, weeping as they went up.

**31** And one told David, saying, Ahithophel is among the conspirators with Absalom. And David said, O Lord, I pray thee, turn the counsel of Ahithophel into foolishness. **32** And it came to pass, that when David was come to the top of the *mount*, where he worshipped God, behold, Hushai the Archite came to meet him with his coat rent, and earth upon his head: **33** Unto whom David said, If thou passest on with me, then thou shalt be a burden unto me: **34** But if thou return to the city, and say unto Absalom, I will be

*y* Psa. 43. 3.—*e* Num. 14. 8; chap. 32. 20; 1 Kings 10. 9; 2 Chron. 9. 8; Isa. 62. 4.—*d* 1 Sam. 3. 18.—*b* 1 Sam. 9. 9.—*c* Chap. 17. 17.—*d* Chap. 17. 16.—*e* He *going up, and weeping.*—*e* Ch. p.

19. 4; Esther 6. 12.—*f* Isa. 20. 2, 4.—*g* Jer. 14. 3, 4.—*h* Psa. 126. 6.—*i* Psa. 3. 1, 2; 55. 12, &c.—*k* Chap. 16. 23; 17. 14, 23.—*l* Joshua 15. 2.—*m* Chap. 1. 2.—*n* Chap. 19. 35.—*o* Chap. 16. 19.

the conspirators. **Abiathar went up**—Went up the ascent of Mount Olivet, leading a vast concourse of the people, until, from its side or summit, he saw the end of the procession outside the city. Here we see that Zadok and Abiathar, though at the head of different establishments, were sometimes together, and acted conjointly in the priesthood. On this occasion it seems that Zadok accompanied the ark, and remained by it while it rested in the Kidron valley, while Abiathar marched on at the head of the procession of people.

**27. Art not thou a seer**—Luther, after the Vulgate, renders the words as an exclamation, *Thou seer!* On the word, see 1 Sam. ix. 9. As seer he could best serve the king by remaining in Jerusalem, and thence secretly sending him word of all that might be of advantage to him to know.

**28. I will tarry in the plain of the wilderness**—This could be none other than the plain of Jericho. 2 Kings xxv. 5. But the text reads עֲבָרוֹת, which in the singular is rendered, chap. xix. 18, a *ferry-boat*; and it is best to regard the plural, both here and in chap. xvii. 16, as equivalent to מַעְבְּרוֹת, *crossing places*, or *fords*. The crossing places of the desert would be the fords of the Jordan, which were on the eastern bor-

der of the desert. Fürst renders it, *in the outermost sides of the steppe*.

**30. Head covered...barefoot...weeping**—Thus both the king and his people in deep self-abasement humble themselves before the penal chastisements of God.

HUSHAI SENT TO DEFEAT THE COUNSEL OF AHITHOPHEL, 31-37.

**31. Turn the counsel of Ahithophel into foolishness**—This was spoken in allusion to the meaning of the name Ahithophel—*brother of folly*. David dreaded the far-reaching counsel of this wisest of his former friends. See note on verse 12.

**32. To the top—Of Mount Olivet. Where he worshipped God**—“Though in danger of his life he stops for prayer! How true is the adage, ‘Prayer and provender never hinder any man’s journey!’”—*Clarke*. **Hushai the Archite**—Like Ahithophel he was one of David’s friends and counsellors, and a native of Archi, a place north of Jerusalem and not far from Ataroth. Josh. xvi. 2.

**33. A burden**—From which we infer that Hushai was now an old man. Compare chap. xix. 35.

**34. Say unto Absalom**—The artifices here planned must not be regarded as rules for moral conduct, but as the

thy servant, O king; *as I have been* thy father's servant hitherto, so *will* I now also *be* thy servant: then mayest thou for me defeat the counsel of Ahithophel. **35** And *hast thou* not there with thee Zadok and Abiathar the priests? therefore it shall be, *that* what thing soever thou shalt hear out of the king's house, *thou shalt tell it to Zadok and Abiathar the priests.* **36** Behold, *they have* there *with them* their two sons, Ahimaaz Zadok's son, and Jonathan Abiathar's son; and by them ye shall send unto me every thing that ye can hear. **37** So Hushai 'David's friend came into the city, ' and Absalom came into Jerusalem.

## CHAPTER XVI.

**A**ND \* when David was a little past the top of *the hill*, behold, ' Ziba the servant of Mephibosheth met him, with a couple of asses saddled, and upon them two hundred loaves of bread, and a hundred bunches of raisins, and a hundred of summer fruits, and a bottle of wine. **2** And the king said unto Ziba,

*p* Chap. 17. 15, 16. — *q* Ver. 27. — *r* Chap. 16. 16; 1 Chron. 27. 33. — *s* Chap. 16. 15. — *a* Chap. 15. 30, 32. — *b* Chap. 9. 2. — *c* Chap. 15. 28; 17. 29.

stratagems of war. Hushai was commissioned to use deceit to blind the eyes of Absalom and defeat the counsel of Ahithophel. How well he succeeded in this is shown in chap. xvii, 1-14.

## CHAPTER XVI.

ZIBA'S HYPOCRISY AND SLANDER, 1-4.

**1. Two hundred loaves**—Ziba's load very much resembled that of Abigail. Compare 1 Sam. xxv, 18. **Summer fruits**—Fruits which were adapted only to immediate consumption, and not easily preserved for winter use. Harmer supposes that cucumbers are intended, and are so called from their adaptation to allay the summer heats.

**3. Restore me the kingdom of my father**—This was a base slander of Ziba's own devising, designed by him to secure the favour of the king, and the possessions of Mephibosheth. Compare chap. xix, 24-30.

**4. Then said the king to Ziba**—David's mind was excited, and unprepared to weigh the words of this slave. It was very unlikely that Mephibosheth would entertain the hope of attaining

what meanest thou by these? And Ziba said, The asses *be* for the king's household to ride on; and the bread and summer fruit for the young men to eat; and the wine, 'that such as be faint in the wilderness may drink. **3** And the king said, And where *is* thy master's son? **4** And Ziba said unto the king, Behold, he abideth at Jerusalem: for he said, To day shall the house of Israel restore me the kingdom of my father. **4** \* Then said the king to Ziba, Behold, thine *are* all that *pertained* unto Mephibosheth. And Ziba said, 'I humbly beseech thee *that* I may find grace in thy sight, my lord, O king.

**5** And when king David came to Bahurim, behold, thence came out a man of the family of the house of Saul, whose name *was* 'Shimei, the son of Gera: ' he came forth, and cursed still as he came. **6** And he cast stones at David, and at all the servants of king David: and all the people and all the mighty men *were* on his right hand and on his left. **7** And thus said Shimei when he cursed,

*d* Chap. 19. 27. — *e* Prov. 13. 18. — *1* Heb. *I do obeisance.* — *f* Chap. 19. 16; 1 Kings 2. 8, 44. — *2* Or, *he still came forth and cursed.*

the kingdom of his grandfather Saul, for the adherents of Absalom could not think of preferring before him the crippled son of the half-forgotten Jonathan. But after he heard that his own former familiar friend Ahithophel had turned against him, he knew not how far the conspiracy might extend. **And Ziba said**—The cunning slave acknowledged the king's favour with words characteristic of eastern sycophancy and politeness. **I humbly beseech thee**—Literally, *I have bowed myself; I shall find favour in thy eyes.* He was in an ecstasy of joy over his good fortune.

## SHIMEI'S CURSING, 5-14.

**5. Bahurim**—See note on chap. iii, 16. **Of the family of the house of Saul**—And therefore, doubtless, affected with the same bitter animosity towards David which was felt by Saul, and which seems to have been felt by all Saul's distant relatives. Compare chap. xxi, 1-9.

**6 Cast stones at David**—As if to visit upon him the penalty due to an adulterer. Compare Lev. xx, 10, with John viii, 5.

Come out, come out, thou <sup>3</sup>bloody man, and thou <sup>4</sup>man of Belial: 8 The Lord hath <sup>5</sup>returned upon thee all <sup>6</sup>the blood of the house of Saul, in whose stead thou hast reigned; and the Lord hath delivered the kingdom into the hand of Absalom thy son: and, <sup>7</sup>behold, thou <sup>8</sup>art taken in thy mischief, because thou <sup>9</sup>art a bloody man. 9 Then said Abishai the son of Zeruiah unto the king, Why should this <sup>10</sup>dead dog <sup>11</sup>curse my lord the king? let me go over, I pray thee, and take off his head. 10 And the king said, <sup>12</sup>What have I to do with you, ye sons of Zeruiah? so let him curse, because <sup>13</sup>the Lord hath said unto him, Curse David. <sup>14</sup>Who shall then say, Wherefore hast thou done so? 11 And David said to Abishai, and to

<sup>3</sup> Heb. *man of blood*.—<sup>4</sup> Deut. 13. 12.—<sup>5</sup> Judges 9. 24, 56, 57; 1 Kings 2. 32, 33.—<sup>6</sup> See chap. 1. 16; 3. 28, 29; 4. 11, 12.—<sup>7</sup> Heb. *behold thee in thy evil*.—<sup>8</sup> 1 Sam. 24. 14; chap. 9. 8.—<sup>9</sup> Exod. 22. 28.—<sup>10</sup> Chap. 19. 23; 1 Peter 2. 23.

7. **Come out, come out**—Rather, *Go! go!* That is, *Away with thee!* **Bloody man**—So called for the reason given in the following verse.

8. **The blood of the house of Saul**—To his mind the murder of Abner and of Ishbosheth was brought about through David's artifices, and the slaughter of the seven princes at Gibeon (chap. xxi, 8, 9) may have been an affair of recent notoriety, for its date is uncertain. **In whose stead thou hast reigned**—This was a charge against David that he was a usurper, and had attained the throne by violence.

9. **Dead dog**—See note on chap. ix, 8. **Curse... the king**—This was transgression, for the law said, "Thou shalt not curse the ruler of thy people." Exod. xxii, 28.

10. **Ye sons of Zeruiah**—Perhaps Joab joined with Abishai in the request to avenge the king. **The Lord hath said unto him, Curse David**—By this we are not to understand that God personally communicated with Shimei, and by direct revelation ordered him to curse David; but that David recognised in Shimei's cursing one method of receiving the divine judgments upon himself for his past sins. It was an instance where God made the wrath of one man an instrument of scourging

all his servants. Behold, <sup>1</sup>my son, which <sup>2</sup>came forth of my bowels, seeketh my life: how much more now *may this* Benjamite *do it?* let him alone, and let him curse; for the Lord hath bidden him. 12 It may be that the Lord will look on mine <sup>3</sup>affliction, and that the Lord will <sup>4</sup>requite me good for his cursing this day. 13 And as David and his men went by the way, Shimei went along on the hill's side over against him, and cursed as he went, and threw stones at him, and <sup>5</sup>cast dust. 14 And the king, and all the people that <sup>6</sup>were with him, came weary, and refreshed themselves there.

15 And <sup>7</sup>Absalom, and all the people the men of Israel, came to Jerusalem, and Ahithophel with him. 16 And it

<sup>1</sup> See 2 Kings 18. 25; Lam. 3. 38.—<sup>2</sup> Rom. 9. 20.—<sup>3</sup> Chap. 12. 11.—<sup>4</sup> Gen. 18. 4.—<sup>5</sup> Or, *tears*; Heb. *eye*; Gen. 29. 32; 1 Sam. 1. 11; Psa. 35. 18.—<sup>6</sup> Rom. 8. 28.—<sup>7</sup> Heb. *dusted him with dust*.—<sup>8</sup> Chap. 15. 37.

another for his crimes. David felt that the hand of God was in it.

Pure from the blood of Saul in vain,  
He dares not to the charge reply;  
Uriah's doth the charge maintain,  
Uriah's doth against him cry.  
Let Shimei curse: the rod he bears  
For sins which Mercy had forgiven,  
And in the wrongs of man reverses  
The awful righteousness of Heaven.

Lord, I adore thy gracious will—  
Through every instrument of ill  
My Father's goodness see;  
Accept the complicated wrong  
Of Shimei's hand and Shimei's tongue  
As kind rebukes from thee.—*C. Wesley.*

14. **Weary**—The word עָיִף, thus rendered, Keil understands to be the name of a place, *Ayephim*, and argues that the word *there*, at the close of the verse, requires such a construction; but the versions are all against him, and the word *there* may easily be understood to refer indefinitely to the place where they stopped to refresh themselves. Many critics suppose that the cursing of Shimei was the occasion of Psalm vii.

**ABSALOM ENTERS INTO JERUSALEM, AND MEETS WITH HUSHAI, 15-19.**

15. **All the people the men of Israel**—The men out of all the tribes, who heard the sound of the trumpet and rallied to the support of Absalom. Chap. xv, 10. **Came to Jerusalem**—



came to pass, when Hushai the Archite, David's friend, was come unto Absalom, that Hushai said unto Absalom, 'God save the king, God save the king.

**17** And Absalom said to Hushai, *Is* this thy kindness to thy friend? "why wentest thou not with thy friend?" **18** And Hushai said unto Absalom, Nay; but whom the Lord, and this people, and all the men of Israel, choose, his will I be, and with him will I abide. **19** And again, "whom should I serve? *should* I not serve in the presence of his son? as I have served in thy father's presence, so will I be in thy presence.

**20** Then said Absalom to Ahithophel, Give counsel among you what we shall do. **21** And Ahithophel said unto Ab-

*t* Chap. 15. 37.—*7* Heb. *Let the king live.*—*u* Chap. 19. 25; Prov. 17. 17.—*v* Chap. 15. 34.—*w* Chap. 15. 16; 20. 3.

This arrival seems to have taken place almost immediately after David's departure. The young prince sought to rush matters to a final issue, and take the kingdom by a sudden *coup de main*.

**16. God save the king**—Words of flattery and dissimulation. By this salutation of royalty Hushai begins his deep-laid plans.

**17. Thy friend**—By "thy" friend Absalom means David. By these questions he seeks to sound the depth of Hushai's professed loyalty to himself.

**18. This people**—Referring to the multitudes that accompanied Absalom into Jerusalem. He professes that with him the voice of the people is the voice of Jehovah. It can hardly be said that the words of Hushai are equivocal, and so put that he could have meant David as well as Absalom, for in the next verse he plainly pledges himself to serve the prince as he had done his father. He used deceit and falsehood; but in his case it was a stratagem of war, and is to be regarded as any other strategic military measure designed to deceive an enemy. See note on chap. xv, 34.

#### AHITHOPHEL'S IMPIOUS COUNSEL, 20-23.

**21. Go in unto thy father's concubines**—This would be a most bold and irrevocable assumption of all the royal rights, and render the breach be-

salom, Go in unto thy father's "concubines, which he hath left to keep the house; and all Israel shall hear that thou art abhorred of thy father: then shall the hands of all that are with thee be strong. **22** So they spread Absalom a tent upon the top of the house; and Absalom went in unto his father's concubines in the sight of all Israel. **23** And the counsel of Ahithophel, which he counselled in those days, was as if a man had inquired at the oracle of God: so was all the counsel of Ahithophel both with David and with Absalom.

#### CHAPTER XVII.

**MOREOVER** Ahithophel said unto Absalom, Let me now choose out

*α* Gen. 34. 30; 1 Sam. 13. 4.—*γ* Chap. 2. 7; Zech. 8. 13.—*ε* Chap. 12. 11, 12.—*8* Heb. *word.*—*a* Chap. 15. 12.

tween Absalom and his father utterly irreconcilable.

**22. Upon the top of the house**—That roof of the royal palace whence David took the lustful look upon Bathsheba. Chap. xi, 2. **In the sight of all Israel**—As Nathan's bitter prophecy foretold. See chap. xii, 11, 12.

**23. As if a man had inquired at the oracle of God**—That is, it was treated with the utmost respect and reverence, and acted upon as if it had given as much assurance as the word of God. This fact seems to be here stated as a reason for Absalom's incest. That prince would hardly have gone as far as this without the counsel of his impious adviser, for such a crime demanded the punishment of death. Lev. xx, 11.

#### CHAPTER XVII.

THE COUNSEL OF AHITHOPHEL DEFEATED BY HUSHAI, 1-14.

Most vividly graphic is this sketch of what Kitto calls "the first cabinet council to which history admits us." It would be difficult to find in the same space a more perfect word picture. After his most shameful incest in the sight of all Israel, Absalom returns for further counsel, and finds his great adviser full of deep-laid plans for future action. He would have the prince continue his lewd pleasures at Jerusalem, whilst himself, at the head of a strong force,

twelve thousand men, and <sup>a</sup> I will arise and pursue after David this night: **2** And I will come upon him while he <sup>is</sup> <sup>b</sup> weary and weak handed, and will make him afraid: and all the people that <sup>are</sup> with him shall flee; and I will <sup>c</sup> smite the king only: **3** And I will bring back all the people unto thee: the man whom thou seekest <sup>is</sup> as if all returned: <sup>so</sup> all the people shall be in peace. **4** And the saying <sup>d</sup> pleased Absalom well, and all the elders of Israel. **5** Then said Absalom, Call now Hushai the Archite also, and let us hear likewise <sup>e</sup> what he saith. **6** And when Hushai was come to Absalom, Absalom spake unto him, saying, Ahithophel hath spoken after this manner: shall we do <sup>after</sup> his <sup>3</sup> saying? if not, speak thou. **7** And Hushai said unto Absalom, The counsel that Ahithophel hath <sup>4</sup> given <sup>is</sup> not good

<sup>a</sup> Prov. 1. 16; 4. 16; Isa. 59. 7, 8.—<sup>b</sup> See Deut. 25. 18; chap. 16. 14.—<sup>c</sup> Zech. 13. 7.—<sup>d</sup> 1 Heb. *you are right in the eyes of, &c.*: 1 Sam. 18. 20.—<sup>e</sup> 2 Heb. *what is in his mouth.*—3 Heb. *word?*

would pursue the fugitive David, steal upon him in the still darkness of the night, paralyze his heart and hands with fear, scatter his defenders, and smite him whom alone it was necessary to smite in order to crush all opposition. Absalom and all his cabinet are highly pleased, and we fancy the graphic language and great influence of the wise counsellor make them almost feel that the desired result is already as good as reached. But Hushai is called in to give also his opinion, and what we have already learned of the weight of Ahithophel's counsel only serves to prepare us for a fuller appreciation of the superior skill and captivating eloquence of Hushai. He adroitly acknowledges the excellence of Ahithophel's advice, but thinks it ill-timed, and then, with winged words, depicts the chafed monarch, furious as the wild bear robbed of her whelps, cunning and crafty as years of dangerous warfare could make him, not to be taken by surprise, nor so easily smitten as Ahithophel had presumed. He counsels delay, until Absalom himself, with overwhelming numbers, shall be able to cover his enemies as with the dews of night, or to drag down the walls of the city in which they might entrench themselves. And so totally did his speech defeat the counsel of

at this time. **8** For, said Hushai, thou knowest thy father and his men, that they <sup>be</sup> mighty men, and they <sup>be</sup> chafed in their minds, as <sup>a</sup> a bear robbed of her whelps in the field: and thy father <sup>is</sup> a man of war, and will not lodge with the people. **9** Behold, he is hid now in some pit, or in some <sup>other</sup> place: and it will come to pass, when some of them be <sup>6</sup> overthrown at the first, that whosoever heareth it will say, There is a slaughter among the people that follow Absalom. **10** And he also <sup>that is</sup> valiant, whose heart <sup>is</sup> as the heart of a lion, shall utterly <sup>c</sup> melt: for all Israel knoweth that thy father <sup>is</sup> a mighty man, and <sup>they</sup> which <sup>be</sup> with him <sup>are</sup> valiant men. **11** Therefore I counsel that all Israel be generally gathered unto thee, <sup>d</sup> from Dan even to Beer-sheba, <sup>e</sup> as the sand that <sup>is</sup> by the sea for multitude; and <sup>7</sup> that thou go to

<sup>4</sup> Heb. *counselled.*—<sup>5</sup> Heb. *bitter of soul.* Judg. 14. 25.—<sup>d</sup> Hosea 13. 8.—<sup>e</sup> 6 Heb. *fallen.*—<sup>f</sup> Josh. 2. 11.—<sup>f</sup> Judg. 20. 1.—<sup>g</sup> Gen. 22. 17.—<sup>7</sup> Heb. *that thy face, or, presence go, &c.*

Ahithophel that Absalom and all his council adopted his opinions.

**1. Twelve thousand men**—How numerous already had the adherents of Absalom become! The two hundred innocent followers of chap. xv, 11, come back twelve thousand strong, but not now "in their simplicity."

**3. The man whom thou seekest**—David. **As if all returned**—Only remove David, and all the people will submit to thee.

**5. Call now Hushai**—Perhaps he was known to have met David in his flight, and therefore supposed to know the strength of his forces. His age also (compare note on chap. xv, 33) entitled him to be heard.

**8. A bear**—See on 1 Sam. xvii, 34.

**9. In some pit**—Some cave, as in the time of his persecution by Saul. Compare 1 Sam. xxiv, 3. **When some of them be overthrown**—Rather, *when he* (that is, David) *falls upon them*. The sense of this verse and that following is, that David, being concealed from his pursuers, could slyly sally forth and fall upon them unawares, and then the report of such a sudden attack would rapidly spread, and cause among the followers of Absalom a panic, in which the most lion-hearted hero would be likely to quail.

battle in thine own person. **12** So shall we come upon him in some place where he shall be found, and <sup>a</sup>we will light upon him as the dew falleth on the ground: and of him and of all the men that <sup>a</sup>are with him there shall not be left so much as one. **13** Moreover, if he be gotten into a city, then shall all Israel bring ropes to that city, and we will draw it into the river, until there be not one small stone found there. **14** And Absalom and all the men of Israel said, The counsel of Hushai the Archite <sup>a</sup>is better than the counsel of Ahithophel. For <sup>a</sup>the Lord had <sup>a</sup>appointed to defeat the good counsel of Ahithophel, to the intent that the Lord might bring evil upon Absalom.

**15** <sup>a</sup>Then said Hushai unto Zadok and to Abiathar the priests, Thus and thus did Ahithophel counsel Absalom and the elders of Israel; and thus and thus have I counselled. **16** Now there-

<sup>a</sup> 1 Kings 20. 10; Obad. 3.—<sup>c</sup> Chap. 15. 31, 34.  
<sup>b</sup> Heb. *commanded*.—<sup>e</sup> Chap. 15. 35.—  
1 Chap. 15. 28.—<sup>m</sup> Chap. 15. 27, 36.

**11. Go to battle in thine own person**—Literally, *thy presence going into the battle*. Unlike Ahithophel, who counselled him to stay at Jerusalem, (verse 3,) Hushai advises him to go himself to the war.

**12. As the dew falleth**—Covering all things, so that nothing on the ground escapes its touch.

**13. Not one small stone**—"Hushai speaks in hyperboles of the irresistible power which the whole nation would put forth when summoned together for battle, in order to make his advice appear the more plausible."—*Keil*.

HUSHAI'S MESSAGE TO DAVID, 15-22.

**16. Send quickly**—Hushai seems to have feared that his counsel might not be followed, and so without delay apprizes the king of his danger. **The plains**—Or, *crossing places*. See note on chap. xv. 28. **Pass over**—Cross the fords of the Jordan. **Swallowed up**—Overwhelmed and destroyed by the numbers of the enemy that may speedily pursue.

**17. En-rogel**—A well commonly supposed to be just below the junction of the Kidron and Hinnom valleys. But a number of modern travellers identify it with the "Fountain of the Virgin."

fore send quickly, and tell David, saying, Lodge not this night <sup>a</sup>in the plains of the wilderness, but speedily pass over; lest the king be swallowed up, and all the people that <sup>a</sup>are with him. **17** <sup>a</sup>Now Jonathan and Ahimaaz <sup>a</sup>stayed by <sup>a</sup>En-rogel; for they might not be seen to come into the city: and a wench went and told them: and they went and told king David. **18** Nevertheless, a lad saw them, and told Absalom: but they went both of them away quickly, and came to a man's house <sup>a</sup>in Bahurim, which had a well in his court; whither they went down. **19** And <sup>a</sup>the woman took and spread a covering over the well's mouth, and spread ground corn thereon; and the thing was not known. **20** And when Absalom's servants came to the woman to the house, they said, Where <sup>a</sup>is Ahimaaz and Jonathan? And <sup>a</sup>the woman said unto them, They be gone over the brook of water. And

<sup>a</sup> Josh. 2. 4, &c.—<sup>c</sup> Josh. 15. 7; 18. 16.—  
<sup>p</sup> Chap. 16. 5.—<sup>g</sup> See Josh. 2. 6.—<sup>r</sup> See Exod. 1. 19; Josh. 2. 4, 5.

See on Josh. xv. 7. **They might not be seen to come into the city**—After the public occurrences recorded chap. xv. 24-29, both the high priests and their sons would naturally be suspected of sympathy for David, and therefore closely watched; and if once within the city they could not easily escape to carry news to David. **A wench**—נַעֲמָה, *the female servant*.

The word is made definite by the article. This maidservant of one of the high priests' families went forth, as the women of Jerusalem do now, to draw water from the well, and, unsuspected, bore the secret tidings to her master's son. **Told king David**—Here the historian, as is common with the Old Testament writers, anticipates the result (see verse 21) before the particulars are told.

**18. Came to a man's house in Bahurim**—They found they were pursued, and even in the village of the hostile Shimei (chap. xvi. 5) they obtained a shelter. This man, in whose court they were concealed, was probably some old acquaintance and friend.

**20. The woman said**—Like Rahab, she deceived them. Compare Josh. ii. 4, 5. **The brook of water**—The wady or stream that ran just below Bahurim.

when they had sought and could not find *them*, they returned to Jerusalem.

**21** And it came to pass, after they were departed, that they came up out of the well, and went and told king David, and said unto David, "Arise, and pass quickly over the water: for thus hath Ahithophel counselled against you." **22** Then David arose, and all the people that *were* with him, and they passed over Jordan: by the morning light there lacked not one of them that was not gone over Jordan.

**23** And when Ahithophel saw that his

*s* Verses 15, 16. — *t* Verse 24: Prov. 27. 12: Matt. 10. 16. — *9* Heb. *done*. — *u* Chap. 15. 12. — *10* Heb. *gave charge concerning his house*, 2 Kings 20. 1. — *v* Matt. 27. 5.

**22. By the morning light**—Surely an expeditionary march for all that multitude who left Jerusalem but the day before. In the light of this morning the king composed Psalm iii, in which he might well say, in reference to the refreshing sleep of the first part of the night, (compare chap. xvi, 14.) "I laid me down and slept; I awaked; for the Lord sustained me."

AHITHOPHEL'S SUICIDE, 23.

**23. Arose, and gat him home**—He was deeply chagrined and mortally offended. He saw, too, that by the neglect of his counsel Absalom's cause was lost; and for himself, he had gone too far in treason ever to hope for reconciliation with David. **To his city**—Giloh. See chap. xv, 12. **Put his household in order**—Or, as margin, *gave charge concerning his house*; settled up his worldly affairs. **Hanged himself**—Like the betrayer of our Lord. Matt. xxvii, 5. There are several points of resemblance between Ahithophel and Judas Iscariot. The deep wounding of David's spirit by the treason of Ahithophel probably occasioned the writing of the forty-first, fifty-fifth, sixty-ninth, and one hundred and ninth Psalms, from one of which (xli, 9) the Lord quoted a passage which he interpreted as a prophecy of Judas. John xiii, 18. **Buried in the sepulchre of his father**—"Not like an excommunicated outcast, but like a venerable patriarch."—*Stunley*. According to Josephus he hung himself in the inmost

counsel was not followed, he saddled *his* ass, and arose, and gat him home to his house, to "his city, and "put his household in order, and "hanged himself, and died, and was buried in the sepulchre of his father.

**24** Then David came to "Mahanaim. And Absalom passed over Jordan, he and all the men of Israel with him. **25** And Absalom made Amasa captain of the host instead of Joab: which Amasa *was* a man's son, whose name *was* "Ithra an Israelite, that went in to "12 Abigail the daughter of "13 Nahash,

*w* Gen. 32. 2; Josh. 13. 26: chap. 2. 8.—11 Or. *Jether an Ishmaelite*. — *a* 1 Chron. 2. 16, 17.—12 Heb. *Abigail*. —13 Or, *Jesse*. See 1 Chron. 2. 13, 16.

room of his house, and his relatives took him down and honoured him with becoming funeral ceremonies. "Ahithophel is not, probably, the first man who hanged himself, but he bears the unenviable distinction of being the first whose hanging himself is recorded; and society would have little reason to complain, if all who have since sentenced themselves to this doom were as worthy of it as this father of self-suspenders. Bishop Hall quaintly remarks of him, that, though mad enough to hang himself, he was wise enough to set his house in order before he did it."—*Kittó*.

ABSAKOM'S PURSUIT OF DAVID, 24-26.

**24. David came to Mahanaim**—Where Ishbosheth had once had the seat of his government. See chap. ii, 8. **Absalom passed over Jordan**—This was probably several weeks or months after David crossed, during which time Absalom had been anointed as king, (chap. xix, 10,) and, in accordance with Hushai's counsel, had gathered warriors from all the tribes.

**25. Amasa**—A nephew of David and cousin of Joab, but of foreign paternity, which fact, perhaps, had led David to honour the sons of Zeruihal more than him. **An Israelite**—Rather, *an Ishmaelite*, as the text of 1 Chron. ii, 17, has it; for there was no reason to state his nationality if he were an Israelite. **Nahash**—Supposed by some to be the name of Jesse's wife, but by

sister to Zeruiah Joab's mother. **26** So Israel and Absalom pitched in the land of Gilead.

**27** And it came to pass, when David was come to Mahanaim, that <sup>v</sup>Shobi the son of Nahash of Rabbah of the children of Ammon, and <sup>w</sup>Machir the son of Ammiel of Lo-debar, and <sup>x</sup>Barzillai the Gileadite of Rogelim, **28** Brought beds, and <sup>y</sup>basins, and earthen vessels, and wheat, and barley, and flour, and parched corn, and beans, and lentiles, and parched pulse, **29** And honey, and butter, and sheep, and cheese of kine, for David, and for the people that <sup>z</sup>were with him, to eat: for they said, The people <sup>a</sup>is hungry, and weary, and thirsty, <sup>b</sup>in the wilderness.

<sup>v</sup> See chap. 10. 1; 12. 29.—<sup>z</sup> Chap. 9. 4.—<sup>m</sup> Chap. 19. 31, 32; 1 Kings 2. 7.—<sup>14</sup> Or, *cupa*.—<sup>n</sup> Chap. 16. 2.—<sup>a</sup> 1 Sam. 8. 12.—<sup>b</sup> Judges

Stanley to be the king of the Ammonites, and father of Abigail and Zeruiah by a woman who afterwards became the wife of Jesse and mother of David. But the more common and satisfactory opinion is the unbroken tradition of the Jews, that Nahash and Jesse were different names of the same person.

**26. Gilead**—The mountainous tract east of the Jordan. See map, page 234.

DAVID AT MAHANAIM, 27–29.

**27. Shobi the son of Nahash**—And therefore the brother of Hanun, who so shamefully treated David's servants. Chap. x, 1–4. Unlike Hanun he showed kindness to David, as his father had done. Josephus calls him the ruler of the Ammonites, and it is probable that he joined not with his brother in the war with Israel, and that after the fall of Rabbah David placed him over the subjected territory. **Machir**—The friend and protector also of Mephibosheth. Chap. ix, 4. **Barzillai**—An aged and very wealthy man, as we further learn from chap. xix, 32. **Rogelim**—A place in Gilead now unknown.

**29. Cheese of kine**—The Hebrew word translated *cheese* occurs nowhere else. The Septuagint renders it *suckling calves*, and the Vulgate, *fat calves*. But our version, which follows the Chaldee and Syriac, is probably more correct. According to Burekhardt, the Bedouins

## CHAPTER XVIII.

**A**ND David numbered the people that <sup>1</sup>were with him, and set captains of thousands and <sup>2</sup>captains of hundreds over them. **2** And David sent forth a <sup>3</sup>third part of the people under the hand of Joab, and a third part under the hand of Abishai the son of Zeruiah, Joab's brother, <sup>4</sup>and a third part under the hand of Ittai the Gittite. And the king said unto the people, I will surely go forth with you myself also. **3** <sup>5</sup>But the people answered, Thou shalt not go forth: for if we flee away, they will not <sup>6</sup>care for us; neither if half of us die, will they care for us: but now <sup>7</sup>thou art <sup>8</sup>worth ten thousand of us: therefore now <sup>9</sup>it is better that thou <sup>10</sup>succour us

7. 16, 19; 9. 43.—<sup>2</sup> Chap. 15. 19.—<sup>4</sup> Chap. 21. 17.—<sup>1</sup> Heb, *set their heart on us*.—<sup>2</sup> Heb. *as ten thousand of us*.—<sup>3</sup> Heb. *be to succour*.

beat buttermilk till it coagulates, then dry it till quite hard, after which it is rubbed to pieces and stored up in large quantities. It is usually eaten mixed with butter. See note on 1 Sam. xvii, 18. "The catalogue of the commodities which these and other like-minded men supplied, at probably an all but ruinous expense to themselves, is curious, as showing the nature of the articles considered in that age to be necessary for the comfort and subsistence of the king and his people. It will be perceived that in this pastoral land unusual prominence is given to the produce of flocks and herds, and the agricultural produce is confined to prime necessities."—*Killo*. Contrast what Ziba brought. Chap. xvi, 1.

## CHAPTER XVIII.

THE BATTLE IN THE WOOD OF EPHRAIM, AND DEATH OF ABSALOM, 1–33.

**1. Numbered the people**—Josephus says he found them to be about four thousand. Others have inferred, from verse 3, that they were ten thousand. Many had probably rallied to his standard at Mahanaim.

**2. Under the hand**—Under the direction and generalship. **Ittai**—Now rewarded for his loyalty with an important office. See on chap. xv, 21.

**3. Better that thou succour us out of the city**—Better for thee to remain here at Mahanaim, with a strong force

out of the city. **4** And the king said unto them, What seemeth you best I will do. And the king stood by the gate side, and all the people came out by hundreds and by thousands. **5** And the king commanded Joab and Abishai and Ittai, saying, *Deal* gently for my sake with the young man, *even* with Absalom. 'And all the people heard when the king gave all the captains charge concerning Absalom. **6** So the people went out into the field against Israel: and the battle was in the 'wood of Ephraim; **7** Where the people of Israel were slain before the servants of Da-

vid, and there was there a great slaughter that day of twenty thousand *men*. **8** For the battle was there scattered over the face of all the country: and the wood 'devoured more people that day than the sword devoured. **9** And Absalom met the servants of David. And Absalom rode upon a mule, and the mule went under the thick boughs of a great oak, and his head caught hold of the oak, and he was 'taken up between the heaven and the earth; and the mule that *was* under him went away. **10** And a certain man saw *it*, and told Joab, and said, Behold, I saw Absalom hanged in

e Verse 24; Isa. 28. 6.—f Verse 12.—g Josh. 17. 15, 18.—4 Heb. *multiplied to devour*.

h Deut. 21. 23; Job 18. 8, 10; 31. 3; Prov. 20. 20; 30. 17; Gal. 3. 13.

with thee, and thus be able to come forth with reinforcements to our help in case of need.

**5. Gently for my sake with the young man**—Josephus says that he was afraid some mischief might befall himself if Absalom were slain. But it was David's deep affection for the beautiful youth, which, notwithstanding all his errors, still yearned for him. The tenderness of the father exceeded the justice of the king.

**6. Against Israel**—Alas! It was Israel against Israel. But it had come to pass that strong prejudices were manifested between the *people* of Israel and the *men* of Judah. **The wood of Ephraim**—A forest evidently not far from Mahanaim, and probably near the Jordan, but its exact locality and the origin of its name are now unknown. Grotius conjectured that it took its name from the great slaughter of the Ephraimites recorded Judges xii, 1-6; and the Jews have a tradition that Joshua, who was an Ephraimite, permitted the people of his tribe to pasture their flocks in this forest. Keil argues that it was on the west of the Jordan in the tribe-land of Ephraim, which, according to Joshua xvii, 15, abounded in wood. But as David was at Mahanaim, and Absalom in Gilead, (chap. xvii, 26,) this battle doubtless took place on the east of the Jordan.

**7. Twenty thousand**—Surely the multitude that followed Absalom must have been like the sand of the sea. Chap. xvii, 11.

**8. Scattered**—For they could not

march *en masse* through the tangled forests. **The wood devoured more people... than the sword**—This forest was probably full of deep gorges and pits, into which, in their haste, multitudes were thrown and perished; others were lost; and some, perhaps, as the Chaldee, Syriac, and Arabic versions suggest, destroyed by wild beasts. Tristram, who passed through this region in 1864, writes: "We rose to the higher ground, and cantered through a noble forest of oaks. Perhaps we were in the woods of Mahanaim. Somewhere a little to the east of us was fought the battle with the rebellious Absalom, and by such an oak as these was he caught. In picturing the broken lines, and a rout through such an open forest, how we realized the statement: 'The battle was there scattered over the face of all the country, and the wood devoured more people that day than the sword devoured.' As I rode under a grand old oak tree, I, too, lost my hat and turban, which were caught by a bough."

**9. Absalom met the servants of David**—And probably darted rapidly one side through the forest to avoid them, when he met with the accident which exposed him helpless to his enemy. **His head caught hold of the oak**—Probably entangled by his hair, (compare chap. xiv, 26,) and so Josephus affirms.

**10. Saw Absalom hanged**—Suspended by his head, hair, and arms, and probably struggling to disentangle himself. He must have suffered serious injury to his person and almost per-

an oak. **11** And Joab said unto the man that told him, And, behold, thou sawest him, and why didst thou not smite him there to the ground? and I would have given thee ten *shekels* of silver, and a girdle. **12** And the man said unto Joab, Though I should receive a thousand *shekels* of silver in mine hand, yet would I not put forth mine hand against the king's son: 'for in our hearing the king charged thee and Abishai and Ittai, saying, 'Beware that none touch the young man Absalom. **13** Otherwise I should have wrought falsehood against mine own life: for there is no matter hid from the king, and thou thyself wouldst have set thyself against me. **14** Then said Joab, I may not tarry thus 'with thee. And he took three darts in his

5 Heb. *weigh upon mine hand.*—*l* Verse 5.  
—8 Heb. *Beware whosoever ye be of, &c.*—  
7 Heb. *before thee.*

ished by this mishap before the darts of Joab pierced him, for so the statement in verse 14, that *he was yet alive*, seems to imply.

**13. Falsehood against mine own life**—Rather, *against his life*, that is, Absalom's life, for such is the reading of the Hebrew text, (שׁוֹנֵן,) and only the Masoretic pointing favours the English version. To work falsehood against his life means to slay him secretly, and keep it unknown by whose hand he fell. The whole verse should be thus translated: *But if I had wrought falsehood against his life, and everything (word) is not hidden from the king, even thou wouldst have set thyself in opposition.*

**14. I may not tarry**—I have no time to lose in thus talking with thee, and am not thus careful to obey the king in this matter. Absalom's life, says Clarke, "was quadruply forfeited to the law. (1) In having murdered his brother Amnon; (2) In having excited an insurrection in the state; (3) In having taken up arms against his own father, (Deut. xxi, 18, 21;) (4) In having lain with his father's concubines. Lev. xviii, 29. Long ago he should have died by the hand of justice." But we cannot, with Clarke and others, denounce this act of Joab as a cowardly murder, base and disloyal. True, he disobeyed the king, but he felt it a duty to disobey. He was too much of a warrior and statesman to

hand, and thrust them through the heart of Absalom, while he *was* yet alive in the 'midst of the oak. **15** And ten young men that bare Joab's armour compassed about and smote Absalom, and slew him. **16** And Joab 'blew the trumpet, and the people returned from pursuing after Israel: for Joab held back the people. **17** And they took Absalom, and cast him into a great pit in the wood, and 'laid a very great heap of stones upon him: and all Israel fled every one to his tent. **18** Now Absalom in his lifetime had taken and reared up for himself a pillar, which *is* in 'the king's dale: for he said, 'I have no son to keep my name in remembrance: and he called the pillar after his own name: and it is called unto this day, Absalom's

8 Heb. *heurt.*—*k* Chap. 2. 28; 20. 22; Num. 10. 3, 10.—*l* Josh. 7. 26.—*m* Gen. 14. 17.—  
*n* See chap. 14. 27.

think that the rebellion could be successfully subdued without the death of Absalom, and he afterwards vindicated himself before David with a severity of rebuke which the king dared not gainsay or resist. Chap. xix, 1-8. **Yet alive**—Compare note on verse 10.

**15. Ten young men**—These armour-bearers of Joab, of course, accompanied their chieftain when he went to smite Absalom, and after he had pierced him with his fatal darts they also wantonly abused his lifeless body, and afterwards cast him into the pit. Verse 17.

**16. Blew the trumpet**—The signal for the people to come together: the death of Absalom virtually ending the rebellion.

**17. Heap of stones upon him**—As in the case of Achan and the king of Ai. Josh. vii, 26; viii, 29.

**18. A pillar**—A monumental column inscribed with his own name. **King's dale**—Supposed by some to be the lower part of the Kidron valley, near the pool of Siloam. See at Gen. xiv, 17. **No son**—The three sons mentioned (chap. xiv, 27) seem to have died in childhood, and their names were never registered. **Called unto this day, Absalom's place**—That is, at the time of the writer the pillar was yet standing and its history known. There still stands in the Kidron valley a monument bearing this name. It is an iso-

place. **19** Then said Ahimaaz the son of Zadok, Let me now run, and bear the king tidings, how that the Lord hath <sup>a</sup>avenged him of his enemies. **20** And Joab said unto him, Thou shalt not <sup>b</sup>hear tidings this day, but thou shalt bear tidings another day: but this day thou shalt bear no tidings, because the king's son is dead. **21** Then said Joab to Cush, Go tell the king what thou hast seen. And Cush bowed himself unto Joab, and ran. **22** Then said

<sup>9</sup> Heb. *judged him from the hand, &c.*  
<sup>10</sup> Heb. *be a man of tidings.*

lated block hewn out of the rocky ledge, twenty-four feet square and forty in height. Most travellers have decided, with Robinson, that its style of architecture shows the work of a



ABSALOM'S TOMB.

later age than that of Absalom; but some are inclined to identify it with the ancient pillar.

**19. Then said Ahimaaz**—This son of the high priest had already performed valuable service as messenger for the king, (chap. xv, 36; xvii, 21,) and thereby he had gained the confidence and esteem of David. Verse 27. He was also swift of foot, and had a burning desire to be first in bearing the tidings of this victory to Mahanaim.

**21. Cush**—Supposed by some to have been an Ethiopian slave in the ser-

Ahimaaz the son of Zadok yet again to Joab, But <sup>11</sup>howsoever, let me, I pray thee, also run after Cush. And Joab said, Wherefore wilt thou run, my son, seeing that thou hast no tidings <sup>12</sup>ready? **23** But howsoever, *said he*, let me run. And he said unto him, Run. Then Ahimaaz ran by the way of the plain, and overran Cush. **24** And David sat between the two gates: and <sup>a</sup>the watchman went up to the roof over the gate unto the wall, and lifted up his eyes, and

<sup>11</sup> Heb. *be what may.*—<sup>12</sup> Or, *convenient?*  
<sup>o</sup> 2 Kings 9, 17.

vice of Joab. **What thou hast seen**—He was probably among those ten young men (verse 15) that smote Absalom.

**22. Wherefore wilt thou run**—

According to Josephus Joab opposed Ahimaaz in his desire to bear the tidings to the king, because he had always before borne good news, and now he knew that it would greatly offend and afflict David to inform him of the death of his son. **My son**—An address of affectionate tenderness. Compare Josh. vii, 19. **Thou hast no tidings ready**—No good tidings, such as thou art wont to bear and receive a reward for. **First renders: And the tidings are not profitable unto thee**; that is, will not obtain for thee a reward. Perhaps his greatest desire in bearing the tidings was to obtain a reward.

**23. Ran by the way of the plain**—He seems to have understood the routes better than Cush, and also to have been a swift-

er runner. What plain is here intended is <sup>a</sup>not clear. If the Jordan valley is meant, then the wood of Ephraim must have been somewhere near the river. See note on verse 6.

**24. Sat between the two gates**—

The city of Mahanaim seems to have been enclosed by a double wall, and its main entrance guarded by two gates, an outer and an inner one, between which was a sort of court. **The roof over the gate unto the wall**—The top of one of the towers of the outer gate. The outer gate of fortified cities was usually surmounted by a tower, in



looked, and behold a man running alone. **25** And the watchman cried, and told the king. And the king said, If he be alone, *there is tidings* in his mouth. And he came apace, and drew near. **26** And the watchman saw another man running: and the watchman called unto the porter, and said, Behold *another* man running alone. And the king said, He also bringeth tidings. **27** And the watchman said, <sup>13</sup> Methinketh the running of the foremost is like the running of Ahimaaz the son of Zadok. And the king said, <sup>14</sup> He is a good man, and cometh with good tidings. **28** And Ahimaaz called, and said unto the king, <sup>15</sup> All is well. And he fell down to the earth upon his face before the king, and said, Blessed be the Lord thy God, which hath <sup>16</sup> delivered up the men that lifted up their hand against my lord the king. **29** And the king said, <sup>16</sup> Is the young

<sup>13</sup> Heb. *I see the running*.—<sup>p1</sup> Kings 1. 42; Prov. 25. 13, 25.—<sup>14</sup> Or, *Peace* be to thee; <sup>15</sup> Heb. *Peace*.—<sup>15</sup> Heb. *shut up*.—<sup>16</sup> Heb. *Is there*

which chambers were often built. The top was a suitable station for a watch-



GATE OF KONIEH.

man. Such towers were also built into the city walls at various places.

**25. If he be alone, there is tidings**—For if many had been running together it would have indicated a flight.

man Absalom safe? And Ahimaaz answered, When Joab sent the king's servant, and *me* thy servant, I saw a great tumult, but I knew not what *it was*. **30** And the king said *unto him*, Turn aside, *and stand here*. And he turned aside, and stood still. **31** And, behold, Cushie came; and Cushie said, <sup>17</sup> Tidings, my lord the king: for the Lord hath avenged thee this day of all them that rose up against thee. **32** And the king said unto Cushie, *Is the young man Absalom safe?* And Cushie answered, *The enemies of my lord the king, and all that rise against thee to do thee hurt, be as that young man is*. **33** And the king was much moved, and went up to the chamber over the gate, and wept: and as he went, thus he said, *O my son Absalom, my son, my son Absalom! would God I had died for thee, O Absalom, my son, my son!*

*peace?*—<sup>17</sup> Heb. *Tidings is brought*.—<sup>q</sup> Judges 5. 31; Psa. 68. 12; Dan. 4. 19.—<sup>r</sup> Chap. 19. 4.—<sup>s</sup> Psa. 103. 13; Prov. 10. 1; 17. 25.

**26. The porter**—The gate keeper.

**27. Methinketh**—Rather, as the margin, *I see the running of the foremost*, etc. The swift-footed Ahimaaz was well known for his fleetness. **He is a good man**—One of the most valuable and cheering of all the tidings David ever received was borne by this messenger, (comp. chapter xv, 31, 34, and xvii, 14–17,) and this fact made Ahimaaz to be loved by him.

**28. All is well**—שלום, *Peace*. Equivalent to *Hail!* **Blessed be the Lord**—Observe the indirect way in which the tidings are announced.

**29. The king's servant**—Cushie, who was now close by. **I saw a great tumult, but I knew not what it was**—He knew the king's son was dead, for Joab had told him, (verse 20;) but knowing the tenderness of David for Absalom, he would not be the herald of sad news to him. Josephus states that Ahimaaz obtained leave of Joab to run to David by assuring him that he would relate only the victory of his army, and not the death of Absalom.

**33. The chamber over the gate**—An apartment in the upper part of the tower of one of the gates. **O my son Absalom**—This lamentation is the most touchingly pathetic of all David's

## CHAPTER XIX.

**A**ND it was told Joab, Behold, the king weepeth and mourneth for Absalom. **2** And the victory that day was turned into mourning unto all the people: for the people heard say that day how the king was grieved for his son. **3** And the people gat them by stealth that day into the city, as people being ashamed steal away when they flee in battle. **4** But the king covered his face, and the king cried with a loud voice, "O my son Absalom! O Absalom, my son, my son!" **5** And Joab came into the house to the king, and said, "Thou hast shamed this day the faces of all thy servants, which this day have saved thy life, and the lives of thy sons

and of thy daughters, and the lives of thy wives, and the lives of thy concubines; **6** "In that thou lovest thine enemies, and hatest thy friends. For thou hast declared this day, that thou regardest neither princes nor servants: for this day I perceive, that if Absalom had lived, and all we had died this day, then it had pleased thee well. **7** Now therefore arise, go forth, and speak comfortably unto thy servants: for I swear by the Lord, if thou go not forth, there will not tarry one with thee this night: and that will be worse unto thee than all the evil that befell thee from thy youth until now. **8** Then the king arose, and sat in the gate. And they told unto all the people, saying, Behold,

<sup>1</sup> Hebrew, *salvation*, or, *deliverance*.—<sup>a</sup> Verse 32.—<sup>b</sup> Chap. 15. 30.—<sup>c</sup> Chap. 18. 33.  
—<sup>2</sup> Hebrew, *By loving*, &c.

<sup>3</sup> Hebrew, *that princes or servants are not to thee*.—<sup>4</sup> Hebrew, *to the heart of thy servants*, Gen. 34. 3.

elegies, and it sprung from the deepest depths of his heart. One hardly knows which most to wonder at, the excessive tenderness of the father, or the pitiable weakness of the king.

In the life and death of Absalom we have a picture of the fast young man. At an early period of his life a bitter hatred towards his brother soon ends in impious fratricide, and a soul thus passionate and rash can easily find its way to the crimes of an incendiary. Chap. xiv, 30. Excessively vain, he loves to display his beauty, and have his praises spoken of in Israel; and this path of vainglory leads him rapidly on to an ostentatious prodigality that affects regal pomp and splendour, (chap. xv, 1,) and even erects a pillar to perpetuate his name. For a youth thus reckless and headstrong it was no difficult matter to plot treason, (even against a father's throne,) seduce the people, betray the innocent, and commit the most shameful incest. Such abandoned characters are sure to meet with a miserable end.

## CHAPTER XIX.

## DAVID REPROVED BY JOAB, 1-8.

The stern and chivalrous Joab was highly indignant at the king's grief. His nature was incapable of sympathy with the tender, paternal emotions of a soul like David's, and with him the

notion of crushing the rebellion and at the same time dealing tenderly with the arch-rebel, was the height of absurdity. He saw, too, that it was high time for David to turn his attention to the affairs of state, for such unmanly grief on a day of victory might lead to further disaffection, and even a general revolt of the people from a king that seemed to care more for an incorrigible son than for the national honour. The bold captain, therefore, ventures to approach his sovereign with words of sharp reproof.

**2. The victory... into mourning**—The people were saddened to see their king so bitterly afflicted.

**3. Gat them by stealth... into the city**—They entered not by the gate where David sat mourning, but, like thieves, climbed in some other way.

**4. Covered his face**—After the manner of mourners. Chap. xv, 30.

**6. Thou lovest thine enemies, and hatest thy friends**—Certainly David's conduct justified this charge.

**7. I swear**—None but the dauntless Joab dared speak to the king in this way. "In his manner," says Clarke, "Joab far exceeded the bounds of that reverence which a servant owes to his master, or a subject to his prince. Joab was a good soldier, but a bad man and dangerous subject."

**8. Arose, and sat in the gate**—He left that chamber in the tower where

the king doth sit in the gate. And all the people came before the king: "for Israel had fled every man to his tent.

9 And all the people were at strife throughout all the tribes of Israel, saying, The king saved us out of the hand of our enemies, and he delivered us out of the hand of the Philistines; and now he is "fled out of the land for Absalom. 10 And Absalom, whom we anointed over us, is dead in battle. Now therefore why "speak ye not a word of bringing the king back? 11 And king David sent to Zadok and to Abiathar the priest, saying, Speak unto the elders of Judah, saying, Why are ye the last to bring the king back to his house? see-

d Ver. 3; Chap. 18. 6, 8; 1 Kings 22. 36; 2 Kings 14. 12.—e Chap. 15. 14.—f Heb. are ye silent?

he had poured out his grief, (chap. xviii, 33,) and sat in the court between the two gates, near where the multitude of the people passed. He obeyed Joab, but never forgot the offence of this reproof. See verse 13, and 1 Kings ii, 5, 6. **All the people**—This phrase, so common throughout the historical books of the Old Testament, is not to be taken anywhere in its utmost literal sense, but is equivalent to *multitudes of the people*. **Every man to his tent**—To his home or lodging place.

#### RIVALRY BETWEEN ISRAEL AND JUDAH OVER DAVID'S RETURN, 9-14.

"Absalom is dead. David is victorious. What more has the king to do but to cross the Jordan, march to Jerusalem, and take possession of his throne! This had been ill speed—it had been too abrupt. David is much to be commended for the delicacy with which he acted. Seeing that the defection of the people and the preference of Absalom had been so general among the tribes west of the Jordan, he feared even the appearance of forcing himself upon them, or seeming to recover possession of his throne as a conqueror. He therefore tarried beyond the river, waiting to be invited back. There was some delay in giving this invitation; perhaps because the king's wish and his motive in delaying to move westward were not at first understood."—*Killo*.

ing the speech of all Israel is come to the king, *even* to his house. 12 Ye are my brethren, ye are "my bones and my flesh: wherefore then are ye the last to bring back the king? 13 "And say ye to Amasa, Art thou not of my bone, and of my flesh? "God do so to me, and more also, if thou be not captain of the host before me continually in the room of Joab. 14 And he bowed the heart of all the men of Judah, "even as *the heart of one man*; so that they sent *this word* unto the king, Return thou, and all thy servants.

15 So the king returned, and came to Jordan. And Judah came to "Gilgal, to go to meet the king, to conduct the

f Chap. 5. 1.—g Chap. 17. 25.—h Ruth 1. 17.—i Judges 20. 1.—k Josh. 5. 9.

9. **Were at strife**—*נִחֲזָה*, *Were casting reproaches at one another*. They felt that in following Absalom they had been guilty of insurrection against the king, and were under obligations to secure his return from Mahapaim. From verse 11 we learn that their words were reported to David.

11. **Speak unto the elders of Judah**—It was wise in David thus to appeal to his own tribe and secure their coöperation with the rest of Israel in bringing him back to his throne in Jerusalem, for otherwise it would appear that the men of Judah were indifferent about his restoration. But it was unwise to accept their guidance back without also waiting for the coöperation of the ten northern tribes.

13. **Say ye to Amasa**—Amasa had been captain of the rebel hosts, (chap. xvii, 25,) and David hoped by honouring him to secure fully the allegiance of his disaffected subjects who had taken up arms against him; but this politic measure—the untimely offspring of his bitter enmity against Joab—was a serious and fatal error. It was also a measure dangerous to himself, and soon resulted in making Amasa the victim of Joab's deadly jealousy. Chap. xx, 10.

14. **Bowed the heart**—Affected them so powerfully by his appeal as to win all hearts to himself, and cause the whole tribe to rise as one man to his rescue and restoration.

king over Jordan. **16** And <sup>1</sup>Shimei the son of Gera, <sup>a</sup>Benjamite, which <sup>was</sup> of Bahurim, hasted and came down with the men of Judah to meet king David. **17** And <sup>there were</sup> a thousand men of Benjamin with him, and <sup>2</sup>Ziba the servant of the house of Saul, and his fifteen sons and his twenty servants with him; and they went over Jordan before the king. **18** And there went over a ferryboat to carry over the king's household, and to do <sup>what he thought good</sup>. And Shimei the son of Gera fell down before the king, as he was come over Jordan; **19** And said unto the king, <sup>3</sup>"Let not my lord impute iniquity unto me, neither do thou remember <sup>that which thy servant did</sup> perversely the day that my lord the king went out of Jerusalem, that the king should <sup>take it to his heart</sup>. **20** For thy servant doth know that I have sinned: therefore, behold, I am come the first this day of all <sup>the house of Joseph</sup> to go down to meet my lord the king. **21** But Abishai the son of Zeruiah answered and said, Shall not

Shimei be put to death for this, because he <sup>4</sup>cursed the LORD's anointed? **22** And David said, <sup>5</sup>"What have I to do with you, ye sons of Zeruiah, that ye should this day be adversaries unto me? <sup>6</sup>"shall there any man be put to death this day in Israel? for do not I know that I <sup>am</sup> this day king over Israel? **23** Therefore <sup>the king said unto Shimei</sup>, Thou shalt not die. And the king swore unto him.

**24** And <sup>7</sup>Mephibosheth the son of Saul came down to meet the king, and had neither <sup>8</sup>dressed his feet, nor trimmed his beard, nor washed his clothes, from the day the king departed until the day he came <sup>again</sup> in peace. **25** And it came to pass, when he was come to Jerusalem to meet the king, that the king said unto him, <sup>9</sup>"Wherefore wentest not thou with me, Mephibosheth? **26** And he answered, My lord, O king, my servant deceived me: for thy servant said, I will saddle me an ass, that I may ride thereon, and go to the king; because thy servant <sup>is</sup> lame. **27** And <sup>he hath slan-</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Chap. 16. 5; <sup>1</sup> Kings 2. 8.—<sup>m</sup> Chap. 9. 2, 10; 16. 1, 2.—<sup>s</sup> Heb. *the good in his eyes*.—<sup>a</sup> 1 Sam. 22. 15.—<sup>o</sup> Chap. 16. 5, 6, &c.—<sup>p</sup> Chap. 12. 33.—<sup>q</sup> See chap. 16. 5.—<sup>r</sup> Exod. 22. 28.

<sup>s</sup> Chap. 16. 10.—<sup>t</sup> 1 Sam. 11. 13.—<sup>u</sup> 1 Kings 2. 8, 9, 37, 46.—<sup>v</sup> Chap. 2. 6; 16. 3.—<sup>w</sup> Chap. 15. 30; Isa. 15. 2; Jer. 41. 5; Matt. 6. 16; Rom. 12. 15.—<sup>x</sup> Chap. 16. 17.—<sup>y</sup> Chap. 16. 3.

#### SHIMEI'S CONFESSION AND PARDON, 15-23.

**17. A thousand men of Benjamin with him**—From which it seems that Shimei was a man of much power and influence among the Benjamites.

**18. A ferryboat**—The original word (עֲבָרָה) means some instrument used for conveying persons across the river, but the manner of its construction and the method of using it are uncertain. The Septuagint translates it by *δύβρις*, a bridge. **As he was come over Jordan**—Rather, *at his crossing over the Jordan*; that is, when he was about to cross.

**20. The house of Joseph**—This designation is here used as synonymous with *all Israel*. In poetical and oratorical style this was a common term for Israel. Compare Psalms lxxvii, 15; lxxx, 1; lxxxi, 5. It probably grew out of the fact that Joseph received the rights of primogeniture which Reuben by transgression lost. 1 Chron. v, 1, 2.

**21. Abishai...said**—He cherished yet his rage and indignation against

this reviler of the king. See chapter xvi, 9.

**22. Shall any man be put to death this day**—His feelings were like those of Saul after his first great victory. Compare 1 Sam. xi, 13.

**23. The king swore unto him**—That during his reign he should not be put to death. But he charged Solomon to bring his hoary head to the grave with blood. 1 Kings ii, 8, 9.

#### THE MEETING WITH MEPHIBOSHETH 24-30.

**24. Mephibosheth**—Who had been basely slandered by his servant. See chap. xvi, 3. His appearance gave ample evidence of the strongest attachment and devotion to the interests of David.

**25. When he was come to Jerusalem**—Rather, *When Jerusalem came*; that is, the inhabitants of Jerusalem. Mephibosheth's residence was in the city, (chap. ix, 13,) and at the earliest opportunity he came forth with the inhabitants of Jerusalem to meet the king, who was yet at the Jordan.

O. T.

dered thy servant unto my lord the king; \*but my lord the king *is* as an angel of God: do therefore *what is* good in thine eyes. **28** For all *of* my father's house were but <sup>7</sup>dead men before my lord the king: \*yet didst thou set thy servant among them that did eat at thine own table. What right therefore have I yet to cry any more unto the king? **29** And the king said unto him, Why speakest thou any more of thy matters? I have said, Thou and Ziba divide the land. **30** And Mephibosheth said unto the king, Yea, let him take all, forasmuch as my lord the king is come again in peace unto his own house.

**31** And <sup>8</sup>Barzillai the Gileadite came down from Rogelim, and went over Jordan with the king, to conduct him over Jordan. **32** Now Barzillai was a very aged man, *even* fourscore years old: and <sup>9</sup>he had provided the king of sustenance

<sup>8</sup> Chap. 14. 17, 20.—<sup>7</sup> Heb. *men of death*, 1 Sam. 26. 16.—<sup>a</sup> Chap. 9. 7, 10, 13.—<sup>b</sup> 1 Kings 2. 7.—<sup>c</sup> Chap. 17. 27.

**27. The king is as an angel**—Wise to discern, and righteous to decide a case of wrong. But David's action did not justify this tribute of confidence.

**29. Why speakest thou any more of thy matters**—David evidently felt that Mephibosheth had been injured, and yet it is possible he may have had some suspicion. At all events, he had not now the time nor patience to investigate closely a matter of this kind, and therefore he dismissed it in the quickest way. **Thou and Ziba divide the land**—This was not, as some have held, a reversal of his decision in favour of Ziba, for before that Mephibosheth possessed the whole estate of Saul, (chap. ix, 9,) and Ziba was merely a servant, but now he retains only half. The king was desirous that no one should be made unhappy on that joyful day of his restoration; and Mephibosheth obtains and enjoys again the royal favour, and Ziba is much better off than he was before David's flight.

**30. Yea, let him take all**—He delights more in the king's safe return than in all his former estate, and yet these words contain, though undesignedly on his part, an expression of wounded feeling that the slanderous Ziba had received riches rather than punishment for his base calumnies.

while he lay at Mahanaim; for he *was* a very great man. **33** And the king said unto Barzillai, Come thou over with me, and I will feed thee with me in Jerusalem. **34** And Barzillai said unto the king, <sup>5</sup>How long have I to live, that I should go up with the king unto Jerusalem? **35** I am this day <sup>6</sup>four-score years old: *and* can I discern between good and evil? can thy servant taste what I eat or what I drink? can I hear any more the voice of singing men and singing women? wherefore then should thy servant be yet a burden unto my lord the king? **36** Thy servant will go a little way over Jordan with the king: and why should the king recompense it me with such a reward? **37** Let thy servant. I pray thee, turn back again, that I may die in mine own city, *and be buried* by the grave of my father and of my mother. But behold thy servant <sup>7</sup>Chimham; let

<sup>8</sup> Heb. *How many days are the years of my life*.—<sup>d</sup> Job 12. 11; Psa. 90. 10; Eccles. 12. 1, 5.—<sup>e</sup> 1 Kings 2. 7; Jer. 41. 17.

#### DAVID'S PARTING WITH BARZILLAI, 31–39.

**31. Barzillai**—See chap. xvii, 27. **Went over Jordan with the king**—The conversation that follows probably took place while they were crossing.

**32. A very great man**—A man of great wealth and influence in Gilead.

**35. Can I discern between good and evil**—Is it to be supposed that at my time of life I still retain unimpaired the powers of judgment and discrimination which belong to the age of healthfulness and vigour? *Good and evil* are to be understood here of the pleasures and entertainments of court life, as the following specifications show. **Can thy servant taste what I eat**—*Thy servant* is a periphrastic expression for *I*, as is verse 26, and frequently elsewhere. It is a form of expression used out of respect to royalty, and is equivalent to *Can I taste what I eat*, etc. His senses of taste and hearing had become so impaired that delicate meats and drinks, and vocal or instrumental music, with all which he would be constantly entertained at the royal court, would not be appreciated by him.

**37. By the grave of my father**—The natives of a hill country generally have a tender desire to be buried among

him go over with my lord the king; and do to him what shall seem good unto thee. **38** And the king answered, Chimham shall go over with me, and I will do to him that which shall seem good unto thee: and whatsoever thou shalt require of me, *that* will I do for thee. **39** And all the people went over Jordan. And when the king was come over, the king kissed Barzillai, and blessed him; and he returned unto his own place.

**40** Then the king went on to Gilgal, and <sup>10</sup>Chimham went on with him: and all the people of Judah conducted the king, and also half the people of Israel. **41** And, behold, all the men of Israel came to the king, and said unto the king, Why have our brethren the men of Judah stolen thee away, and have brought the king, and his household, and all

<sup>9</sup> Heb. *choose*.—<sup>f</sup> Gen. 31.55.—<sup>10</sup> Heb. *Chimham*.—<sup>g</sup> Verse 15.—<sup>h</sup> Verse 12.

their kindred and their native hills. **Chimham**—Generally supposed to have been a son of Barzillai, whom David kindly remembered at his death, (1 Kings ii, 7,) and whose dwelling near Beth-lehem, probably given him from David's paternal estate, is spoken of by the prophet Jeremiah. Jer. xli, 17.

QUARREL AT GILGAL BETWEEN JUDAH AND ISRAEL OVER THE KING'S RETURN, 40-43.

**40. Gilgal**—In the Jordan plain just east of Jericho; the ancient camping-ground of Israel under Joshua, and the spot where the kingdom was confirmed to Saul when he returned successful from a war fought beyond the Jordan. Compare notes on 1 Sam. xi, 12-15.

**41. Why . . . Judah stolen thee away**—Violent outburst of a deep jealousy that had been long maturing. **All David's men**—His faithful adherents who had fled with him from Jerusalem or had rallied to his standard at Mahanaim.

**42. The king is near of kin to us**—Of our tribe, and therefore descended from the same father. Compare verse 12. **Have we eaten at all of the king's**—Have we received any special favours or honours? **Hath he given us any gift**—Such as fields, vineyards, or offices, as Saul did to the Benjamites. See 1 Sam. xxii, 7.

David's men with him, over Jordan? **42** And all the men of Judah answered the men of Israel, Because the king is near of kin to us: wherefore then be ye angry for this matter? have we eaten at all of the king's *cost*? or hath he given us any gift? **43** And the men of Israel answered the men of Judah, and said, We have ten parts in the king, and we have also more *right* in David than ye: why then did ye despise us, that our advice should not be first had in bringing back our king? And the words of the men of Judah were fiercer than the words of the men of Israel.

### CHAPTER XX.

**A**ND there happened to be there a man of Belial, whose name *was* Sheba, the son of Bichri, a Benjamite: and he blew a trumpet, and said, We

<sup>11</sup> Heb. *set us at light*.—<sup>t</sup> See Judges 8. 1; 12. 1. a Chap. 19. 43.

**43. We have ten parts**—They were ten tribes, and Judah but one. **Also more right in David than ye**—Though David was of the tribe of Judah, yet as king he belonged to one tribe as much as to another, and the united voice of ten tribes was of more weight than that of one. **Despise us**—Treat us with contempt. **That our advice should not be first had**—This translation is faulty. It should be, *And was not my word the first to bring back my king?* That is, We first suggested the propriety of bringing back our king with becoming honours. This was true, as we have seen in verses 10, 11. **Fiercer**—More violent and spirited, and helped to provoke the rebellion of Sheba, which is recorded in the next chapter.

### CHAPTER XX.

SHEBA'S REBELLION, 1-22.

**1. A man of Belial**—See note on 1 Sam. i, 16. **A Benjamite**—And therefore probably affected with strong desire to have his tribe recover the ascendancy which it lost by the death of Saul. Sheba had probably been a leading spirit in Absalom's rebellion, and was evidently a man of great influence among the people. **He blew a trumpet**—The signal of insurrection (chap. xv, 10) as well as retreat. Chap.

have no part in David, neither have we inheritance in the son of Jesse: <sup>b</sup>every man to his tents, O Israel. **2** So every man of Israel went up from after David, and followed Sheba the son of Bichri: but the men of Judah clave unto their king, from Jordan even to Jerusalem. **3** And David came to his house at Jerusalem; and the king took the ten women <sup>his</sup> concubines, whom he had left to keep the house, and put them in <sup>ward</sup>, and fed them, but went not in unto them. So they were <sup>shut up</sup> unto the day of their death, <sup>living</sup> in widowhood. **4** Then said the king to Amasa,

<sup>b</sup>1 Kings 12. 16; <sup>2</sup> Chron. 10. 16. — <sup>c</sup> Chap. 15. 16; 16. 21, 22. — <sup>1</sup> Heb. *a house of ward*. — <sup>2</sup> Heb. *bound*. — <sup>3</sup> Heb. *in widowhood of life*.

xviii, 16. It served to assemble the people and secure their attention. **We have no part in David**—At that moment of excited and bitter contention this cry acted like a charm to precipitate rebellion. **Every man to his tents**—To his house or lodging place. On the meaning of *tent* in such connexion, see note at 1 Sam. xvii, 54.

**2. Israel went up from after David**—So this second insurrection began before the king had returned to Jerusalem. The elders of the ten tribes, embittered by the fierce words of the Judahites, and emboldened by the sound of Sheba's trumpet, utterly forsook the king in the plains of Jericho, and left the men of Judah to escort him home alone.

**3. Put them in ward**—Shut them up in a place of security, where no one could come at them. **Fed them**—Provided them with temporal comforts. "He could not well divorce them; he could not punish them, as they were not in the transgression; he could no more be familiar with them, because they had been defiled by his son; and to have married them to other men might have been dangerous to the state."—*Clarke*.

**4. Said the king to Amasa**—So he speedily carried out his pledge to this man. See chap. xix, 13. But this rash purpose, conceived in anger, proved to Amasa fatally abortive.

**5. He tarried longer than the set time**—He doubtless met with many and serious difficulties in collecting to-

<sup>4</sup> Assemble me the men of Judah within three days, and be thou here present. **5** So Amasa went to assemble *the men of Judah*: but he tarried longer than the set time which he had appointed him. **6** And David said to Abishai, Now shall Sheba the son of Bichri do us more harm than *did* Absalom: take thou <sup>thy</sup> lord's servants, and pursue after him, lest he get him fenced cities, and <sup>escape</sup> us. **7** And there went out after him Joab's men, and the Cherethites, and the Pelethites, and all the mighty men: and they went out of Jerusalem, to pursue after Sheba the son of Bichri. **8** When

<sup>4</sup> Heb. *Call*. — <sup>d</sup> Chap. 19. 13. — <sup>e</sup> Chap. 11. 11; 1 Kings 1. 33. — <sup>5</sup> Heb. *deliver himself from our eyes*. — <sup>f</sup> Chap. 8. 18; 1 Kings 1. 38.

gether the warriors of Judah, who, long accustomed to the command of Joab, were slow to follow the call of him who had been the leader of the insurgent hosts.

**6. David said to Abishai**—He grew impatient over the slow movements of Amasa, and, knowing that every day might add new strength to the rebellion, he sent forth Joab's brother; for he could not now safely or consistently send Joab, who had been superseded in office, and might himself be strongly tempted to join the insurgents. **Thy lord's servants**—The mighty men and faithful adherents who had returned to Jerusalem with the king, and ever kept near his person. They are called *David's men* in chap. xix, 41, and included the Cherethites and Pelethites. **Escape us**—Margin, correctly: *deliver himself from our eyes*; that is, elude all our search and effort to overcome him. Keil translates, *tear out our eye*, that is, do us a serious injury.

**7. Joab's men**—The body of soldiers that usually fought under Joab's immediate command. From what follows we see that Joab also went with them, probably in command of his own body of men, but not as captain of the host. He cherished a terrible purpose of revenge on the man who had taken his office in the army, but he kept his purpose to himself until the proper time for its accomplishment. **Cherethites . . . Pelethites**—Executioners and runners of foreign origin. See on chap. viii, 18.

They *were* at the great stone which is in Gibeon, Amasa went before them. And Joab's garment that he had put on was girded unto him, and upon it a girdle with a sword fastened upon his loins in the sheath thereof; and as he went forth it fell out. **9** And Joab said to Amasa, *Art thou in health, my brother?* And Joab took Amasa by the beard with the right hand to kiss him. **10** But Amasa took no heed to the sword that *was* in Joab's hand: so <sup>h</sup> he smote him therewith <sup>i</sup> in the fifth rib, and shed out his bowels to the ground, and <sup>a</sup> struck him not again; and he died. So Joab and Abishai his brother pursued after

<sup>g</sup> Matt. 26. 49; Luke 22. 47. — <sup>h</sup> 1 Kings 2. 5. — <sup>i</sup> Chap. 2. 23. — <sup>a</sup> Heb. *doubled not his stroke*.

**8. The great stone**—Some old landmark well known at the time of the writer, but now not recognised or identified by travellers, perhaps because long since removed. **Gibeon**—Where occurred the sore battle between Abner and Joab. Chap. ii, 12–17. **Amasa went before them**—At this place he had probably ordered the men of Judah, whom he had been summoning, to rendezvous; and now, arriving at the place himself, and finding David's servants there under command of Abishai, he went before them all; that is, assumed command of the entire host. This was more than Joab's jealousy could endure, and he felt that now was the opportune moment for revenge. **And Joab's garment that he had . . . on**—A better translation is, *And Joab was girt about with his military coat as his upper garment, and upon it a sword-girdle fastened on his loins in its sheath, and he went forth and it fell*; that is, the sword fell out.

**9. To kiss him**—How like the treachery of Judas! Matt. xxvi, 49. Joab was versed in treacherous acts like this. Compare chap. iii, 27.

**10. Took no heed to the sword**—He probably saw him pick up his sword as it fell from his girdle, and, though still in his hand, he suspected no foul intention. **In the fifth rib**—Rather, *in the abdomen*. See note on chap. ii, 23. **Joab and Abishai . . . pursued**—They felt themselves now responsible for the success of the army.

**11. One of Joab's men stood**—

Sheba the son of Bichri. **11** And one of Joab's men stood by him, and said, He that favoureth Joab, and he that *is* for David, *let him go* after Joab. **12** And <sup>a</sup> Amasa wallowed in blood in the midst of the highway. And when the man saw that all the people stood still, he removed Amasa out of the highway into the field, and cast a cloth upon him, when he saw that every one that came by him stood still. **13** When he was removed out of the highway, all the people went on after Joab, to pursue after Sheba the son of Bichri. **14** And he went through all the tribes of Israel unto <sup>i</sup> Abel, and to Beth-maachah, and all the

<sup>k</sup> Psa. 9. 16; 55. 23; Prov. 24. 21, 22. — <sup>l</sup> 2 Kings 15. 29; 2 Chron. 16. 4.

Doubtless he was instructed to do so by Joab himself. **By him**—By the bloody corpse of Amasa. **He that favoureth Joab . . . after Joab**—There is no other commander now, and his heart is still loyal to David. Thus Joab's bold and fearless action defeats the purposes of his king.

**12. Stood still**—Horror-stricken at the ghastly sight, as formerly at the sight of the murdered Asahel, (chap. ii, 23;) and probably many were in doubt as to who was now their captain.

**14. Through all the tribes**—That is, all the tribes whose territory lay between Jerusalem and Abel, namely, Benjamin, Ephraim, Manasseh, Issachar, Zebulun, and Naphtali. **Abel, and to Beth-maachah**—Called *Abel of Beth-maachah* in the next verse, and *Abel beth-maachah* in 1 Kings xv, 20, and 2 Kings xv, 29. Beth-maachah was probably the district of which Abel was the chief city. This city was situated on a long oval mound, about twenty-five miles north of the Sea of Galilee, and identical with the modern Abil. Says Dr. Thomson: "I have repeatedly ridden round it, and stood on the top trying to realize the scene. Taking advantage of an oblong knoll of natural rock that rises above the surrounding plain, the original inhabitants raised a high mound sufficiently large for their city. With a deep 'trench' and strong wall, it must have been almost impregnable. The country on every side is most lovely, well watered, and very fertile." In 2 Chron.



Berites: and they were gathered together, and went also after him. **15** And they came and besieged him in Abel of Beth-mauchah, and they <sup>m</sup>cast up a bank against the city, and <sup>7</sup>it stood in the trench: and all the people that *were* with Joab <sup>8</sup>battered the wall, to throw it down. **16** Then cried a wise woman out of the city, Hear, hear; say, I pray

*m 2 Kings 19. 32.—7 Or, it stood against the outmost wall.—8 Hebrew, married to throw down.*

xvi, 4, it is called *Abel-maim*, probably from the fountains and vast marsh near by. **All the Berites**—The meaning of this is uncertain. It may designate a tribe of people dwelling near Abel; or we may render the Hebrew by *all the Berim*, and understand a district of open country in the same vicinity. Compare *all Bethron*, (chap. ii, 29), and the Chaldee *בן, an open field*.

**15. A bank against the city**—A mound or rampart on which the besieging forces might easily approach the city wall. **It stood in the trench**—The marginal reading is better, *it stood against the outmost wall*; that is, the embankment or rampart just mentioned stood against or near by the exterior fortification (*pomærium*) which the inhabitants of Abel had built around the wall of their city. The building of an embankment against these outer works of the city enabled the besieging army to batter the wall with engines. **Battered the wall**—What methods or instruments they used for destroying these walls it is difficult to tell. The en-

you, unto Joab, Come near hither, that I may speak with thee. **17** And when he was come near unto her, the woman said, *Art thou Joab?* And he answered, *I am he*. Then she said unto him, Hear the words of thine handmaid. And he answered, I do hear. **18** Then she spake, saying, <sup>9</sup>They were wont to speak in old time, saying, They shall surely

*9 Or, They plainly spake in the beginning, saying, Surely they will ask of Abel, and so make an end. See Deut. 20. 11.*

gins invented during Uzziah's reign (2 Chron. xxvi, 15) were not then in use; but perhaps they used something resembling the battering ram of the ancient Romans.

**16. A wise woman**—And one that had great influence with the people, as the sequel shows. She may have been a prophetess, like Deborah. Judges iv, 4.

**18. They were wont to speak in old time**—Translated thus, the verse means that in former times Abel had been celebrated for the wisdom of its inhabitants, and persons were wont to resort thither for counsel. This wise woman, by calling attention to this fact, suggests that the counsel of Abel may be worth hearing now. This is the interpretation adopted by most critics; but to us the translation in the margin seems to suggest a simpler interpretation. We would translate and explain as follows: *They* (the inhabitants of Abel) *would repeatedly speak at the beginning*, (of the siege, when Joab's army first appeared before the walls and began to cast up embankments,) *saying, They will surely ask in Abel*; (that is, ask what they want, or propose terms of peace before they proceed to destroy the city, as the law required, Deut. xx, 10:) *and so they will cease*, (that is, cease from or make an end of the war. They will thus cause the battle to cease.) According to this interpretation, the wise woman blamed Joab for beginning a siege without consulting its inhabitants and making known the object of his attack; and the sequel clearly implies that he had begun the siege without first demanding the surrender of Sheba.



ROMAN BATTERING RAM.

ask *counsel* at Abel: and so they ended *the matter*. **19** *I am one of them that are peaceable and faithful in Israel: thou seekest to destroy a city and a mother in Israel: why wilt thou swallow up "the inheritance of the Lord?"* **20** And Joab answered and said, Far be it, far be it from me, that I should swallow up or destroy. **21** The matter *is* not so: but a man of mount Ephraim, Sheba the son of Bichri <sup>10</sup> by name, hath lifted up his hand against the king, *even* against David: deliver him only, and I will depart from the city. And the woman said un-

to Joab, Behold, his head shall be thrown to thee over the wall. **22** Then the woman went unto all the people <sup>9</sup> in her wisdom: and they cut off the head of Sheba the son of Bichri, and cast *it* out to Joab. And he blew a trumpet, and they <sup>11</sup> retired from the city, every man to his tent. And Joab returned to Jerusalem unto the king.

**23** Now <sup>p</sup> Joab *was* over all the host of Israel: and Benaiah the son of Jehoiada *was* over the Cherethites and over the Pelethites: **24** And Adoram *was* <sup>q</sup> over the tribute: and <sup>r</sup> Jehoshaphat the son of

<sup>n</sup> 1 Sam. 26. 19; chap. 21. 3.—<sup>10</sup> Heb. *by his name*.—<sup>o</sup> Ecc. 9. 14, 15.

<sup>11</sup> Heb. *were scattered*.—<sup>p</sup> Chap. 8. 16, 18.—<sup>q</sup> 1 Kings 4. 6.—<sup>r</sup> Chap. 8. 16; 1 Kings 4. 3.

**19. I...peaceable...faithful in Israel**—She speaks in the name of the whole city, declaring that they were guilty of nothing that called for war. **A mother in Israel**—A designation of Abel as a mother city, having many towns dependent upon her. **Why wilt thou**—This question clearly implies that Joab had begun his siege without proper preliminary communication with the inhabitants, and even without making known his purpose or desires. **The inheritance of the Lord**—The land of Israel, consecrated for his chosen people. See marginal references.

**21. Mount Ephraim**—Which extended into the territory of Benjamin. See note on Judges xvii, 1.

**22. In her wisdom**—With wise counsels advising them to deliver up the seditious Benjamite, which advice they readily followed. **Retired from the city**—Literally, *They were scattered, or dispersed themselves, from the city*. They retreated, not in the order of battle, but at the sound of the trumpet every man started off by the nearest road to his own home. **Joab returned...unto the king**—Flushed with victory and extolled by the people as the conqueror of this rebellion as well as that of Absalom, he knew that David would not dare depose him again from the office he had resumed upon the death of Amasa.

#### DAVID'S OFFICIALS, 23-26.

This list differs from that given in chap. viii, 16-18, only in the addition of the names of *Adoram* and *Ira the Jair-*

*ite*, and belongs to a later period of David's reign. Our authors seem to have had before him the records of Jehoshaphat, the king's recorder, and finding therein these two lists, he inserted them both at the proper places in his own narrative to show how few changes the king made among his officials in a reign of forty years.

**24. Adoram**—Called also *Adoniram* and *Hadoram*, 1 Kings iv, 6; 2 Chron. x, 18. He received his appointment at a late period of David's reign, and continued in office until the reign of Rehoboam, when he was stoned to death by the infuriated people, who had grown tired of excessive taxation. See 1 Kings xii, 18. **Over the tribute**—The Hebrews were required to pay tribute to Jehovah to sustain the service of the sanctuary. Exod. xxx, 11-16. The support of the kingdom, the court, and the building of public works required additional revenues, and the kings of Israel, when they had the power, exacted tribute from the foreign nations that were subject to them, and also, in times of emergency, from the Israelitish people themselves. This taxation became, in the reign of Solomon, so burdensome that after his death the people protested against it. 1 Kings xii, 4. It was Adoram's business to superintend all these revenues of the kingdom, but more particularly the levies of men which were, from time to time, required for the public works. The Hebrew word **נָדָה**, here rendered *tribute*, means generally a tribute of bond-service, or levies of men impressed for various

Ahilud was <sup>12</sup>recorder: **25** And Sheva was scribe: and <sup>1</sup>Zadok and Abiathar were the priests: **26** <sup>1</sup>And Ira also the Jairite was <sup>12</sup>a chief ruler about David.

## CHAPTER XXI.

**T**HEN there was a famine in the days

<sup>12</sup> Or, *remembrancer*.—s Chapter 8. 17; 1 Kings 4. 4.—t Chap. 23. 38.—13 Or, *a prince*,

kinds of labour. So the word is used in 1 Kings v, 13, 14. There it appears that Adoram's duty was to oversee the levies that were bound to labour, whether they were levied from among the Israelites, or were bond-servants from among the heathen. This, perhaps, explains why this officer first appears at a late period of David's reign, when the number of foreign captives, reduced to bond-service by the fortunes of war, had become so great as to require a special officer to superintend them.

**25. Sheva**—Called *Shisha*, 1 Kings iv, 3, and *Shavsha*, 1 Chron. xviii, 16; but these are all either corruptions or abbreviations of the name *Seraiah*, which appears in the earlier list. Chap. viii, 17. **Zadok and Abiathar**... **priests**—These priests seem to have acted in great harmony during the reign of David. But the one officiated at Gibeon and the other at Jerusalem. See note on chap. vi, 17. When Solomon became king he removed Abiathar. 1 Kings ii, 26.

**26. Ira the Jairite**—He either took the place of David's sons, or was added to their number as a private counsellor. See on chap. viii, 18. Of his personal history we know nothing beyond this single fact. The *Ithrite* of this name, mentioned chap. xxiii, 38, was, perhaps, a different person.

## CHAPTER XXI.

THE GIBEONITES AVENGED, 1-9.

**1. Then there was a famine**—The date of this occurrence cannot be exactly determined. It "certainly did not take place in the closing years of David's reign; on the other hand, it is evident from the remark, in verse 7, to the effect that Mephibosheth was spared, that it happened after David had received tidings of Mephibosheth,

of David three years, year after year; and David <sup>1</sup>inquired of the Lord. And the Lord answered, *t is* for Saul and for *his* bloody house, because he slew the Gibeonites. **2** And the king called the Gibeonites, and said unto them; (now the Gibeonites *were* not of the children

Gen. 41. 45; Exod. 2. 16; Chap. 8. 18.—1 Heb. *sought the face*, &c. See Num. 27. 21.

and had taken him to his own table."

—*Keil*. **David inquired**—Rather, as in the margin, *David sought the face of Jehovah*; an expression noticeably different from the one so often previously used of inquiring by urim. He now sought the Lord by prayer and supplication, and perhaps was answered by a prophet rather than by urim. After the Israelitish monarchy became fully established, and the age of the great prophets approached, Jehovah communicated less and less by urim, and more and more by prophets. **And for his bloody house**—The family of Saul, as well as Saul himself, were implicated in the violation of Israel's oath with the Gibeonites. **He slew the Gibeonites**—This fact is nowhere else recorded, and it is impossible to form a positive reason for Saul's action in the case. From verses 2 and 5 we infer that his ostensible reason was to rid Israel of the presence of such foreigners in their midst. In Joshua's time the people murmured against the league which Joshua made with these Gibeonites; and probably similar murmuring was often heard in Saul's time, and in his zeal for the peace of Israel he had endeavoured to destroy them from all the land. Or, as Ewald suggests, when the tabernacle was set up again at Gibeon, the ancient Amorite inhabitants may have claimed the right of doing the service of the house of God agreed upon with Joshua, (Josh. ix, 23;) and a dispute may have arisen on this point, and Saul, with characteristic recklessness, may have driven matters to fearful violence by attempting the utter extermination of the Gibeonites. It has also been plausibly conjectured that in this way he came into possession of the lands and vineyards which he distributed to his brethren of the tribe of Benjamin.

of Israel, but <sup>a</sup> of the remnant of the Amorites; and the children of Israel had sworn unto them: and Saul sought to slay them in his zeal to the children of Israel and Judah;) **3** Wherefore David said unto the Gibeonites, What shall I do for you? and wherewith shall I make the atonement, that ye may bless <sup>b</sup> the inheritance of the Lord? **4** And the Gibeonites said unto him, <sup>c</sup> We will have no silver nor gold of Saul, nor of his house; neither for us shalt thou kill any man in Israel. And he said, What ye shall say, *that* will I do for you. **5** And they answered the king, The man that consumed us and that <sup>d</sup> devised against us *that* we should be destroyed from remaining in any of the coasts of Israel, **6** Let seven

<sup>a</sup> Josh. 9, 3, 15, 16, 17. — <sup>b</sup> Chap. 20, 19. — <sup>c</sup> 2 Or, *It is not silver nor gold that we have to do with Saul or his house, neither pertains it to us to kill, &c.* — <sup>d</sup> 3 Or, *cut us off.* — <sup>e</sup> 1 Sam. 10, 26; 11, 4.

1 Sam. xxii, 7. In this case the members of his own family doubtless shared largely in the plunder.

**2. Of the Amorites** — They are called *Hivites* at Josh. ix, 7; but the name Amorites is more general, and often used of all the Canaanitish tribes. Gen. xv, 16; Amos ii, 9. **Had sworn** — See Josh. ix, 3-21.

**3. Make the atonement** — Make the necessary satisfaction. **The inheritance of the Lord** — The land and people of Israel.

**4. No silver nor gold** — The marginal reading is more literal. The meaning is, The price of blood is not to be paid to us in silver or gold: we will have blood for blood. The law said: "Ye shall take no satisfaction for the life of a murderer." Num. xxxv, 31. **Neither... any man in Israel** — That is, We wish not to take innocent blood, but the blood of those who helped devise our destruction, and now live upon the lands they violently took from us.

**6. Seven men** — A sacred number, not only among the Israelites, but among other Oriental nations. **Hang them up** — Impale or crucify them. According to the Jewish interpreters the persons were first put to death, and then their bodies were impaled or tied upon a stake. Compare Josh. viii, 29, note. **Unto the Lord** — That is, to expiate his wrath. **Gib-**

men of his sons be delivered unto us, and we will hang them up unto the Lord <sup>e</sup> in Gibeah of Saul, *"whom the Lord did choose."* And the king said, I will give *them.* **7** But the king spared Mephibosheth, the son of Jonathan the son of Saul, because of <sup>f</sup> the Lord's oath that *was* between them, between David and Jonathan the son of Saul. **8** But the king took the two sons of <sup>g</sup> Rizpah the daughter of Aiah, whom she bare unto Saul, Armoni and Mephibosheth; and the five sons of <sup>h</sup> Michal the daughter of Saul, whom she <sup>i</sup> brought up for Adriel the son of Barzillai the Meholahite: **9** And he delivered them into the hands of the Gibeonites, and they hanged them in the hill <sup>j</sup> before the Lord: and they

<sup>4</sup> Or, *chosen of the LORD.* — <sup>d</sup> 1 Sam. 10, 24. — <sup>e</sup> 1 Samuel 18, 3; 20, 8, 15, 42; 23, 18. — <sup>f</sup> Chap. 3, 7. — <sup>g</sup> Or, *Michal's sister.* — <sup>h</sup> Heb. *bare to Adriel.* 1 Samuel 18, 19. — <sup>i</sup> Chapter 6, 17.

**eah of Saul** — See marginal references. The place of Saul's residence was chosen to make the punishment of his crimes more signal. **Whom the Lord did choose** — Mark the sentiment and the terrible irony. Hang up unto the Lord the sons of him whom the Lord chose! **I will give them** — David dared not refuse the demand, for the penal famine pressed upon the land, and the law had said, "The land cannot be cleansed of the blood that is shed therein but by the blood of him that shed it." Num. xxxv, 33. It has been asked why similar satisfaction was not required for the massacre of the priests at Nob. 1 Sam. xxii, 9-19. "The answer is, that the people, and even the family of Saul, had no sympathy with or part in this tragedy, which none but an alien (Doeg) could be found to execute. But both the people and Saul's family had made themselves parties in the destruction of the unhappy Gibeonites by their sympathy, their concurrence, their aid, and, above all, as we must believe, by their accepting the fruits of the crime." — *Kittó.*

**8. Rizpah** — A concubine of Saul. Chap. iii, 7. **Michal** — Rather, *Merab*. See 1 Sam. xviii, 19. The insertion of Michal for Merab was, probably, the mistake of an early copyist.

**9. In the hill** — See on 1 Sam. x, 5.

fell *all* seven together, and were put to death in the days of harvest, in the first *days*, in the beginning of barley harvest.

10 And <sup>a</sup> Rizpah the daughter of Aiah took sackcloth, and spread it for her upon the rock, <sup>1</sup> from the beginning of harvest until water dropped upon them out of heaven, and suffered neither <sup>2</sup> the birds of the air to rest on them by day, nor the beasts of the field by night.

11 And it was told David what Rizpah the daughter of Aiah, the concubine of Saul, had done. 12 And David went and took the bones of Saul and the bones of Jonathan his son from the men of

<sup>a</sup> Verse 8; chap. 3. 7.—<sup>i</sup> See Deut. 31. 23.—<sup>k</sup> Gen. 40. 19; Ezek. 39. 4.

**The beginning of barley harvest—**  
About the first of April.

RIZPAH'S MATERNAL AFFECTION, 10.

This single verse contains a mournful tale, which none can read without emotion.

10. **Took sackcloth**—The sign of mourning. **Spread it for her upon the rock**—For the purpose of a seat and bed. **Until water dropped**—Until rain came and ended the three years' famine, which had probably been caused by drought; but how long she had to wait upon the rock beside the exposed bodies of her sons before the rain came is not quite clear. Josephus says that it came soon after the execution, and Harmer thinks it was a late spring rain, which is sometimes known to fall as late as June in seasons when the usual rains of spring have failed. But the statement, *from the beginning of harvest until water dropped*, most naturally means that she kept up her sad and woful watching during all the summer season, from April until the early autumnal rains began. **Neither the birds... nor the beasts**—To be devoured by birds or beasts of prey was the foulest ignominy that could visit the dead. Compare 1 Sam. xvii, 44.

**BURIAL OF THE BONES OF SAUL AND JONATHAN, 11-14.**

11. **It was told David**—And it deeply touched his sensitive nature, and prompted him to the action next described.

<sup>1</sup> Jabesh-gilead, which had stolen them from the street of Beth-shan, where the <sup>2</sup> Philistines had hanged them, when the Philistines had slain Saul in Gilboa: 13 And he brought up from thence the bones of Saul and the bones of Jonathan his son; and they gathered the bones of them that were hanged. 14 And the bones of Saul and Jonathan his son buried they in the country of Benjamin in <sup>3</sup> Zelah, in the sepulchre of Kish his father: and they performed all that the king commanded. And after that <sup>4</sup> God was entreated for the land.

15 Moreover the Philistines had yet

<sup>1</sup> 1 Sam. 31. 11, 12, 13.—<sup>m</sup> 1 Sam. 31. 10.—<sup>n</sup> Josh. 18. 28.—<sup>o</sup> So Josh. 7. 26; Chap. 24. 25.

12. **Took the bones**—See 1 Sam. xxxi, 10-13, and notes there.

14. **Zelah**—This town, in the tribe of Benjamin, (Josh. xviii, 28,) was probably the native place of the family of Kish, and Saul's early home. Its site is now unknown. **After that**—After the execution of Saul's sons, and the decent burial of their bones. **God was entreated for the land**—He removed the plague of famine. But did God require the execution of Saul's sons? Undoubtedly; otherwise he would not have scourged the land because of their and their father's sins, (verse 1,) and removed the plague as soon as they were executed. And did he not the same in the case of Achan, (Josh. vii;) and in his holy law declare that he would by no means clear the guilty, but visit the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate him? Exod. xx, 5; xxxiv, 7.

**HEROIC DEEDS OF DAVID'S MEN IN THE PHILISTINE WARS, 15-22.**

"The brief accounts contained in these verses of different heroic feats were probably taken from a history of David's wars drawn up in the form of chronicles, and are here introduced as practical proofs of the gracious deliverance of David out of the hands of all his foes, for which he praises the Lord his God in the psalm of thanksgiving which follows, so that the enumeration of these feats is to be regarded as supplying an historical basis for the psalm."—*Keil*.

war again with Israel; and David went down, and his servants with him, and fought against the Philistines: and David waxed faint. **16** And Ishbi-benob, which *was* of the sons of <sup>7</sup>the giant, the weight of whose <sup>8</sup>spear *weighed* three hundred *shekels* of brass in weight, he being girded with a new *sword*, thought to have slain David. **17** But Abishai the son of Zeruiah succoured him, and smote the Philistine, and killed him. Then the men of David sware unto him, saying, <sup>9</sup>Thou shalt go no more out with us to battle, that thou quench not the

<sup>7</sup> Or, *Raphu*.—<sup>8</sup> Heb. *the staff*, or, *the head*.  
<sup>9</sup> Chap. 18. 3.—<sup>1</sup> 1 Kings 11. 36; 15. 4; Psa. 133. 17.—<sup>2</sup> Heb. *candle*, or, *lamp*.

**15 Yet war again**—This expression indicates that the document here used by our author contained also accounts of other and earlier wars with the Philistines. **Went down**—From the heights of Judea to the great plain of Philistia. **Waxed faint**—Was becoming exhausted.

**16. Ishbi-benob**—The name means, *his dwelling on the hill*, and was perhaps given him on account of some high citadel or castle which he occupied. **Sons of the giant**—Or, *sons of Raphah*. On the ancient giant race, *Rephaim*, compare Gen. xiv. 5; xv. 20; and Deut. iii. 11. The word *Raphah* (or *Rapha*, as in 1 Chron. xx. 4) seems to have been the proper name of the father of a race of giants that dwelt among the Philistines, but he was doubtless related to the more ancient *Rephaim*. **Weight of whose spear**—The reference is doubtless to the metal head of his spear. **Three hundred shekels**—About nine pounds, half the weight of Goliath's. See 1 Sam. xvii. 7. **New sword**—Better to supply the word *armour* in place of *sword*. His entire military garb was new.

**17. Sware unto him**—The word *ישבע* seems here to have rather a causative signification, *made him swear*; that is, administered an oath unto him. **Quench not the light of Israel**—David's position as king over Israel and leader of the armies was like that of the sun in the heavens, or a lamp in a house. Let it be suddenly removed, and all would be involved in darkness and terror. Compare chap. xviii. 3.

**light of Israel. 18** And it came to pass after this, that there was again a battle with the Philistines at Gob: then <sup>10</sup>Sibbechai the Hushathite slew <sup>11</sup>Saph, which *was* of the sons of <sup>12</sup>the giant. **19** And there was again a battle in Gob with the Philistines, where Elhanan the son of <sup>13</sup>Jaareoregim, a Bethlehemit, slew <sup>14</sup>the brother of Goliath the Gittite, the staff of whose spear *was* like a weaver's beam. **20** And <sup>15</sup>there was yet a battle in Gath, where was a man of *great* stature, that had on every hand six fingers, and on every foot six toes, four and

<sup>10</sup> 1 Chron. 20. 4.—<sup>11</sup> 1 Chron. 11. 29.—<sup>12</sup> Or, *Sippai*.—<sup>13</sup> Or, *Rapha*.—<sup>14</sup> Or, *Jair*.—<sup>15</sup> 1 Chron. 20. 5.—<sup>16</sup> 1 Chron. 20. 6.

**18. Gob**—According to the parallel passage in 1 Chron. xx. 4, the place of this battle was *Gezer*, on the situation of which see Josh. x. 33. The site of Gob is not known, but it was probably close by *Gezer*. **Sibbechai**—Probably identical with the *Mebunnar* of chap. xxiii. 27, and one of David's mighty men. 1 Chron. xxvii. 11. **Hushathite**—So called from Hushah, his native town.

**19. Elhanan the son of Jaareoregim**—This text, in the Hebrew, is certainly corrupt. Our translators have partially emended it by inserting *the brother of*, from 1 Chron. xx. 5. The word *oregim* is transferred from the end

of the verse, *מנור ארגים, menor oregim, beam of weavers.* *בית הלחמי, beth hal-*

*lachmi, the Beth-lehemite*, is a corruption of *לחמי, eth lachmi*, the name of Goliath's brother, called *Lahmi* in Chronicles. We consider the text in Chronicles as the correct one, and this passage as corrupted by some early transcribers.

**20. Six fingers...six toes**—Persons thus abnormal have been elsewhere met with. "Tavernier informs us that the eldest son of the emperor of Java, who reigned in 1648, had six fingers on each hand, and six toes on each foot. Maupertius, in his seventeenth letter, says that he met with two families near Berlin, in which sedigitism was equally transmitted on both the father's and mother's side. I once saw a young girl in the county of

twenty in number; and he also was born to <sup>13</sup>the giant. **21** And when he <sup>14</sup>defied Israel, Jonathan the son of <sup>15</sup>Shimeah the brother of David slew him. **22** \* These four were born to the giant in Gath, and fell by the hand of David, and by the hand of his servants.

**2. Jehovah is my rock, and my fortress, and my place of refuge, even mine.**

<sup>13</sup> Or, *Rapha*.—<sup>14</sup> Or, *reproached*, 1 Sam. 17. 10, 25, 26.—<sup>15</sup> 1 Sam. 16, 9, *Shammah*.—<sup>16</sup> 1 Chron. 20. 8.

Londonderry, in Ireland, who had six fingers on each hand and six toes on each foot, but her stature had nothing gigantic in it. The daughters of Cainus Horatius, of patrician dignity, were called *sedigitæ* because they had six fingers on each hand."—*Clarke*.

**22. These four**—Goliath was the fifth, and they were all sons of Raphah. See on verse 16. **By the hand of David**—He had personally assisted in the slaughter of Ishbi-benob.

## CHAPTER XXII.

DAVID'S PSALM OF THANKSGIVING,  
1–51.

The grand and beautiful triumphal ode contained in this chapter is substantially the same as the eighteenth psalm. Both here and there it is referred to the same historical occasion, and was undoubtedly composed by David to celebrate his deliverances out of the hands of all his foes, and especially Saul—not that Saul was the last of his enemies, but the most prominent of all, and therefore deserving special mention. It was probably composed about the time indicated in chap. vii, after the Lord had given him rest from all his foes, and revealed to him through Nathan the glorious future of his posterity. It was thus the product of a triumphal moment of his life—the impassioned but divinely inspired outburst of a prophetic spirit which yearned to magnify Jehovah. In tone and spirit this psalm reminds us of the last song of Moses, in Deut. xxxii, 1–43. In each of these great psalms we discern a lofty soul that has reached a distinctive crisis in its history, and rests for the time as in a sub-

## CHAPTER XXII.

**AND** David <sup>a</sup>spake unto the Lord the words of this song, in the day <sup>b</sup>that the Lord had <sup>c</sup>delivered him out of the hand of all his enemies, and out of the hand of Saul: **2** And he said, <sup>d</sup>"The Lord <sup>e</sup>is my rock, and my fortress, and

<sup>a</sup> Exod. 15. 1; Judg. 5. 1.—<sup>b</sup> Psa. 18, title; 34. 19.—<sup>c</sup> Deut. 32. 4; Psa. 18. 2, &c.; 31. 3; 71. 3; 91. 2; 144. 2.

lime repose of conscious acceptance and power with the Almighty.

The verbal differences between this text and that of the eighteenth psalm have been differently accounted for. Some have attributed them to the carelessness of transcribers; but they seem to have been too deliberately made to be thus explained. Others have supposed that both copies were taken from some old Hebrew anthology—probably the Book of Jasher—and that both were somewhat modified by the different compilers to suit particular purposes. But the most plausible supposition is, that in this chapter we have a true copy of the original, as first prepared by David, naturally and properly appended to the history on which it is based; and that the eighteenth psalm is a subsequent revision of it either by David himself or some later hand, and inserted in the Psalter for liturgical use. As in other cases where we have subjoined a new translation to the text, we base the following notes upon the revised translation.

**2. Rock. fortress. . . place of refuge**—The poet uses a profusion of metaphors in order to extol most gratefully that Divine Goodness and Power to whom he owes all his salvation. The rocks and strongholds of his native land, which sheltered and defended him so often when persecuted by Saul, furnish appropriate imagery for his song, and forcibly represent that Divine Spiritual Rock who was David's fortress and hiding-place in his darkest times of trial. **Even mine**—This addition intensifies the thought of David's personal realization of the mercies received from his God.

my deliverer; **3** The God of my rock; <sup>1</sup>in him will I trust: *he is* my <sup>2</sup>shield, and the <sup>3</sup>horn of my salvation, my high <sup>4</sup>tower, and my <sup>5</sup>refuge, my saviour; thou savest me from violence. **4** I will call on the Lord, *who is* worthy to be praised: so shall I be saved from mine enemies. **5** When the <sup>1</sup>waves of death compassed me, the floods of <sup>2</sup>ungodly

men made me afraid; **6** The <sup>1</sup>sorrows of hell compassed me about; the snares of death prevented me. **7** In my distress <sup>1</sup>I called upon the Lord, and cried to my God: and he did <sup>1</sup>hear my voice out of his temple, and my cry *did enter* into his ears. **8** Then <sup>2</sup>the earth shook and trembled; <sup>3</sup>the foundations of heaven moved and shook, because he was wroth.

3. God of my rock, I trust in him;  
My shield and horn of my salvation;  
My high tower and my place of flight;  
My Saviour, from violence thou savest me.
4. The Praised One I call upon—Jehovah—  
And from mine enemies I am saved.
5. For around me rolled the breakers of death,  
Torrents of wickedness thrill me with terror;
6. The bands of Sheol encircled me,  
Before me are the snares of death.
7. In the distress that is upon me I call Jehovah,  
And unto my God I call;  
And he listens from his sanctuary to my voice,  
And my cry for help is in his ears.
8. Then quakes and shakes the earth;  
The foundations of the heavens move,  
And they quake, because there is anger upon Him.

*d* Hebrew 2. 13.—*e* Genesis 15. 1.—*f* Luke 1. 69.—*g* Proverbs 18. 10.—*h* Psalm 9. 9; 14. 6; 59. 16; 71. 7; Jeremiah 16. 19.—*i* Or, *pangs*.

*2* Heb. *Belial*.—*3* Or, *cords*.—*4* Ps. 116. 3.—*5* Ps. 116. 4; 120. 1; Jonah 2. 2.—*6* Exod. 3. 7; Ps. 34. 6, 15, 17.—*m* Judg. 5. 4; Ps. 77. 18; 97. 4.—*n* Job 26. 11.

**3. God of my rock**—My rock, God; that is, God, who is to me a rock of defence and security. **Horn of my salvation**—An allusion to the power of those animals whose horn is their great weapon of defence. So both **shield** and **horn** represent Jehovah as the mighty Defender. Compare the imagery of Haunah's song. 1 Sam. ii, 1, 2

**5. Breakers of death**—Death stared him in the face, like an angry sea whose billows rolled around and broke close upon him. **Torrents of wickedness**—He compares his wicked foes to those mountain torrents that, after a rain, rush like an avalanche down through the rocky gorges, and sweep away every thing before them.

**6. Bands of Sheol**—The dark under-world seemed to open upon him, and reach out those *bands* which bind and drag down mortals into its oblivion. Job xiv, 20, 21. **Snares of death**—Death, like a hunter, seemed

to David to have set snares all along the path where he was to go.

**8. Quakes and shakes**—There is a similar play upon the words in the Hebrew—*guash* and *raash*. From this verse on to verse 17, the poet pictures his deliverance by the imagery of a sublime theophany drawn from the history of the scene at Sinai. Compare Exod. xix, 16-21. So overwhelming was David's subjective view of the magnitude and grandeur of his deliverance from all his foes, that in his gratitude and glory he finds no ordinary language adequate to express his emotions of triumphant joy. We are not to understand that this sublime theophany was a literal historical fact in David's life, but rather a highly-wrought poetical picture of his many and great deliverances as they were apprehended by his soul at a moment of great spiritual exultation. **Foundations of the heavens**—A stronger expression than *found-*



9 There went up a smoke 'out of his nostrils, and 'fire out of his mouth devoured: coals were kindled by it. 10 He bowed the heavens also, and came down; and 'darkness *was* under his feet. 11 And he rode upon a cherub, and did fly: and he was seen 'upon the wings of the wind. 12 And he made 'darkness pavilions round about him, 'dark waters, and thick clouds of the

skies. 13 Through the brightness before him were 'coals of fire kindled. 14 The Lord 'thundered from heaven, and the Most High uttered his voice. 15 And he sent out 'arrows and scattered them; lightning, and discomfited them. 16 And the channels of the sea appeared, the foundations of the world were discovered, at the 'rebuking of the Lord, at the blast of the breath of his

9. There went up a smoke through his nostrils,  
And fire from his mouth devours.  
Hot coals glowed from him.
10. And he bows down the heavens and descends,  
And a dark cloud is under his feet.
11. And he rides upon a cherub, and flies,  
And is seen upon the wings of the wind.
12. And he makes darkness round about him pavilions,—  
A gathering of waters, a darkness of clouds.
13. From the shining brightness before him  
Glowed hot coals of fire.
14. Thunders from the heavens Jehovah,  
And the Most High gives his voice.
15. And he sends arrows and scatters them,  
Lightning, and puts them in commotion.
16. Then are seen the beds of the sea;  
Uncovered are the foundations of the world—  
By the rebuke of Jehovah,  
From the breath of the wind of his nostrils.

4 Heb. *by*.—o Psa. 97. 3; Hab. 3. 5; Heb. 12. 29.—p Psa. 144. 5; Isa. 64. 1.—q Exod. 20. 21; 1 Kings 8. 13; Psa. 97. 2.—r Psa. 104. 3.—s Verse 10; Psa. 97. 2.—5 Heb. *binding of wa-*

*ters*.—t Verse 9.—u Judg. 5. 20; 1 Sam. 2. 10; 7. 10; Psa. 29. 3; Isa. 30. 30.—v Deut. 32. 23; Psa. 7. 13; 77. 17; 144. 6; Hab. 3. 11.—w Exod. 15. 8; Psa. 105. 9; Nah. 1. 4; Matt. 8. 26.

*dations of the hills*, used in the corresponding passage in Psalm xviii. The ideal pillars which support the skies are supposed to **move** and **quake** when God comes down in **anger** to smite David's wicked enemies.

9. **Smoke through his nostrils**—Expressive of the violent snortings, or bursts of wrath, as of the enraged war-horse. **Hot coals glowed**—Flamed out in glowing brightness from Him as he sped on his path of vengeance. Compare verse 13.

10. **Bows down the heavens**—Bent down the firmament so as to form a broad descending way for his coming.

11. **Rides upon a cherub**—Jehovah communed with Moses from between the two cherubim that spread their wings over the mercy-seat. Exod. xxv. 22. So here he is represented as moving forth upborne on a cherub's

wing. Compare Ezekiel's vision, where the outspread wings of the cherubim support the firmament on which rests the throne of the Divine Glory. Ezek. i, 23, 26. **Wings of the wind**—An allusion to some sweeping tempest, an element often used as the Lord's minister of judgment. Comp. Judges v, 4, note.

12. **Darkness... waters... clouds**—All these constitute his dwelling, tent, or **pavilion**, when he moves forth in the dispensations of his providence. His judgments are a great deep, and founded in reasons oft hid from the minds of men.

15. **Sends arrows**—Jehovah's arrows are the forked **lightnings**, as indicated in the next line of the parallelism.

16. **Beds of the sea**—Jehovah's judgments are conceived of as so terrible and mighty as to lay bare, by earthquake and thunder, the bottom of the sea and the interior of the earth. **Tristram**

'nostrils. **17** \*He sent from above, he took me, he drew me out of many waters. **18** \*He delivered me from my strong enemy, and from them that hated me: for they were too strong for me. **19** They prevented me in the day of my calamity: but the Lord was my stay. **20** \*He brought me forth also into a large place: he delivered me, because he

\*delighted in me. **21** \*The Lord rewarded me according to my righteousness; according to the \*cleanness of my hands hath he recompensed me. **22** For I have \*kept the ways of the Lord, and have not wickedly departed from my God. **23** For all his \*judgments were before me: and as for his statutes I did not depart from them. **24** I was also

17. He sends from the height and takes hold on me,  
He draws me out of the great waters.
18. He delivers me from my strong enemy,  
From my haters, for they were mightier than I.
19. They encounter me in the day of my misfortune;  
Then becomes Jehovah a support to me.
20. And forth into a broad place he leads me;  
He sets me free, for he has delighted in me.
21. Jehovah deals with me according to my righteousness,  
According to the cleanness of my hands does he reward me.
22. For I have attended to the ways of Jehovah,  
And have not wickedly departed from my God.
23. For all his judgments are before me,  
And his statutes—I turn not away from them.

6 Or, *anger*, Psa. 74. 1.—a Psa. 144. 7.—  
7 Or, *great*.—y Verse 1.—s Psa. 31. 8; 118. 5.  
—a Chap. 15. 26; Psa. 22. 8.—b Verse 25;

1 Samuel 26. 23; 1 Kings 8. 32; Psa. 7. 8.—  
c Psa. 24. 4.—d Gen. 18. 19; Psa. 119. 3; 128. 1;  
Prov. 8. 32.—e Deut. 7. 13; Psa. 119. 30, 102.

observes that much of the imagery of this psalm may have been furnished David during his sojourn at Engedi. 1 Sam. xxiii, 29. There he would have recollections of the fate of Sodom, which the bitumen, and the sulphur, and the salt of the Dead Sea, would suggest. There he would often gaze upon the dark waters below, and the rent channels of the old world waters above, and an earthquake, such as these regions often experience, might have revealed to his eye the beds of the dark sea and the foundations of the mountains.

**17. Sends from the height**—Or, reaches forth his hand from the lofty seat above the clouds, where his Majesty is represented as appearing. **Great waters**—Those billows of death and torrents of wickedness by which, according to verse 5, he was surrounded.

**18. Strong enemy . . . haters**—Not only Saul, but all those bitter enemies that first and last hated the soul of David, (chap. v, 8, note,) not at all excepting Goliath. **Mightier than I**—David never gloried in personal strength, but trusted in the God who in early life delivered him from the lion and the bear.

**19. Day of my misfortune**—While he was a fugitive and an outlaw, and also afterwards, when rebellion broke out in his own family.

**21. My righteousness**—"The *righteousness* and *cleanness of hands*, that is, the innocence, which David attributed to himself, were not perfect righteousness or holiness before God, but the righteousness of his endeavors and deeds as contrasted with the unrighteousness and wickedness of his adversaries and pursuers, and consisted in the fact that he endeavored earnestly and sincerely to walk in the ways of God, and to keep the divine commandments."—*Keil*.

**22. Ways of Jehovah**—The ways of truth and duty which Jehovah has marked out. To *attend* to these ways is to walk in them. **Not wickedly departed**—Foully apostatised. He does not mean that he had never sinned, but that he had never wilfully rejected and turned away from the divine service.

**23. His judgments**—His decisions and dispensations, that showed his views of right and wrong. **Statutes**—The established laws and usages of his covenant with Israel.

'upright <sup>a</sup>before him, and have kept myself from mine iniquity. **25** Therefore <sup>a</sup>the Lord hath recompensed me according to my righteousness; according to my cleanness <sup>a</sup>in his eyesight. **26** With <sup>a</sup>the merciful thou wilt show thyself merciful; *and* with the upright man thou wilt show thyself upright. **27** With the pure thou wilt show thy-

self pure; and <sup>a</sup>with the froward thou wilt <sup>10</sup>show thyself unsavoury. **28** And the <sup>a</sup>afflicted people thou wilt save: but thine eyes *are* upon <sup>1</sup>the haughty, *that* thou mayest bring *them* down. **29** For thou *art* my <sup>11</sup>lamp, O Lord: and the Lord will lighten my darkness. **30** For by thee I have <sup>12</sup>run through a troop: by my God have I leaped over a wall.

24. And I am upright towards him,  
And I keep myself from my iniquity.  
25. And rewards Jehovah me according to my righteousness,  
According to my cleanness before his eyes.  
26. With the kind thou showest thyself kind,  
With the upright man thou dealest uprightly.  
27. With the pure thou showest thyself pure,  
And with the perverse thou showest thyself crooked.  
28. And the people of affliction thou dost save,  
And thy eyes are against the lofty; thou bringest them low.  
29. For thou art my lamp, O Jehovah!  
And Jehovah illuminates my darkness.  
30. For by thee I run a troop,  
By my God I leap a wall.

*f* Gen. 6. 9; 17. 1; Job 1. 1.—8 Heb. *to him*.  
*g* Verse 21.—9 Heb. *before his eyes*.  
*h* Matt. 5. 7.—1 Lev. 26. 23, 24, 27, 28.—10 Or,  
*veritable*, Psa. 18. 26.

*k* Exod. 3. 7, 8; Psa. 72. 12, 13.—1 Job 40. 11,  
12, 13; Isa. 2. 11, 12, 17; 5. 15; Dan. 4. 37.—  
11 Or, *candle*, Job 29. 3; Psa. 27. 1.—12 Or,  
*broken a troop*.

24. **Upright towards him**—Correct and true in my relations to him. **My iniquity**—The iniquity into which I am ever prone to run. These words show that David does not utter these professions of innocence as a claim of absolute purity and perfection, for the expression, **my iniquity**, indicates a consciousness of human infirmity. The righteousness and innocence which he here and elsewhere pleads have reference to his deportment towards his enemies; and his observance of the religious ordinances of Israel. The testimony of sacred history is, that "David 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, save only in the matter of Uriah the Hittite." 1 Kings xv, 5; see note. That matter of Uriah, and other sins of David's life, affected not the righteousness of his deportment towards his foes, nor his habitual observance of the statutes of the Lord; and as his object in this triumphal Psalm is to praise God for his deliverance from all his enemies, it was in keeping with his

purpose not to speak of his own private sins, but to show the righteousness of his cause, and his integrity in all his conflicts with enemies. To make these things prominent served both to honour David and magnify Jehovah.

26. **With the kind thou . . . kind**—The statements of verses 26–28 are an expansion of the proposition of verse 25, that God rewards men according to their righteousness.

28. **People of affliction**—Families or nations bowed down under oppression or beset with foes.

29. **For**—This connective serves here to explain more fully how the preceding propositions (verses 25–28) were true in David's case.

30. **Run a troop**—*לָרַץ*, a band of warriors. The allusion is to forcing one's way through a hostile army. The thought may be either that, being surrounded by hostile troops, he runs through them and escapes, or that, being himself the attacking party, he forces his way, and runs triumphantly into and through the ranks of the foe. **Leap a wall**—Mount fortifications and bul-

**31** As for God, <sup>11</sup>his way <sup>is</sup> perfect; <sup>12</sup>the word of the Lord <sup>is</sup> tried: he <sup>is</sup> a buckler to all them that trust in him. **32** For <sup>13</sup>who <sup>is</sup> God, save the Lord? and who <sup>is</sup> a rock, save our God? **33** God <sup>is</sup> my <sup>14</sup>strength <sup>and</sup> power; and he <sup>is</sup> maketh my way <sup>perfect</sup>. **34** He <sup>is</sup> maketh my feet <sup>like</sup> hinds' feet, and <sup>setteth</sup> me upon my high places. **35** He teacheth my hands <sup>to</sup> war: so that a bow of steel is broken by mine arms. **36** Thou hast also given me the

shield of thy salvation: and thy gentleness hath <sup>made</sup> me great. **37** Thou hast <sup>enlarged</sup> my steps under me; so that my <sup>feet</sup> did not slip. **38** I have pursued mine enemies, and destroyed them; and turned not again until I had consumed them. **39** And I have consumed them, and wounded them, that they could not arise: yea, they are fallen <sup>under</sup> my feet. **40** For thou hast <sup>girded</sup> me with strength to battle: <sup>them</sup> that rose up against me hast thou

31. The Almighty—perfect is his way,  
The word of Jehovah is pure;  
A shield is he to all who trust in him.
32. For who is Almighty besides Jehovah,  
And who is a rock besides our God?
33. The Almighty is my fortress of strength,  
And he shows the upright his way;
34. Making his feet like the hinds,  
And upon my heights he causes me to stand;
35. Training my hands for war,  
And my arms to bend the brazen bow.
36. And thou givest me the shield of thy salvation,  
And thy condescension makes me great.
37. Thou makest broad my steps under me,  
And my ankles have not wavered.
38. I pursue my enemies and destroy them,  
And I return not until I finish them.
39. And I devour them, and crush them, and they do not rise;  
And they fall under my feet.
40. And thou girdest me with strength for war,  
Thou bowest down my adversaries under me.

*m* Deut. 32. 4; Dan. 4. 37; Rev. 15. 3.—*n* Psa. 13. 6; 119. 140; Prov. 30. 5.—*o* 1 Sam. 2. 2; Isa. 45. 5, 6.—*p* Exod. 15. 2; Psa. 27. 1; 28. 7, 8; 31. 4; Isa. 12. 2.—*q* Heb. *rid-deth*, or, *loo-eth*.—*r* Heb. 13. 21.—*s* Deut. 18. 13; Job 22. 3; Psa. 101. 2, 6; 119. 1.

15 Heb. *equalleth*.—*s* Chap. 2. 18; Hab. 3. 19.—*t* Deut. 32. 13; Isa. 33. 16; 58. 14.—*u* Psa. 144. 1.—*v* Heb. *for the war*.—*w* Heb. *multiplied me*.—*x* Prov. 4. 12.—*y* Heb. *ankles*.—*z* Mal. 4. 2.—*aa* Psa. 18. 32, 39.—*ab* Psa. 44. 5.

warks, so as to take the enemies' defences by storm.

**31. The Almighty**—He who thus helps David is not a heathen divinity, but emphatically *the* Almighty God, whose ways are absolutely perfect. **Pure**—The Hebrew word is used of the smelting and refining of metals in the furnaces. Thus the **word** of God is pure, having been *tried* by David and others in many a fiery ordeal.

**34. Like the hinds**—Nimble and swift. This was a great accomplishment to a warrior. **My heights**—Mine both by divine gift and by right of conquest, so that on them I now stand in triumph and in safety.

**36. Shield of thy salvation**—The protection and defence which salvation from God affords. **Thy condescension**—Thy clemency and self-humiliation in deigning to notice me so much. Such favour openly bestowed **makes me great** in the sight of all men.

**37. Broad my steps**—A broad way for my steps, so that I have ample room for walking without danger.

**38. I pursue . . . destroy**—These verbs are in the future tense in the Hebrew, but we translate them in the present tense as designating not so much what David expects or threatens to do, as the confident assurance of what he is now able to do by the help of God.

<sup>19</sup>subdued under me. **41** Thou hast also given me the <sup>20</sup>necks of mine enemies, that I might destroy them that hate me. **42** They looked, but ~~there~~ <sup>21</sup>was none to save; ~~even~~ <sup>22</sup>unto the Lord, but he answered them not. **43** Then did I beat them as small <sup>23</sup>as the dust of the earth: I did stamp them <sup>24</sup>as the mire of the street, ~~and~~ <sup>25</sup>did spread them abroad. **44** <sup>26</sup>Thou also hast delivered me from the strivings of my people, thou hast kept me ~~to be~~ <sup>27</sup>head of the heathen: <sup>28</sup>a people ~~which~~ <sup>29</sup>I knew not shall serve me. **45** <sup>30</sup>Strangers shall

<sup>31</sup>submit themselves unto me: as soon as they hear, they shall be obedient unto me. **46** Strangers shall fade away, and they shall be afraid <sup>32</sup>out of their close places. **47** The Lord liveth; and blessed ~~be~~ <sup>33</sup>my rock; and exalted ~~be~~ <sup>34</sup>the God of the <sup>35</sup>rock of my salvation. **48** ~~It is~~ <sup>36</sup>God that <sup>37</sup>avengeth me, and that <sup>38</sup>bringeth down the people under me, **49** And that bringeth me forth from mine enemies: thou also hast lifted me up on high above them that rose up against me: thou hast delivered me from the <sup>39</sup>violent man. **50** Therefore I will give

41. And my enemies thou causest to give me the back,  
My haters also, and I root them out.
42. They look around, and no one to save;  
To Jehovah, and he has not answered them.
43. And I rub them in pieces as the dust of the earth,  
As the mire of the streets I crush them, I stamp them down.
44. And thou dost deliver me from the feuds of my people;  
Thou keepest me at the head of the nations;  
People I do not know serve me.
45. Sons of the stranger fawn upon me.  
At the hearing of the ear they become obedient unto me.
46. Sons of the stranger fall away,  
And fly trembling out of their strongholds.
47. Live Jehovah, and blessed be my Rock,  
And exalted be the God of the rock of my salvation;
48. The Almighty, who gives vengeance to me,  
And subdues peoples under me.
49. And he leads me forth from my enemies,  
And from my adversaries dost thou lift me up:  
From the man of violence dost thou deliver me.

<sup>19</sup> Heb. *caused to bow*.—<sup>20</sup> Gen. 49. 8; Exod. 23. 27; Josh. 10. 24.—<sup>21</sup> Job 27. 9; Prov. 1. 28; Isaiah 1. 15; Micah 3. 4.—<sup>22</sup> 2 Kings 13. 7; Psa. 25. 5; Dan. 2. 35.—<sup>23</sup> Isa. 10. 6; Micah 7. 10; Zech. 10. 5.—<sup>24</sup> Chap. 3. 1; 5. 1; 19. 9, 14; 20. 1, 2, 22.—<sup>25</sup> Deut. 28. 13; Chap. 8. 1-14; Psa. 2. 8.

—<sup>35</sup> Isa. 55. 5.—<sup>36</sup> Heb. *Sons of the stranger*.—<sup>37</sup> Or, *yield feigned obedience*; Heb. *lie*. See Deut. 32. 29; Psa. 68. 8; 81. 15.—<sup>38</sup> Micah 7. 17.—<sup>39</sup> Psa. 89. 26.—<sup>40</sup> Heb. *giveth vengeance for me*. 1 Sam. 25. 39; Chap. 18. 19, 31, —<sup>41</sup> Psa. 144. 2.—<sup>42</sup> Psa. 140. 1.

**41. Causest to give me the back**—The word rendered *back* means properly the back of the neck. The meaning is, that God had made David's foes turn their backs to him and fly. Compare a parallel expression in Exod. xxiii, 27. In all this passage it is noticeable how devoutly David ascribes all his successes and victories to God.

**44. Feuds of my people**—Such as the rebellions of Absalom and Sheba. **Head of the nations**—David was the mightiest conqueror and king of his age. **People I do not know**—Of whom Toi, king of Hamath, and his people were an example. Chap. viii, 10.

**45. Sons of the stranger**—People of foreign parts. Alexander renders, "the sons of outland." **Fawn upon me**—Cringingly, but with deceptive hearts, they pretend submission. **At the hearing of the ear**—At the thrilling report of David's victories.

**46. Fall away**—Wither and fade away like decaying leaves.

**48. Gives vengeance to me**—Executes merited punishment on my enemies. Thus to Jehovah belongs vengeance. Deut. xxxii, 35; Rom. xii, 19.

**49. Man of violence**—A special allusion to Saul, but including all his savage foes.

thanks unto thee, O LORD, among 'the heathen, and I will sing praises unto thy name. 51 <sup>m</sup> *He is* the tower of salvation for his king: and sheweth mercy to his <sup>a</sup> anointed, unto David, and <sup>o</sup> to his seed for evermore.

50. Therefore do I praise thee, O Jehovah, among the nations,  
And to thy name do I sing,  
51. Who magnifies the salvation of his king,  
And does kindness to his anointed,  
To David, and to his seed forever.

## CHAPTER XXIII.

1. Oracle of David, son of Jesse;  
And oracle of the man exalted on high;  
Anointed of the God of Jacob,  
And pleasant in the songs of Israel;

l Rom. 15. 9.—<sup>m</sup> Psa. 144. 10.—<sup>n</sup> Psa. 89. 20.  
o Chap. 7. 12, 13; Psa. 89. 29.

a Chap. 7. 8, 9; Psa. 78. 70, 71; 89. 27.  
b 1 Sam. 16. 12, 13; Psa. 89. 20.

## CHAPTER XXIII.

## LAST WORDS OF DAVID, 1-7.

The royal hand that so long had swept the harp of Judah, and been the pride and pleasure of Israel, was becoming palsied with age. But like the dying Jacob when his end was approaching, his heart and memory cling to the words of promise that bespoke for him a glorious future, and, borne along by the Spirit, he looks down the distant years until his vision culminates in the Messianic reign. The prophecy of Nathan, "Thine house and thy kingdom shall be established forever before thee," (chap. vii, 16,) had been for many years the basis of David's holiest hopes and joys; and it was but natural that his last days and last words should be full of thought and song about that "everlasting covenant." The gracious pledge that his throne should be established for ever now expands into a rapt vision of a righteous kingdom, whose glory and beneficence would be like the brilliant sunrise of the orient, and continue for ever the blessing and joy of the good and true, but the terror and destruction of the wicked and worthless. To this picture of the righteous ruler we may well point, and say, "Be wise now, therefore, O ye kings; be instructed, ye judges of the earth." Psa. ii, 10.

## CHAPTER XXIII.

NOW these *be* the last words of David. David the son of Jesse said, "and the man *who was* raised up on high," the anointed of the God of Jacob, and the sweet psalmist of Israel, said,

1. **Oracle**—Divine saying; a prophecy. This introduction is modeled after the sayings of Balaam in Num. xxiv, 3, 4, 15, 16. **Son of Jesse**—"So he remained to the end; always with his family affections fresh and bright; his father and his early kinsmen never forgotten amidst his subsequent splendour." **The man exalted on high**—"This feeling, too, never deserted him—the sense of the marvellous change which had placed a shepherd-boy on the throne of a mighty empire."—*Stanley*. Jehovah's own word by Nathan had deeply impressed it on his soul. Compare chap. vii, 8. **Anointed of the God of Jacob**—He was first anointed by Samuel, (1 Sam. xvi, 13,) next by the tribe of Judah, (2 Sam. ii, 4,) and afterwards by all the elders of Israel, (v, 3,) and in these acts he could not but recognise the hand of Jacob's God. Compare Psa. lxxxix, 20. **Pleasant in the songs of Israel**—Not *sweet psalmist*, as the authorized version has it, for the word זמרים means *songs*, not *singers*. David was tenderly endeared to the people by his long association with their national songs of praise, for among all Hebrew poets his is the greatest name; and of the two words, *David* and *Psalms*, it may be said that the one always suggests the other.

**2** The Spirit of the Lord spake by me, and his word *was* in my tongue. **3** The God of Israel said, 'the Rock of Israel spake to me, 'He that ruleth over men *must be just, ruling* 'in the fear of God.

**4** And 'he shall be as the light of the morning, *when* the sun riseth, *even* a morning without clouds; *as* the tender grass *springing* out of the earth by clear shining after rain. **5** Although my house

2. The Spirit of Jehovah has spoken in me,  
And his word is on my tongue.

3. Said the God of Israel to me,  
Spoke the Rock of Israel:  
He that ruleth over man—righteous—  
Ruling in the fear of God;

4. Even as the light of morning when the sun is rising (is he) -  
A morning without clouds—  
From (whose) clear shining after the rain the tender grass  
(springs) from the earth.

c 2 Pet. 1. 21. —d Deut. 32. 4, 31; Chap. 22. 3, 32.  
—1 Or, *Be thou ruler*, &c.; Psa. 110. 2. —e Exod.

18. 21; 2 Chron. 19. 7, 9. —f Judges 5. 31; Psa. 89. 36; Prov. 4. 18; Hosea 6. 5. See Psa. 110. 3.

2. **His word is on my tongue**—He was conscious of divine inspiration.

3. **Rock of Israel**—So called because he was their firm foundation, their sure protection and defence. See Deut. xxxii. 4. **He that ruleth**—The exact grammatical construction of the word thus translated (*שֹׁפֵט*) it is impossible to decide, for it seems to be left designedly uncertain. The psalmist, by a few master strokes, draws the picture of a righteous, God-fearing ruler, and the blessings of his reign, but he does not say that he himself was that ruler, nor does he say decidedly at all who he was, or when he should appear; but the reference in verse 5 to the everlasting covenant which God had made with his house makes it very evident that his eye was upon that promised "Seed" of Nathan's prophecy, of whom Jehovah said: "I will be his father and he shall be my son." Chap. vii. 14. **Righteous**—An epithet describing the character and administration of *him that ruleth*. The inspired singer portrays that coming Ruler by the disconnected exclamatory utterances of an emotional style. The meaning is, however, clear. Under the righteous rule of the person here described, no worthy subject shall go unrewarded, no offender escape the strictest penalties of law. The prominent virtue of the model ruler and magistrate is righteousness.

4. **As the light of morning**—That is, the righteous ruler, on whom the vision of the psalmist rests, commences his reign as grandly and auspiciously as breaks the light of an oriental morning. Travellers describe an eastern sunrise as exquisitely beautiful and grand. After a night of storm the atmosphere becomes transparent as crystal, and the cloudless sky is of a peculiarly deep dark blue, which one never sees in a land of clouds and haze. The twilight is very short, but before the sun becomes visible his beams shed a rich glow over the whole eastern sky, making it gleam like burnished gold. Suddenly he emerges from behind the horizon and all nature starts into life and action, and hills and valleys ring with joy. The sparkling rivulet, the forest glades, and the happy birds, the tender grass of the pastures—and the frisking flocks and herds that follow the shepherd forth—all seem to exult and sing for joy, and the very trees of the field "clap their hands." **From clear shining**—The springing up of the tender grass is a result from the clear sunshine of such a morning. So the auspicious reign of "David's greater Son" awakens new life in all the universe. And so, too, the clear, unsullied administration of every righteous ruler will be the source of innumerable blessings to his people and to the land he rules.

be not so with God; yet he hath made with me an everlasting covenant, ordered in all *things*, and sure: for *this is* all my salvation, and all *my* desire, although he make it not to grow. 6 But the sons of Belial shall be all of them as

thorns thrust away, because they cannot be taken with hands: 7 But the man *that* shall touch them must be fenced with iron and the staff of a spear; and they shall be utterly burned with fire in the *same* place.

5. For is not my house so with God?

For an everlasting covenant has he made with me,  
Arranged in all things, and guarded;  
For (it is) all my salvation, and all delight,  
For will it not become mighty?

6. But the worthless—as thorns thrust aside are they all;

For not in the hand may they be taken,  
And the man that touches them is filled with iron and the shaft of a spear,  
And with fire are they utterly burned in their place.

9 Chap. 7. 15, 16; Psa. 89. 29; Isa. 55. 3.

2 Heb. *filled*.

5. **For is not my house so with God**—By taking this sentence, and also the one with which the verse concludes, interrogatively, we are relieved of the difficulties which have here puzzled interpreters. The meaning then becomes plain. David's inspired vision of the righteous ruler is based upon the everlasting covenant which God had made with his house. To that covenant he here appeals as the ground of his hopes and oracles. **Arranged in all things**—Provided with every thing that will augment its glory, or help to establish it. **Guarded**—Secured against dangers and failure. Even though David's sons commit iniquity, yet will not Jehovah's covenant be unfulfilled. See chap. vii, 15. **Will it not become mighty**—Will not this covenant grow stronger with the passing years, develope, and in the grace and providence of God at last be verified amidst incalculable power and glory? Such was David's most ardent hope and trust, and well might he call it all his **salvation and delight**.

6. **The worthless**—Literally, *worthlessness*, an elliptical expression for worthless or wicked men, depicting the godless as personified worthlessness. He doubtless had in mind the profane and godless enemies who had been to him, all through his own reign, a source of vexation and anxiety, including also such as Saul and his partisans, Shimei and his sympathizers,

traitors among his own familiar friends, like Ahithophel, and even the sons of Zeruiah. **As thorns thrust aside**—As the prickly shrubs which are hated and destroyed by husbandmen; apt illustration of the wicked. **Not in the hand may they be taken**—As all who have tried it know. So, too, he who carelessly, or without properly guarding himself, meddles with the godless, must suffer injury. David found Joab as a prickly thorn when he injudiciously attempted to transfer his office to Amasa. **Filled with iron**—That is, defended with some sort of iron armour to protect his flesh against the thorns. The expression is elliptical, and comes from *filling one's hand* with any thing; that is, taking in hand, or providing one's self with, means of defence. So the righteous ruler must be armed with all needful authority and power to make himself a terror to evil doers, and show that he beareth not the sword in vain. See Rom. xiii, 1–6. **Shaft of a spear**—The long wooden handle or staff by which the husbandman may lop the bush, and cut its roots without being hurt. Thorns thus cut were used for burning lime. Isa. xxxiii, 12. Dr. Thomson saw people in the north of Palestine cutting up thorns with their mattocks and pruning hooks, and gathering them into bundles for the lime-kiln. **Burned in their place**—That is, the place where they grew. The same observant traveller just referred



8 These *be* the names of the mighty men, whom David had: \* The Tachmonite that sat in the seat, chief among the captains; the same was Adino the Eznite: \* *he lifted up his spear* against eight hundred, \* whom he slew at one time. 9 And after him was \* Eleazar the son of Dodo the Ahohite, *one* of the three

3 Or, *Joshebbasseh* at the Tachmonite, head of the three.

to says: "It is a curious fidelity to real life that, when the thorns are merely to be destroyed, they are never cut up, but set on fire where they grow."

#### DAVID'S MIGHTY MEN, 8-39.

This list and that of 1 Chron. xi, 10-47, are substantially the same. This assumes to give the *names*, and that the *number*, of David's heroes; but a comparison of the two records shows numerous discrepancies in the names, and also in the orthography: Chronicles also adds sixteen names after the mention of Uriah the Hittite, with which this list ends. Undoubtedly there are corruptions in the text of both records; and it seems very clear that the writer of Chronicles had access to documents which the writer of Samuel never made use of. "As the names and deeds of Mohammed's many companions were long held in very distinct remembrance, and special records were devoted to describing them, David's heroes, too, who had vied with him in valour and self-sacrifice for the community of Israel and the religion of Jehovah, lived on, linked forever with his memory."—*Ewald*.

This list is divided into three classes: the first composed of three most distinguished heroes, (verses 8-12;) the second composed of two, (verses 18-23;) the third of thirty-two, (verses 24-39;) making thirty-seven in all.

8. **Tachmonite**—Better, *son of the Hackmonite*, as in Chronicles. **That sat in the seat**—יָשֵׁב בַּשֵּׁבֶת, *Joshebbassebeth*. This is evidently a corruption of the name *Jashobeam*, which appears in Chronicles, some transcriber having, as Kennicott supposes, carelessly inserted בַּשֵּׁבֶת from the preceding verse in the place of *דָּם*. **Captains**—The original

mighty men with David, when they defied the Philistines *that* were there gathered together to battle, and the men of Israel were gone away: 10 He arose, and smote the Philistines until his hand was weary, and his hand clave unto the sword: and the Lord wrought a great victory that day; and the people re-

4 See 1 Chron. 11. 11; 27. 2.—5 Heb. *slain*.—*h* 1 Chron. 11. 12; 27. 4.

word, שָׁלִישִׁים or שְׁלִישִׁים, *shalishim*, designates a superior order of soldiers who fought from chariots, (Exod. xiv, 7; xv, 4,) and were also a part of the royal body-guard. 1 Kings ix, 22; 2 Kings x, 25. In 2 Kings vii, 2, 17, 19, it is translated *lord*. From verse 18 it appears that Abishai was also a chief among this order of soldiers. *Ewald* thinks that David's army had thirty officers of this kind, and hence the name *shalishim*, *a thirty man*, or one of thirty.

**Adino the Eznite**—Most recent critics agree that these words are not to be taken as a proper name. Gesenius makes them mean, *He brandished it, his spear*, but his criticism is too arbitrary. Better is the supposition that it is a spurious reading for אֶת־חֲנִיתוֹ, *עוֹרֵר*,

*lifted up his spear*, which agrees with Chronicles. **Eight hundred**—Chronicles has *three hundred*. Which is the correct reading it is impossible to decide. The supposition of Kimchi that in one battle he killed eight hundred and in another three hundred is mere conjecture.

9. **Of the three mighty men**—Referring, doubtless, to the three of this first class, namely, Jashobeam, Eleazar, and Shammah. **When they defied the Philistines**—According to Chronicles this encounter took place at Pas-dammim, doubtless the same as Ephes-dammim of 1 Sam. xvii, 1, but it was not the same battle as there described. **The men of Israel were gone away**—Retreated from him, so that he was left singlehanded before the enemy.

10. **He arose**—Took a bold, defiant position; resolved to maintain his ground. **His hand clave unto the sword**—So long and so firmly had he grasped its hilt that his hand became benumbed and cramped, yet firmly fixed

turned after him only to spoil. **11** And after him *was* 'Shammah the son of Agee the Hararite. 'And the Philistines were gathered together 'into a troop, where was a piece of ground full of lentiles: and the people fled from the Philistines. **12** But he stood in the midst of the ground, and defended it, and slew the Philistines: and the Lord wrought a great victory. **13** And 'three of the thirty chief went down, and came to David in the harvest time unto 'the cave of Adullam: and the troop of the Philistines pitched in 'the valley of Rephaim. **14** And David *was* then in 'a hold, and the garrison of the Philistines *was* then in Beth-lehem. **15** And David 'longed, and said, Oh

*†* 1 Chron. 11. 27.—*†* 1 Chron. 11. 13, 14.—*6* Or, *for foraging*.—*†* 1 Chron. 11. 15.—*7* Or, *the three captains over the thirty*.—*m* 1 Sa.

that one would give me drink of the water of the well of Beth-lehem, which *is* by the gate! **16** And 'the three mighty men 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: nevertheless he would not drink thereof, but 'poured it out unto the Lord. **17** And he said, Be it far from me, O Lord, that I should do this: *is not this* 'the blood of the men that went in jeopardy of their lives: therefore he would not drink it. These things did these three mighty men. **18** And 'Abishai, the brother of Joab, the son of Zeruiah, was chief among three. And he lifted up his spear against three

22. 1.—*n* Ch. 5. 18.—*o* 1 Sa. 22. 4, 5.—*p* Num. 11. 4, 5; Isa. 41. 17, 18.—*q* Rom. 5. 7.—*r* Num. 28. 7; 1 Sa. 7. 6.—*s* Lev. 17. 10.—*t* 1 Chr. 11. 20.

in its grasp. Some think his hand was stuck fast to his sword by the blood which was on it. **Returned after him only to spoil**—That is, after they had retreated from him, and he was left alone to fight with the foe, and they saw at a distance the mighty victory wrought through him, they returned again and followed after him, not now to help him, but only to gather up the spoil.

**11. Into a troop**—That is, in a great crowd. Through the error of some copyist several lines are omitted in the parallel place in Chronicles, so that what is here ascribed to Shammah is there attributed to David and Eleazar. **Lentiles**—עֲלִישִׁים Chronicles has עֲלִיָּהִים,

*barley*. But the Hebrew words are so similar that one might easily have been mistaken for the other. *Barley* is probably the better reading, as it is more likely that the Philistines would attack and the Israelites defend a field of barley than a field of lentiles.

**13. Three of the thirty chief**—That is, of the thirty whose names are given in verses 24–39. Their names are not designated here, and this reference to them is too indefinite to be understood of the three just mentioned, namely, Jashobeam, Eleazar, and Shammah. **Came to David**—Put themselves under his command when he was fleeing before Saul, and had taken refuge in the cave of Adullam. See

1 Sam. xxii, 1, 2. **Pitched in... Rephaim**—This was in all probability the same battle as that described in chap. v, 17–21, and occurred after David had been anointed king over Israel, but before he had taken up his settled residence in Jerusalem. See notes at that place. It is not said that this exploit occurred at the time these heroes first joined David's band of men, as some have assumed.

**14. David... in a hold**—Rather, *in the hold*; that is, the cave of Adullam.

**15. Which is by the gate**—Well known to David, who had spent all his boyhood near the place. Tradition has given the name of "David's well" to a cistern a little northeast of Beth-lehem, and Ritter describes it as deep, and supplied with clear, cold water.

**16. Poured it out unto the Lord**—As a drink offering.

**17. Be it far from me**—The tender hearted chieftain felt that it would be like drinking the blood of his men. The event shows both the affection and devotion of David's soldiers for their leader, and his tenderness towards them.

**18. Chief among three**—Rather, *a chief among the captains*, as the same words are rendered in verse 8. All the thirty-seven mentioned in this chapter were chiefs of distinguished rank. **Lifted up his spear against three hundred**—His great feat re-

hundred, <sup>8</sup>and slew *them*, and had the name among three. **19** Was he not most honourable of three? therefore he was their captain: howbeit he attained not unto the *first* three. **20** And Benaiah the son of Jehoiada, the son of a valiant man, of <sup>9</sup>Kabzeel, <sup>9</sup>who had done many acts, <sup>10</sup>he slew two <sup>10</sup>lionlike men of Moab: he went down also and slew a lion in the midst of a pit in time of snow. **21** And he slew an Egyptian, <sup>11</sup>a goodly man: and the Egyptian had a spear in his hand; but 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. **22** These *things* did Benaiah the son of Jehoiada, and had the name among three mighty men. **23** He was <sup>12</sup>more honourable than the thirty, but he attained not to the *first* three. And David set him <sup>13</sup>over his <sup>13</sup>guard. **24** <sup>14</sup>Asahel the brother of Joab *was* one of the thirty; Elhanan the son of Dodo of Beth-lehem, **25** <sup>15</sup>Shammah the Harodite, Elikah the

Harodite, **26** Helez the Paltite, Ira the son of Ikesh the Tekoite, **27** Abiezer the Anethothite, Mebunnai the Hushathite, **28** Zalmon the Aholite, Maharai the Netophathite, **29** Heleb the son of Baanah, a Netophathite, Ittai the son of Ribai out of Gibeah of the children of Benjamin, **30** Benaiah the Pirathonite, Hiddai of the <sup>14</sup>brooks of <sup>14</sup>Gaash, **31** Abialbon the Arbathite, Azmaveth the Barhumite, **32** Eliahba the Shaalbonite; of the sons of Jashen, Jonathan, **33** Shammah the Hararite, Ahiam the son of Sharah the Hararite, **34** Eliphelet the son of Ahasbai, the son of the Maachathite, Eliam the son of Ahithophel the Gilonite, **35** Hezrai the Carmelite, Paarai the Arbite, **36** Igal the son of Nathan of Zobah, Bani the Gadite, **37** Zelek the Ammonite, Nahari the Beerothite, armour-bearer to Joab the son of Zeruiah, **38** <sup>15</sup>Ira an Ithrite, Gareb an Ithrite, **39** <sup>16</sup>Uriah the Hittite: thirty and seven in all.

<sup>8</sup> Hebrew, *slain*.—<sup>9</sup> Joshua 15. 21.—<sup>9</sup> Hebrew, *great of acts*.—<sup>10</sup> Exod. 15. 15: 1 Chronicles 11. 23.—<sup>10</sup> Hebrew, *lions of God*.—<sup>11</sup> Hebrew, *a man of countenance*, or, *sight*: called. 1 Chronicles 11. 23, *a man of great stature*.

<sup>12</sup> Or, *honourable among the thirty*.—<sup>13</sup> Or, *council*. Heb. *at his command*. 1 Sam. 22. 14.—<sup>14</sup> Chap. 2. 18.—<sup>15</sup> See 1 Chron. 11. 27.—<sup>16</sup> Or, *valleys*. Deut. 1. 24.—<sup>16</sup> Judges 2. 9.—<sup>16</sup> Chap. 20. 26.—<sup>16</sup> Chap. 11. 3, 6.

seemed that of Jashobeam, though it was not so celebrated.

**20. Kabzeel**—In the south of Judah. Josh. xv, 21. **Who had done**—The *who* refers to the valiant man of Kabzeel, Benaiah's ancestor. The margin is more literal, *great of acts*. **Two lionlike men**—Fierce, bold, and terrible champions, whom few would dare molest. **In the midst of a pit in time of snow**—An unusually heavy fall of snow had probably driven the lion into the neighbourhood of human habitations, and it had taken refuge in a pit, or, rather, *cistern*.

**21. A goodly man**—A man of commanding aspect. Chronicles says: "A man of great stature, five cubits high." **Went down to him with a staff**—By the dexterous use of which he made the Egyptian's sword of no avail to him. "I have seen," says Clarke, "a parallel instance of a man with his staff being attacked by a soldier with his hanger; he soon beat the weapon out of the soldier's hand, and could easily have slain him with his own sword."

**23. Set him over his guard**—Rather, *appointed him to his privy council*. Such office David once held under Saul. See note on 1 Sam. xxii, 14.

**27. Mebunnai**—Or, *Sibbechai*. Compare Chronicles and chap. xxi, 18.

## CHAPTER XXIV.

DAVID'S SIN IN NUMBERING THE PEOPLE AND ITS PUNISHMENT, 1-25.

Three times in the days of Moses (see Exod. xxx, 12-16, and xxxviii, 25, 26; Num. i, 2, and xxvi, 2) was the census of Israel taken by divine commandment; what particular sin was there, then, in David's numbering of the people? Evidently none in the mere fact of his taking a census, but his sin was in the motives which prompted him to do it. His motives seem to have been well understood among his chief officers, and were condemned even by such a man as Joab; but they have not been recorded, and we are at a loss to conjecture exactly what they were. They probably originated in feelings of vanity and self-ex-

## CHAPTER XXIV.

**A**ND <sup>a</sup>again the anger of the LORD was kindled against Israel, and <sup>b</sup>he moved David against them to say, <sup>c</sup>Go, number Israel and Judah. **2** For the king said to Joab the captain of the host, which <sup>d</sup>was with him, <sup>e</sup>Go now through all the tribes of Israel, <sup>f</sup>from Dan even to Beersheba, and number ye the people, that <sup>g</sup>I may know the number of the people. **3** And Joab said unto the king, <sup>h</sup>Now the LORD thy God add unto the people, how many soever they be, a hundred-fold, and that the eyes of my lord the king may see <sup>i</sup>it: but why doth my lord the king delight in this thing? **4** Notwithstanding the king's word prevailed against Joab, and against the captains

of the host. And Joab and the captains of the host went out from the presence of the king, to number the people of Israel. **5** And they passed over Jordan, and pitched in <sup>j</sup>Aroer, on the right side of the city that <sup>k</sup>lieth in the midst of the <sup>l</sup>river of Gad, and toward <sup>m</sup>Jazer: **6** Then they came to Gilead, and to the <sup>n</sup>land of Tahtim-hodshi; and they came to <sup>o</sup>Danjaan, and about to <sup>p</sup>Zidon, **7** And came to the stronghold of Tyre, and to all the cities of the Hivites, and of the Canaanites: and they went out to the south of Judah, <sup>q</sup>even to Beersheba. **8** So when they had gone through all the land, they came to Jerusalem at the end of nine months and twenty days. **9** And Joab gave up the sum of the

<sup>a</sup> Chap. 21. 1.—<sup>1</sup> 1 Chron. 21. 1.—<sup>b</sup> 1 Chron. 27. 23, 24.—<sup>2</sup> Or, *Compass*.—<sup>c</sup> Judges 20. 1.—<sup>d</sup> Jer. 17. 5.—<sup>e</sup> Chap. 10. 13; 1 Chron. 21. 3, 4; Psa. 115. 14; Prov. 14. 28; Isa. 60. 5.

<sup>f</sup> Deut. 2. 26; Josh. 13. 9, 16.—<sup>3</sup> Or, *valley*.—<sup>g</sup> Num. 32. 1, 3.—<sup>4</sup> Or, *neither land newly inhabited*.—<sup>h</sup> Josh. 19. 47; Judges 18. 29.—<sup>i</sup> Josh. 19. 28; Judges 18. 28.

altation over the supposed numbers and power of his nation, and possibly he was meditating unworthy schemes of foreign conquest. By a deadly pestilence Jehovah smote his pride and vain-glory, and brought him into deep humiliation under his mighty hand. But it must not be overlooked that David's sin was only the immediate occasion of the plague, while the great cause lay back of this in the numerous sins of the nation; and in the opening verse we are told that the Lord's anger was kindled against Israel even before David was moved to number the people. The king had, doubtless, been a chief sinner among his people; but many offences against God and the national honour, committed during the insurrections of Absalom and Sheba, and before, had gone unnoticed and unpunished, and had thereby kindled the anger of Jehovah. Compare the parallel history in 1 Chron. xxi.

**1. Again**—After the penal famine described in chap. xxi, 1. **He moved David against them**—By permitting Satan to insinuate unholy thoughts and purposes into his heart. Compare 1 Chron. xxi, 1. In the same sense did the Lord bid Shimei curse David. Chap. xvi, 10, where see note. David's own sins were many, and called for punishment; and the Lord, in executing his penal judgments upon him, first

delivered him over for a while into the hands of Satan. Compare note on 1 Sam. xxvi. 19.

**3. The Lord thy God add unto the people**—As much as to say, I delight in the numbers of Israel as much as thou, and pray God to add to them even in thy days a hundred fold. **Why...delight in this thing**—Joab knew the king's motives and opposed his designs, for he clearly saw that they were of evil omen to the nation.

**5. Pitched in Aroer**—Encamped and fixed their headquarters at this place. Aroer was a little east of the Jordan, and not far from Rabbah, probably at the modern Ayra. See on Josh. xiii, 25. **River of Gad**—Probably the wady Nimrin. **Jazer**—See on Num. xxi, 32.

**6. Gilead**—The mountainous district north of Aroer. **Tahtim-hodshi**—Some section of country east or northeast of the sea of Galilee, but now unknown. **Danjaan**—The same as Dan, the northern city of Palestine. See note on Gen. xiv, 14. **Zidon**—On the seacoast, some thirty miles northwest of Dan.

**7. Tyre**—On the same seacoast, twenty miles south of Zidon. See on Josh. xix, 29. **Hivites**—That dwelt in the north. Judges iii, 3. **Canaanites**—Various tribes that dwelt between Tyre and Beer-sheba.

number of the people unto the king: "and there were in Israel eight hundred thousand valiant men that drew the sword; and the men of Judah *were* five hundred thousand men. 10 And David's heart smote him after that he had numbered the people. And David said unto the Lord, "I have sinned greatly in that I have done: and now, I beseech thee, O Lord, take away the iniquity of thy servant; for I have done very foolishly. 11 For when David was up in the morning, the word of the Lord came unto the prophet Gad, David's seer, saying, 12 Go and say unto David, Thus saith the Lord, I offer thee three things; choose thee one of them, that I may do it unto thee. 13 So Gad came to David, and told him, and said unto him, Shall seven years of famine come

unto thee in thy land? or wilt thou flee three months before thine enemies, while they pursue thee? or that there be three days' pestilence in thy land? now advise, and see what answer I shall return to him that sent me. 14 And David said unto Gad, I am in a great strait: let us fall now into the hand of the Lord; for his mercies are great: and let me not fall into the hand of man. 15 So the Lord sent a pestilence upon Israel from the morning even to the time appointed: and there died of the people from Dan even to Beersheba seventy thousand men. 16 And when the angel stretched out his hand upon Jerusalem to destroy it, the Lord repented him of the evil, and said to the angel that destroyed the people, It is enough: stay now thine hand. And the

11 1 Chron. 21. 5.—11 Sam. 24. 5.—m Chap. 12. 13.—n 1 Sam. 13. 13.—5 Or, *And when.*  
o 1 Sam. 22. 5.—p 1 Sam. 9. 9; 1 Chron. 29. 29.  
—q See 1 Chron. 21. 12.

r Psa. 103. 8, 13, 14; 119. 156.—6 Or, *many.*  
s See Isa. 47. 6; Zech. 1. 15.—t 1 Chron. 21. 14; 27. 24.—u Exod. 12. 23; 1 Chron. 21. 15.—v Gen. 6. 6; 1 Sam. 15. 11; Joel 2. 13, 14.

**9. Eight hundred thousand. . . five hundred thousand**—1 Chron. xxi, 5, has *one million one hundred thousand and four hundred and seventy thousand*. Which of the two texts is the correct one it is impossible to decide. "They are only approximate statements in round numbers; and the difference in the two texts arose chiefly from the fact that the statements were merely founded upon oral tradition, since, according to 1 Chron. xxvii, 24, the result of the census was not inserted in the annals of the kingdom."—*Keil*.

**10. David's heart smote him**—The sinfulness of his pride and self-exaltation became deeply impressed upon his conscience. He saw and confessed that he had acted **very foolishly**.

**11. When David was up**—From his bed, where probably all night he had watered his couch with his tears. See, Psa. vi, 6, which was, perhaps, composed on this sad occasion. **Gad**—Who had been with him in his early wanderings. 1 Sam. xxii, 5. **Seer**—See note on 1 Sam. ix, 9.

**14. Let us fall now into the hand of the Lord**—Wise and noble choice, and the utterance of a "high prophetic truth which finds a response in the nobler souls of every age. Better any external calamity than those which are

embittered by human violence and weakness."—*Stanley*.

**15. A pestilence**—Some deadly plague scattered through all the land by the destroying angel, so that at the end of three days it might be said of all the homes in Israel, as it was once in Egypt, there was scarcely a house where there was not one dead. David was vainglorious over the multitude of his warriors, but this one stroke almost decimates them. **To the time appointed**—The end of the third day. This is the only natural sense of the words here, and there is no evidence that the pestilence was removed before the third day.

**16. The Lord repented him**—He saw the penitence and humiliation of David and his people, and in his sympathetic relation to them his divine emotionality changed. See the note on 1 Sam. xv, 11. **The angel that destroyed**—It is clearly a doctrine of Holy Scripture that God uses angels as ministers and messengers of his will. Not only do they minister for the heirs of salvation, (Heb. i, 14; Matt. xviii, 10; Acts xii, 7-10,) but also, under God, execute the divine judgments upon the wicked. 2 Kings xix, 35; Acts xii, 23. **It is enough**—This certainly does not mean, as some assume, that the plague

angel of the Lord was by the threshing-place of *Araunah* the Jebusite. **17** And David spake unto the Lord when he saw the angel that smote the people, and said, Lo, *I* have sinned, and *I* have done wickedly: but these sheep, what have they done? let thine hand, *I* pray thee, be against me, and against my father's house. **18** And Gad came that day to David, and said unto him, *'Go up, rear an altar unto the Lord in the threshingfloor of Araunah the Jebusite.* **19** And David, according to the saying of Gad, went up as the Lord commanded. **20** And Araunah looked, and saw the king and his servants coming on toward him: and Araunah went out,

*10* 1 Chron. 21. 15, *Ornan*. See verse 18; 2 Chron. 3. 1.—*11* 1 Chron. 21. 17.—*12* 1 Chron. 21. 18, &c.

was stayed before the third day, but only that it fell not on Jerusalem. **Threshing-place**—See on Ruth iii, 2. **Araunah**—Called *Ornan* in Chronicles. Josephus says of him: "He was a wealthy man among the Jebusites, but was not slain by David in the siege of Jerusalem because of the good will he bore to the Hebrews, and a particular benignity and affection which he had to the king himself."

**17. Saw the angel**—His vision was so spiritualized, and his inner sense so enlarged, that he was permitted to behold "the angel of the Lord stand between the earth and heaven, having a drawn sword in his hand stretched out over Jerusalem." Compare Chronicles xxi, 16; Num. xxii, 31; Josh. v, 13. The elders who were with him in penitential garb seem to have seen the angel also. Such angelic personages are often around us in their ministrations of judgment or of love, but rarely have they been allowed to manifest themselves to human vision. **I have sinned**—*I*, only *I*, am the guilty cause of all this woe! It is ever a characteristic of the subdued and heartbroken penitent to take all possible blame upon himself. He who in professedly deep contrition throws any blame on others, or seeks to involve others in his guilt, is not so much a penitent as a disappointed schemer.

**18. Go up, rear an altar**—This would be a most fitting memorial of

and *'bowed himself* before the king on his face upon the ground. **21** And Araunah said, Wherefore is my lord the king come to his servant? *'And David said, To buy the threshingfloor of thee, to build an altar unto the Lord, that the plague may be stayed from the people.* **22** And Araunah said unto David, Let my lord the king take and offer up what *seemeth* good unto him: *'behold, here be oxen for burnt sacrifice, and threshing instruments and other instruments of the oxen for wood.* **23** All these *things* did Araunah, *as a king, give unto the king.* And Araunah said unto the king, The Lord thy God *'accept thee.* **24** And the king said unto

*7* Heb. *Araunah*.—*8* Gen. 18. 2; Ruth 2. 10.—*9* See Gen. 23. 8-16.—*10* Num. 16. 48, 50.—*11* Kings 19. 21.—*12* Ezek. 30. 40, 41.

Jehovah's compassion on him and his people, and also of his own humiliation and penitence. It would also serve the purpose of a new consecration of himself and his people unto God.

**20. Araunah looked, and saw the king**—According to Chronicles he, too, had seen the angel, and in their terror himself and his four sons had hid themselves.

**22. Instruments of the oxen**—The yoke, and, perhaps, other parts of the harness of oxen. These instruments could never be put to nobler use. Compare 1 Sam. vi, 14; 1 Kings xix, 21.

**23. All these things did Araunah, as a king, give unto the king**—Literally, *the whole gave Araunah, the king, to the king.* Keil proposes to take the *king* as a vocative, and regard the sentence as a continuation, from verse 22, of Araunah's words—*All this giveth Araunah, O king, to the king.* But this makes the next words, *and Araunah said*, etc., superfluous. It is better to suppose that Araunah had formerly been a king or sheik of the Jebusites, and was still occasionally spoken of as such. The supposition is favoured by the statement of Josephus that he was a very wealthy man, and it is no contradiction, as Keil affirms, to the fact that David bought all these things to say also that Araunah gave them, for he plainly did give them, but the king afterwards refused to accept them without price.

Araunah, Nay; but I will surely buy *it* of thee at a price: neither will I offer burnt offerings unto the Lord my God of that which doth cost me nothing. So \* David bought the threshingfloor and the oxen for fifty shekels of silver. **25** And

See 1 Chron. 21. 24, 25.

**24. Neither will I offer**—Would to God all worshippers acted upon this principle of David! Holy services and privileges that cost a man nothing are worth to him about as much as they cost. **Fifty shekels of silver**—Chronicles has *six hundred shekels of gold*, which is probably the more correct reading; for if Abraham gave four hundred shekels of silver for the cave of Machpelah, (Gen. xxiii, 16.) it would seem that the king of Israel should pay much more than fifty shekels for this threshingfloor by the royal city.

**25. David built there an altar**—This he seems to have done without the least delay. The destroying angel still hovered near, and the plague had scarcely yet abated. "It was the meeting of two ages. Araunah, as he yields that spot, is the last of the Canaanites, the last of that stern old race that we discern in any individual form and character. David, as he raises that altar, is the close harbinger of the reign of Solomon, the founder of a new institution which another was to complete."

—*Stanley*. **Offered burnt offerings**—As a type and symbol of his entire consecration, body and soul, to Jehovah. **Peace offerings**—Expressive of his realization of peace and friendship with God, and his thankful homage for the divine favour. Chronicles adds that he called on the Lord and was answered by fire from heaven upon his offerings. This spot became the site of the temple. 2 Chron. iii, 1. **The Lord was entreated . . . and the plague was stayed**—Thus these records of David's life close with a picture of Divine mercy vouchsafed in answer to the pious offerings of a contrite heart; and there is left upon the reader's mind, as he lays down the volume, a precious image of gracious pardon for offences past, and the pledge of a greater salvation to come.

David built there an altar unto the Lord, and offered burnt offerings and peace offerings. 'So the Lord' was entreated for the land, and 'the plague was stayed from Israel.

f Chap. 21. 14.—g Verse 21.

As this book records quite fully the history of David, and even records his last words, but closes without any account of his death and burial, we may with some reason suppose that it was in substance written before the decease of the great king.

No character in Old Testament history is so many-sided, no genius so versatile, as that of David—the red-haired shepherd boy, the youthful hero, the passionate lover and romantic friend, the chivalrous chieftain, the mighty warrior, the greatest of kings, the wise statesman, the sacred poet, the tender father. In him were wonderfully combined all the qualities needful to make him perfect master in every thing to which he put his hand. In him we recognise, says Ewald, "the glorious originality of a creative spiritual power, such as rarely shows itself in any people."

We already discover the elements of a conquering warrior in the young shepherd who slays the lion and the bear. The conqueror of Goliath could be no ordinary hero. The feats of valour and the constant victories that attend him while in Saul's service disclose at every step the growing conqueror. Whilst an outlaw and captain of his brave six hundred, he out-generals the armies of Israel under Saul; and after he attains the throne, and with all the forces of the nation at his command, he rapidly completes the conquest of the nations spared by the sword of Joshua.

His lofty genius and creative originality early identified him with the glorious songs of Israel, (note, chap. xxiii, 1,) and his immortal psalms will ever linger in the heart of the Church universal. "He is the first great poet of Israel," says Stanley. "Although before his time there had been occasional bursts of Hebrew poetry, yet

David is the first who gave it its fixed place in the Israelitish worship. There is no room for it in the Mosaic ritual. Its absence there may be counted as a proof of the antiquity of that ritual in all its substantial features. For so mighty an innovation no less than a David was needed. That strange musical world of the East—with its gongs and horns, and pipes and harps—with its wild dances and wilder contortions—with its songs of question and answer, of strophe and antistrophe, awakening or soothing, to a degree inconceivable in our tamer West, the emotions of the hearer, were seized by the shepherd minstrel when he mounted the throne, and were formed as his own peculiar province into a great ecclesiastical institution. His harp—or, as it was called by the Greek translators, his psalter, or psalter, or guitar—was to him what the wonder-working staff was to Moses, the spear to Joshua, or the sword to Gideon. It was with him in his early youth. It was at hand in the most moving escapes of his middle life. In his last words he seemed to be himself the instrument over which the Divine breath passed. Singing men and singing women were recognised accompaniments of his court. He was an inventor of musical instruments. Amos vi, 5. 'With his whole heart he sung songs, and loved Him that made him.'

David, more than Saul, was the real founder of the Israelitish monarchy. His wise statesmanship led him, as soon as he attained the throne, to secure a strong national capital, and bring the ark there, and thus take effective measures to centralize the whole national power. In thus securing the unity of all Israel for the first time since the days of Joshua he truly fulfilled the dying prophecy of Jacob, (Gen. xlix, 8,) and also in its deeper sense obeyed, though late, the divine command to Judah to lead the tribes to the complete conquest of the Land of Promise. Compare note on Judges i, 2. He thus became Joshua's true successor, and accomplished that which all judges and rulers in Israel had so far failed to do—a failure

which had been to the nation the source of countless woes.

David, enthroned on Zion, the great conqueror-king, the man after God's own heart, the light of Israel, the star of former prophecies, has ever been regarded as a type of the Messiah. The germ of the Messianic prophecies from David onward is found in Jehovah's revelation to the king by Nathan, (2 Sam. vii, 12:) "I will set up thy seed after thee, and I will establish his kingdom; he shall build a house for my name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever." Hence the conviction started and ever after deepened in Israel, that David's dynasty should never end. In the darkest hour of Jewish misfortune and exile the Messianic hope rose high; and when at last the earthly throne had perished, and Israel was about to be scattered, and Jerusalem trodden down of the Gentiles for long ages, there was born in the city of David and of the seed of David, One who fulfilled the law and the prophecies, and set up a spiritual kingdom, and manifested himself to all the world as "the Root and Offspring of David, the bright and morning Star."

David is thus ever to be associated with the Messiah, and such expressions as "The seed of David," "The house of David," "The sure mercies of David," point to his indissoluble connexion with the great Prince and Saviour who was born at Bethlehem of Judah, but "whose goings forth were from of old, from everlasting." Micah v, 2; Matt. ii, 5.

But David, with all his greatness and glory, was not without sins. Dissimulation, falsehood, polygamy, adultery, and even murder, as in the case of Uriah, may be charged upon him. Is this, asks the sneering unbeliever, is this the style of the man after God's own heart? But in depicting these sins of David's life the stern veracity of the sacred historian moves measureless lengths above where the scorner revels in his own folly, and, thus revelling, fails to appreciate the profound spiritual struggles in which his sins involved the hapless king. Beautifully



says Irving, "The hearts of a hundred men strove and struggled together within the narrow continent of his single heart; and will the scornful men have no sympathy for one so conditioned, but scorn him because he ruled not with constant quietness the unruly host of divers natures which dwelt within his single soul? With the defence of his backslidings, which he hath more keenly scrutinized, more clearly discerned against, and more bitterly lamented, than any of his censors, we do not charge ourselves, because they were, in a manner, necessary, that he might be the full-orbed man which was needed to utter every form of spiritual feeling." Not his sins, but his profound struggle and aim never to be untrue to Jehovah, made him the man after God's heart. His sins were sud-

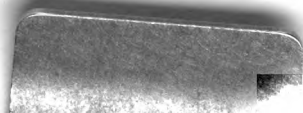
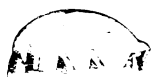
den and erratic, occasioned by trying circumstances or peculiar temptations. His zeal and loyalty to Jehovah were steadfast and persistent; and such was his strength of character, and the profound humility with which he struggled to recover from his fall, that his greatest sins were speedily overlooked by the masses of his people, and he was revered by all.

He never forgot his humble origin, but called himself in his last song the son of Jesse and the man who had been exalted on high. Chap. xxiii, 1. And, altogether, by his early deeds of valour; by his wars and his consummate statesmanship; by his truly royal reign, and his imperishable psalms, he has obtained a hold upon the heart and memory of the Church and the World that must remain fixed forever.

THE END.









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